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Cultural Studies and the Multicultural Curriculum.

Mary Susan huddleston Edgerton

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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Cultural studies and the multicultural curriculum

Edgerton, Mary Susan Huddleston, Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1992
CULTURAL STUDIES AND THE MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by

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ABSTRACT

Although some of the most recent work in the field of multicultural education has acknowledged and begun to theorize about what has been called the new cultural politics of difference, problems concerning the very, notions of marginality, boundaries, and their accompanying "essentialist" thought remain undertheorized. It is my intention to bring discussions about marginality and essentialism from literary theory, feminist psychoanalytic theory and poststructuralist philosophy more explicitly into the conversation about multicultural curriculum theorizing. In this study I have attempted to further develop this conversation around notions of "translation" as generated by philosophers Michel Serres (1982) and John Rajchmann (1991) as well as literary critics Alan Nadel (1988) and Henry Louis Gates (1987), and novelist and critic Wilson Harris (1983, 1989). These translations expose another kind of communication across difference—that is, across difference within (Johnson, B., 1980, 1987). I approached possibilities for this sort of communication through the interweaving of translation, autobiographical, and psychoanalytic theories.

Such communication theorizing, I believe, remains insufficient without consideration of the powerful
significance of place (Pinar, 1991). Through the literary, sometimes explicitly autobiographical, examples of both Black and White southern American authors as well as African-Caribbean authors (and, sometimes, myself), I have attempted to expose the ways in which encounters between are constitutive of and are constituted by place.
CHAPTER ONE

Cultural Studies and the Multicultural Curriculum

For this study my interests are theoretical and directed primarily at curriculum for teacher education. My project is to, in part, bring what has been called cultural studies to bear upon curriculum, and to do that through the debates around multicultural education, the humanities, and what constitutes "western culture". There is a practical reason for my choice in that it is only through the, sometimes forced, inculcation of what is called multicultural education that is taking place in this country that many practitioners and theorists of curriculum are coming into some contact, however weak, with the problematics of culture and marginality. For this reason, although I am very critical of much of what has been called multicultural education, I do not wish to destroy in my arguments that place of entry. I do, however, wish to provide a rationale for going beyond the models and approaches to multicultural education that currently predominate. The canon debates are debates about culture--its definition generally and particularly (particularly in the U.S., it's specific definition for U.S. education). These debates impact upon decisions around curriculum at all levels of the educational enterprise. Teachers, administrators, and school policy-
makers need to acquire the historical, philosophical, and social theoretical insights to participate in these debates among themselves and interested others.

The necessary insights for dealing with these problems, I believe, are made possible for students of teacher education through readings of literary works authored by members of marginalized groups (both in the US and in "third world" nations such as Caribbean nations which have explicit historical ties to the US and to the "West" generally), and by drawing these readings into "conversation" with philosophy, history, social theory, and the students themselves via reflective writings about their own school, life, and reading experiences. Such a conversation also fruitfully involves "canonized" literary works viewed from the perspective of encounters between such works and marginalized ones. Literary works of marginalized groups can provide a passage to a shifting of the discourse away from conceptions of multiculturalism as something we "add on" to the curriculum, or do for marginalized groups to a more fluid and thoughtful "discourse of encounters" in its abrogation of the problem of representation, and in its problematization of notions of cultural translation. Literary works can serve as a kind of counter-screen in a field of other varieties of texts that often tend to screen (simplify) societies,
cultures, and individual experience. Social theory alone does not do it, because the writings of social theory that we have access to are themselves trapped within discursive forms that privilege the language/expressions of white middle class academics. These texts talk about the marginalized, whereas literary texts written by the marginalized speak the marginalized.

I intend to support these claims, in part, through demonstrations of such "conversations" involving literary works by Toni Morrison, Ralph Ellison, Jamaica Kincaid, William Faulkner, and others. Particular authors were selected for various reasons, including powerful attachments to place, writings that engage "canonical" works (or, for example, in the case of Faulkner, are canonical works which speak of cross-cultural encounters), writings that demonstrate the power of cross-cultural encounters and imagination (Harris, 1989). Some student and personal autobiographical work will also be included in these demonstrations.

I defend my choice to limit my discussions of multicultural education and cultural studies primarily to issues of race and gender with emphasis on relations between black and white by virtue of such issues being especially pressing in the particular time and place in which I have conducted my studies—in the deep South,
Louisiana. Also, I contend that much of the theorizing that comes from this study is translatable to issues around difference and otherness more generally, however, particular applications must be attentive to particular, local contexts. The particular encounters, both historical and contemporary, that occur in specific places are also significant to these approaches to literature and theory (Pinar, 1991). Autobiography provides a critical conjuncture in exploring local context.

I will begin this task by describing the general shapes of the fields of multicultural education and cultural studies from the recent past to the present. Current debates around such issues as Eurocentrism, Afrocentrism, and the humanities will be discussed as they hold direct implications for multicultural education and cultural studies. Following that, I will outline the plan that guides remaining chapters and suggest ways in which those chapters attempt to address the problems posed in this introductory chapter. Current approaches to, and models for, multicultural education are discussed first.

**Multicultural Education**

Conceptualization of what is now called multicultural education first began in the 1960's in response to minority demands for more equitable school practices
Prior to this, schools followed a basic assimilationist model (McCarthy, 1990, p. 39). The language used and form taken by much of what was called multicultural education "disarticulated elements of black radical demands for the restructuring of school knowledge and rearticulated these elements into more reformist professional discourses around issues of minority failure, cultural characteristics and language proficiency" (p. 41).

In his critique of current multicultural educational theories, McCarthy outlines three general models characterizing the field to date. The first, "models of cultural understanding," emphasizes ethnic studies for "improving communication" and approach ethnic differences through a stance of "cultural relativism." The primary assumptions underlying such models involve placing greatest significance on individual attitudes toward ethnic difference. Their efforts, therefore, are toward cultivating respect for ethnic cultural differences within individual students (and teachers). Stronger versions of this model, McCarthy suggests, "directly target white students and teachers . . . as the flawed protagonists in their racial relations with blacks and Native Americans" (p. 44). Weaker versions attempt to dispense with negative
images of any sort, and promote instead "racial harmony and tolerance of social and ethnic differences" (p.44).

All versions of this model tend to neglect the larger social context of racial production and tend to collapse racial and ethnic differences into a monolithic idea. Indeed, some studies have pointed to harmful effects of programs based on attitudinal change (Fish, 1981; Baker, 1973; Buckingham, 1984). Quoting Fish, "One semester after completion of a fieldwork experience, students' attitudes toward the mentally retarded and the physically disabled persisted at the pretest level, whereas students' attitudes toward blacks significantly worsened from the pretest level" (p. xii, cited in McCarthy, 1990, p.46). In addition, such models tend to focus on differences between ethnic groups while neglecting differences within groups, thereby promoting unintended stereotyping which can lead to results such as those noted by Fish (Garcia, 1974; Gibson, 1984; Pettigrew, 1974).

The second category McCarthy outlines consists of "models of cultural competence." Major concerns for educators operating out of these models include inculcation of values of cultural pluralism in the schools, and the preservation of cultural identities for minority groups. Liberal social scientists such as
Riesman, Glazer and Denney (1969), and Glazer and Moynihan (1963) introduced the idea that social institutions represent "a plurality of ethnic interests" (McCarthy, 1990, p. 47). Educators such as Banks (1981, 1987), Cortes (1973), Pettigrew (1974) and Gollnick (1980) were concerned with the lack of intercultural competencies, "especially in the area of language" (McCarthy, 1990, p. 47).

Bicultural and bilingual programs associated with this cultural competence approach aim to prepare minority students for their social and cultural negotiation with dominant white mainstream society. At the same time, it is expected that white students will also acquire [cultural] knowledge. . . of minority groups (p. 49).

While challenging the centrality of dominant cultural values as well as notions of "cultural deprivation" whereby minorities are viewed as "naturally" deficient, such programs, in their hopes of "building bridges" (Sleeter and Grant, 1986, p. 4), still focus on individual mobility rather than collective identity formation and action toward structural change (McCarthy, 1990, p. 49). Minority youth are still expected to respect social institutions and their rules designed to accommodate mainstream America.

"Models of cultural emancipation and social reconstruction" constitute the third of McCarthy's categories for this field. These models are further
divided into two "conceptual strands" (p. 51). The first strand is concerned with the development of positive self concepts for minority youth for the purpose of boosting academic achievement (Bullivant, 1981). As McCarthy points out, "this first set of claims therefore retraces some of the ground of the cultural deprivation theorists in that it is suggested that minority students do poorly in school because of their lack of self esteem, among other things" (1990, p. 51). While this seems similar to the older, "cultural deprivation" theories, what makes this stance different is its linkage of underachievement to teacher prejudice and the exclusion or suppression of minority cultures. In this way it does, at least, value minority cultures as something to be respected, if only in part.

In the second conceptual strand of these emancipatory models the larger social structural context is brought to bear by way of a more direct linkage of race relations in the classroom to the economy. A program which generates greater academic achievement by minorities is viewed as a program for breaking "the cycle of poverty and missed opportunity created by a previous biography of cultural deprivation" (p. 51). However, this agenda, McCarthy asserts, ignores research that indicates a relative lack of correlation between educational qualifications and job opportunities for minorities, whereby racial and social
connections take on the greater significance (Troyna, 1984, in McCarthy, 1990, p. 53). Major weaknesses of these approaches are their tendency to place the overwhelming majority of reform burdens on individual teachers while ignoring, at the same time, such issues as "policy formation, decision-making, trade-offs, and the building of alliances for specific reformist initiatives" (p. 54).

Sleeter, partially in response to criticism, outlines five different approaches to multicultural education, some of which she too is critical, and some of which overlap with McCarthy's models (Sleeter, 1991b).

The first, which she calls the "human relations approach," focuses on such things as sensitivity training, the "power of love, unity and harmony," and the need for attitudinal and behavioral change which supersedes concerns with social change. "Unfortunately," Sleeter writes, "many people equate multicultural education with [only] the human relations approach" (Sleeter, 1991b, p.11). (Here she cites McCarthy, 1988.)

The second approach, "teaching the culturally different," is concerned with raising racial minority achievement levels through "culturally compatible education programs" (Sleeter, 1991b, p. 11). Sleeter is critical of this approach for its advocacy of racial minority internalization of mainstream cultural values and
its assumption that this is all that is necessary for minority youth to succeed in the job market and other social spheres.

The third, fourth, and fifth approaches are viewed by Sleeter as having great potential value when differentially applied according to the needs of specific schools, communities, and classrooms. Multicultural education or "cultural democracy" as a third approach is concerned with the "redesign of classrooms and schools to model an unoppressive, equal society which is also culturally diverse" (p. 11). Through this approach social criticism is taught only implicitly. Empowerment for social change is brought about through validation of minority cultures as well as through student experience of a pluralistic and democratized classroom.

"Single group studies" constitute the fourth approach. In this approach such courses as Black, Chicano, and women's studies are taught in order to deal explicitly with the "history of [the] target group's oppression. . . as well as the culture the group has developed within oppressive circumstances" (pp. 11-12). This approach is said to produce greater solidarity within specific oppressed groups to a greater degree than other approaches can, as well as "clearly defining boundaries between the in-group and out-groups" (p. 12).
Finally, "education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist" is the (fifth) approach which intends to create spaces for the formation of coalitions among these "bounded" groups as well as between these groups and members of dominant groups. This is to be accomplished by way of "direct teaching" about political and economic oppression as well as preparation in "social action skills" (p. 12).

It should be noted that in laying out methods and approaches to multicultural education both McCarthy and Sleeter are suggesting a general chronology to the development of the field since the 1960's, but at the same time, each of the methods and approaches described remain current in practices to varying degrees.

Another conceptual approach to viewing the history of multicultural education has been to outline three generations of attempts at "curriculum desegregation", the last of which "is now in its formative stages" (Gay, 1990). Following is Geneva Gay's account and critique.

In the first generation of curriculum desegregation efforts were made to eliminate ethnic and racial stereotypes from texts and to include information on "ethnic heroes", as well as to provide compensatory programs to aid minority students in making the transition to mainstream curricula. While many overtly stereotypical
images were eliminated from texts, representations remained distorted

not so much in the actual content of the books as in their approaches to the subject matter, in the questions asked, in the tone of the presentation, in the persistent use of male-dominated language to refer to general human experience, in the philosophical assumptions that undergirded textbooks, and in curriculum designs (p. 59).

In addition, issues such as oppression, racism, and inequality were scarcely dealt with and, when mentioned, the discussions around these issues were framed in such a way as to portray minorities as the passive, voiceless, nameless recipients of various policies and treatments. As for the inclusion of "ethnic heroes",

Only ethnic individuals who conformed to the middle-class, mainstream cultural standards of heroism were added to the lists of exemplars for children to emulate. Those whose heroism involved fighting oppression, preserving cultural integrity, or combating social injustices in ways that were not sanctioned by mainstream culture were conspicuously absent from the curriculum (p. 59).

Furthermore, teachers were not offered the support necessary for dealing with new materials such that many were unprepared to approach subject matter from different perspectives and/or held negative attitudes toward racial difference. And even when teachers were relatively prepared, standardized tests, to which students and teachers were accountable, were not altered to include new materials. Finally, the new programs designed to
facilitate entry into the mainstream simply became permanent tracks for many minority students (p. 59).

In response to the failures of the first generation reforms to effect significant change in minority school success a second wave of curricular reforms ensued.

Its primary targets were unequal access to instructional opportunities, unequal interactions in the classroom, teachers' biased attitudes and low expectations, and discriminatory patterns of program placements (p. 60).

As such, the emphasis was shifted away, somewhat, from revising textbooks and other instructional materials toward methodological issues. The two major thrusts for this effort were to deal directly with racial prejudice through sensitivity training for teachers and school personnel, and through them, the same was to be done for students, and, secondly, to assist victims of discrimination to develop positive self concepts.

Materials that did come from this generation were largely directed at questions of methodology and attitude. Also, they were limited to selected subjects—such as social studies, language arts, reading, and fine arts—and were often earmarked for those students who were members of the groups profiled in the projects (p. 61).

With the institution of a third generation of curriculum desegregation, Gay proposes three specific principles for guiding efforts in its shaping.
First, no one group or culture should have a monopoly on knowledge, learning, and humanity. Second, educational equality requires the total reconceptualization of our views of American history and culture and of the ways they are taught and learned. Third, diversity is a characteristic of the human condition, one that education for equality and excellence must embrace unconditionally (p. 61).

She challenges the notions that excellence and equity operate at the expense of one another, that mere social contact within diverse groups is sufficient for bringing about equity (and, therefore, excellence), and that the present structure and frameworks around which schools are built are sufficient for producing truly multicultural, desegregated curricula.

There seems to be little research to date in the area of multicultural education that would fit the requirements of Gay's third generation, or of Sleeter's fifth approach (social reconstructionist). This would imply that such programs are even less represented in actual practice. There are, however, some efforts in terms of both research and school practices that seem to be listening to such challenges. To provide an example which relates to my own project in terms of the specific cultural groups involved, I will discuss some research around, and implementation of, an Afrocentric approach, as well as debates around that approach.
One of the more outspoken proponents and articulators of an Afrocentric approach—that is, to history, philosophy, literature, psychology, and social theory—is Molefi Kete Asante (The Afrocentric Idea, 1987, and Afrocentricity, 1988). He defines Afrocentricity as "placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior" (1987, p. 6). This perspective, Asante argues, enables African-Americans (and others of African descent) to be positioned positively in history. One project is to

re-establish the centrality of ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) civilization and the Nile Valley cultural complex as points of reference for an African perspective in much the same way as Greece and Rome serve as reference points for the European world (p. 9).

His argument in support of this move is that by shifting the center away from Europe the universality of any historical perspective is challenged. He counters anticipated charges of separatism by beating such critics to the draw. It is the dominance of a Eurocentric line that promotes separatism, says Asante, and he likens the "seizure of intellectual space" by Eurocentrists to the seizure and colonization of physical territories (p. 9). Asante also notes some interesting congruences between certain feminist criticisms and Afrocentric criticism in terms of ways of viewing community, nature, and relationships. However, he is critical of Marxist
analysis, including feminist Marxist analysis, as it "rests on a reaction to the industrial capitalist order and must use its language to demonstrate the opposition" (p. 8). To summarize Asante's position:

What I seek to do here is to move closer to the possibility of a post-Eurocentric idea where true transcultural analyses become possible; this can be accomplished alongside a post-male ideology as we unlock creative human potential (p. 8).

Afrocentric curricula drawing from the work of Asante and others have been implemented, albeit with many difficulties, in Portland, Oregon, and in various stages in school districts in Atlanta, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C. (Viadero, 1990), and some cities in New York and California (Winkler, 1991). They also are in place in some black independent schools in Chicago (Lee, Lomotey & Shujaa, 1990). These curricula have been endorsed, with some qualifications, by the Organization of American Historians (O.A.H.) and unqualifiedly condemned by conservative scholars such as Diane Ravitch and Arthur Schlesinger (Winkler, 1991). Criticism can also be read in some words from "cultural studies" scholars Henry Louis Gates and Gayatri Spivak, though it takes on a different tenor from conservative criticism (Winkler, 1990). In the paragraphs that immediately follow, I will attempt to lay out the debates.
The curriculum in Portland, after which some other school districts are modeling themselves, was designed by commissioning African-American "baseline essays" from noted African-American scholars throughout the country. These essays focus on the "contributions" of African and American blacks in art, language arts, math, science, social studies, and music. They are to form the basis or standpoint for all curricular content (Viadero, 1990). Conservative critics charge that the essays are distortions of the truth and that they threaten to divide black and white further as the essays focus on white and European oppression of all that is black and African. Diane Ravitch asks, "Does this do anything to bring people together?" She adds, "The great tragedy of segregation is that it prevented us from knowing who the other person was" (cited in Viadero, 1990, p. 13). Schlesinger takes issue with "the notion that Africa was [the] source of everything good and Europe was the source of everything evil . . . [It] is not history at all, but rhetoric" (cited in Viadero, 1990, p. 13). In a separate interview he claims "Afrocentrism in the schools is a symptom of a growing fragmentation that is threatening to divide our society" (cited in Winkler, 1991, p. A5). Indeed, Ravitch claims, an ethnocentric perspective is the opposite of a multicultural one (cited in Viadero, 1990, p. 11).
Proponents of an Afrocentric curriculum claim that it is an improvement to current school curricula for African-American students in that African ideals become central to schooling rather than just an "add-on" which tends to be more divisive and marginalizing than helpful—what James Banks calls a "tepees and chitlins" strategy (cited in Viadero, 1990, p. 11). The Afrocentric perspective has been defended variously by virtue of an Afrocentric capacity to establish a balance to a nation with a dominant Eurocentric world view, by its capacity to bolster African-American engagement with school thereby bolstering self esteem and academic achievement, and by claiming it to be the truth—this last a gesture that appropriates some of the language of its critics, sometimes to dubious ends.

The Organization of American Historians (OAH) supports such a move insofar as it provides historical content that is "based upon sound historical scholarship," and rejects "a history that asserts or implies the inherent superiority of one race, gender, class or region of the world over another" (cited in Winkler, 1991, p. A6). Still, boardmember Gary Nash is concerned that the word "Afrocentric has become something of a red herring" (cited in Winkler, p. A6). Other board members such as Indiana University's David Thelen, Howard University's
Arnold H. Taylor, Boston College's Terrie L. Epstein, and University of Pennsylvania's Frances Berry (also president of OAH) see conservative critics as largely coming from a set of either/or orientations. These orientations are as follows: either you study one distinctive group or you study larger society; either you teach good (Eurocentric) history or bad (Afrocentric) history (an either/or orientation that, it could be argued, also describe some Afrocentric proponents); either one interpretation of history is correct or another one is; either you teach for self esteem or you teach for critical thinking. Alas, Diane Ravitch claims the OAH support as a victory for "our side of the debate" in that

Many of us have always said we support teaching and research in areas such as black studies or women's studies—just not the distorted version being introduced into many schools (p. A6).

OAH president Francis Berry replies,

My fear is that people will say they agree with our statement, and then will still go off promoting a point of view poisonous to multiculturalism (p. A7).

Still, research that has been done on Afrocentric curricula has tended to focus solely on the effects of such curricula on African-American groups and individuals (e.g., Lee, Lomotey & Shujaa, 1990; Ladson-Billings & Henry, 1990) leaving an opening for critics to dismiss it as limited and antagonistic. It should be understood,
however, that most such programs are intended for all or predominantly black schools. Some Afrocentric proponents intend to support and maintain all black schools, or even all male black schools. Such schools are deemed safe and necessary places in an era of resurgent white racism and racist national policies, and a time when young black males are seen as particularly at risk of not reaching adulthood with an education or, even, at all. Others intend the curriculum for inner city schools that have been defacto segregated for years. The debates surrounding an Afrocentric perspective highlight a multi-layered sense of confusion over such issues as the purposes of schooling, national cultural identity, and questions of truth and accuracy.

A look to some criticism of aspects of "multiculturalism" among proponents of multiculturalism in the humanities in higher education is useful, I believe, for extending the conceptual field around multiculturalism generally. Such a look also provides a bridge to my own project of articulating a position toward multicultural education that draws selectively (and in part) from traditions within British cultural studies and French poststructural philosophy.

Henry Louis Gates and Gayatri Spivak, among others, spoke out at the annual meeting of the American Studies
Association last November (1990). An account of that event was covered by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Winkler, 1990). Spivak expressed concern that scholarly emphases on the marginality of women and minorities "has served to reinforce their place on the margins of culture" (cited in Winkler, 1990, p. A8). Gates extends this thought: "Minority critics are accepted by the academy; but in return, they must accept a role already scripted for them" (cited in Winkler, 1990, p. A8). He also argues that through the kinds of "oppositional criticism" that are prevalent, impenetrable barriers are built between margin and center. He suggests,

Perhaps we should try to think of American culture as a conversation among different voices—even if it's a conversation that some of us weren't able to join until recently (cited in Winkler, 1990, A8).

This vignette is one of many at the surface of a history of crises in the humanities and of "national identity" both in Britain and the United States. Their words (Spivak and Gates) in this rather decontextualized vignette could be read to mirror certain conservative critics' concerns about multiculturalism and cultural studies. I hope to demonstrate the difference in later pages. Prior to that it will be necessary to explore debates around the humanities in the United States which I will contextualize by framing the beginnings and growth of
cultural studies. As a preview to demonstrating my investment in cultural studies for this project, I should also mention what about Spivak's and Gates' words grabbed my attention. As suggested early on, I find compelling the notion of a cross-cultural "conversation" that neither reduces one culture to the concerns of another, nor proliferates into infinity the "multiplicities" or "pluralities" of human concerns.

Through interdisciplinary, cross-cultural approaches to studies—including studies labeled "Western"—such a conversation may be possible. For example, a class reading Melville might also read Toni Morrison's interpretation of Moby Dick in an article which is also about race, culture, history, and an intricate phrasing of the question "what and who is 'Western?'") (Morrison, 1989). Indeed, I contend in this writing that encounters between cultures shape and transform those cultures, not so they all become the same, but such that neither exists as pure and unmediated—outside a conversation. That mediation is often expressed in literary works. A turn to cultural studies provides a useful frame for thinking about such a project.

My "turn to cultural studies" should not be interpreted as wholesale acceptance of a predominating philosophy or theoretical perspective or methodology associated at any one time with British cultural studies.
Significantly for both the content and the style of this work, I have drawn rather eclectically from the work of several people who sometimes oppose one another. In this sense, I model a project called cultural studies, to some extent, stylistically.

**Cultural Studies**

To the extent that it makes sense to talk about origins, cultural studies can be said to have been conceived in its contemporary configuration in the 1950's in Birmingham, England by Stuart Hall, Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, and EP Thompson. All four were "extramural teachers," which meant that they were marginal to the academic centers in England where they taught such courses as literacy for adult working-class students. They were marginalized, in part, because none of the traditional academic disciplines fit cleanly into their interests. As such they were thought of as lacking rigor, among other negatives. Cultural studies have since gained legitimacy in the academy to a greater extent (Stuart Hall was given a chair in sociology though his academic degrees are in literature, and the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies [CCCS] is fairly well established in Birmingham), but it's still not considered a full member in many senses as England is undergoing some similar
identity crises to those of the United States where we hear calls for "cultural literacy," for "opening" the "closed" American mind, and for a return to "the canon". (More on that later.) Now there are other strands of cultural studies, American and French to name the dominant others, which influence and converse with British cultural studies and with one another to varying degrees. For example, Stuart Hall draws on the work of contemporary French philosophers Foucault and Derrida in his most recent work, whereas earlier work was primarily influenced by more structuralist theoretical perspectives derived from Althusser, Gramsci, and Frankfurt School critical theory.

In the United States cultural studies as a somewhat organized and recognized area of scholarship is newer. A cultural studies perspective has existed to various extents and in various senses in departments of American Studies. One recent event marking a trend here was a conference called "Crossing the Disciplines: Cultural Studies in the 1990s" sponsored by Robert Con Davis and the Oklahoma Project for Discourse and Theory last year at the University of Oklahoma, which featured speakers such as Gayatri C. Spivak, Robert Scholes, Gerald Vizenor. It is Davis's contention that "the study of [literary] criticism can profitably be situated as a part--and a
leading part—of the study of culture. . . In fact, a strong argument can be made that the texts we customarily call literature constitute a privileged site where the most important social, psychological, and cultural forces combine and contend." This has been a line of a number of British cultural studies scholars as well, though by no means a line of all of them. It is one that I adopt.

British Cultural Studies: A Brief History and Description

Stuart Hall, one of the founders of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham, England, has traced a history of British cultural studies at the centre in two separate writings. The first one, written in 1980, was called "Cultural Studies and the Centre" and supplied the introduction to his edited book Culture, Language, Media. The other, published in 1990 and called "The Emergence of Cultural Studies and the Crisis of the Humanities," (1990) provides a briefer historical tracing which is brought into conversation with current issues around the humanities, national identity, and national curriculum in Britain. A third article, Richard Johnson’s 1986 piece entitled "What Is Cultural Studies, Anyway?" is a look at the disadvantages and advantages of "academic codification" for something like a discipline called cultural studies. He also discusses possible
strategies for defining and describes forms of research in cultural studies. His concerns in this article are predominantly with CCCS and Britain (he is a former director of the center), but are not entirely so limited. A version of it was presented at the 1988 Modern Language Association conference in New Orleans with a panel including an array of American cultural studies scholars including Spivak (who is a native of India and teaches in the United States). These three writings serve as the basis for my historical and descriptive impressions.

Originating texts, or what Hall calls the "original curriculum," include Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1958), Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society* (1966) and *The Long Revolution* (1975, originally published in 1961), and E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1978, originally published in 1964), this last being a critique of Williams' work.

These early texts built on the work of F.R. Leavis in terms of his efforts to deploy literary criticism as a means of reading "social arrangements, the lived cultures and 'languages' of working class life, as particular kinds of 'text'" (Hall, 1980, p. 18). While they utilized some of Leavis' notions of cultural critique, as well as Matthew Arnold's, they departed from these two in terms of
partisanship and the fixing of Culture with a capital "C."

Williams' work, in particular,

shifted the whole ground of debate from a literary-moral to an anthropological definition of culture. But it defined the latter now as the "whole process" by means of which meanings and definitions are socially constructed and historically transformed, with literature and art as only one, specially privileged, kind of social communication (Hall, 1980, p. 19).

In The Making of the English Working Class E.P. Thompson produced a labor history which challenged older versions by breaking with a limiting economic determinism and institutional perspective, and by going beyond a Leavisite elitist version of culture in favor of a notion of culture situated between "social being and social consciousness" (p. 20). It also implicitly challenged Williams in Long Revolution in terms of his somewhat evolutionary approach to culture. "Thompson insisted on the historical specificity of culture, on its plural, not singular, definition--'cultures,' not 'Culture'" (p. 20).

Another ground of contestation for British cultural studies was at the site of British sociology which was, in the 1950's, "massively dependent" on American sociology (p. 20), which Hall characterized in the following way. American sociology was predominantly either Parsonian or structural-functionalist in methodology, and as such was incapable of dealing theoretically with issues of culture as conceived by the new cultural studies. It denied the
category of contradiction in favor of such notions as "dysfunctions" or "tension management." It claimed no ideology and even disclaimed ideology as a sociological concept except to attribute it to "totalitarian society" as opposed to the (non-ideological) "pluralist society" that was America. This polarity was advanced as scientific fact. "Culture" was dealt with only "within the terms of a highly pessimistic variant of the 'mass society/mass culture' hypothesis." Furthermore, the methodology it preferred was "modelled on a highly outdated version of the natural sciences, militantly empiricist and quantitative" (p. 21).

"Schools of English and Contemporary Society" was Hoggart's lecture introducing cultural studies at the Birmingham Centre. It proposed two emphases for the program: (a) primary concern with neglected materials from popular culture and mass media, and (b) deployment of literary critical methods as an approach to reading such materials for their "qualitative cultural evidence" (p. 21).

This lecture precipitated vigorous attacks by both the sociologists and the humanists. Sociologists "while not concerned with such issues [as popular culture and mass media] reserved a proprietary claim over the territory" (p. 21). The humanists
regarded "culture" as already inscribed in the texts they studied and in the values of liberal scholarship. Anything more modern was, by definition, a sign of cultural decline and debasement . . . They shared, in fact, with Leavis, the assumption that culture and democracy were unalterably opposed (pp. 21-22).

Finally, by incorporating history and historiography into the sociological work of cultural studies, the dualism of literary versus sociology was broken down. Also, by performing historical analyses on the classic sociology texts themselves, thereby situating them outside of science and in history, the field of sociology began to be appropriated from within. Through this process other neglected sociologies were turned up as well, such as German sociology (Weberian; hermeneutic approaches of Dilthey and Simmel) and American "social interactionism" (in the work of Mead and the Chicago School) (pp. 22-24).

For several years a central and ongoing debate at the Centre and in cultural studies generally was over a perceived incompatibility between structuralism and culturalism. From its inception—with Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* and beyond—cultural studies was concerned with the lived experience of real people. Yet, the problem with this perspective, structuralists claimed, was that the work attending to such concerns too often seemed to lack theoretical grounding. Such work ignored the larger conditions under which cultures were produced. The
culturalists, on the other hand, were critical of the excessive determinism of the structuralists. Williams and Thompson in particular were concerned with the pessimistic outlook that dismissed any notion of human agency capable of resisting the power of history and ideology. (Turner, 1990, pp. 11-13)

Structuralisms entered the conversation at the CCCS through the years as European works by Lukacs, Benjamin, Goldmann, Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Althusser, and Gramsci became available as English translations. Through these authors theoretical turns were taken and explored with the growing sense that early conceptions of culture and ideology were over-simplified and under-theorized. As a progression of European structuralist theorists captured the interests of various scholars at the Centre, with each turn, the debates over culturalism versus structuralism became more intricate. For example, the traditional Marxist base/superstructure metaphor became more and more radically revised to include interactions among all practices—economic, political, ideological, and cultural—Althusser's concepts of overdetermination and relative autonomy were particularly exciting for this movement. Nevertheless, the problem of human agency, insisted upon by culturalism, remained inadequately addressed by Althusserian theory. In particular, the solutions offered
by structuralism seemed especially lacking. As Hall puts it,

Its formalism and rationalism, its privileging of the highest levels of abstraction as the exclusive mode of operation of "Theory" with a capital "T," its obsession with epistemological issues, themselves constituted formidable barriers to the solution of problems which structuralism itself posed (Hall, 1980, p. 29).

The culturalism/structuralism split ceased to hold a significant place in the Centre with the introduction of the work of Antonio Gramsci. "Where Althusser's explanation implies that cultural change is almost impossible and ideological struggle futile, Gramsci explains how change is built into the system" (Turner, 1990, p. 32). "For Gramsci, 'hegemony' is never a permanent state of affairs and never uncontested" (Hall, 1980, p. 36).

While Gramsci "remains within the basic terms of a materialist theory" (p. 36), Foucault's work represented for cultural studies tendencies to look beyond materialism to critiques of earlier semiotic models and appropriations of psychoanalytic theories. Hall's ambivalence is once again aroused by this theoretical turn as the problem of determination is repressed, but, at the same time, the problem of representation is re-opened. (p. 37)

This has also proved a crucial opening for theorizing around gender and race. The impact of feminism in
particular imposed a crisis on the CCCS in that questions of sexual difference are seen to, in many senses, precede social class differences. Certainly, social class (difference) is more complicated by its interactions with gender issues. Also, since the writing of Hall’s essay (1980), theorizing around race has entered cultural studies in a similar manner. Still, race is grossly under-theorized and largely peripheral. Nonetheless, all of this has required a radical rethinking of many theoretical perspectives and agendas for the Centre, with a concomitant need for redefining.

Defining Cultural Studies: Evasion, Necessity and Constraint

In 1983 Richard Johnson produced his essay asking (and tentatively answering) "what is cultural studies, anyway?" (later published in the 1986-87 issue of Social Text). Many of the concerns with defining, and thereby possibly constraining and undermining, cultural studies remain, at this writing, the same as they were in the beginning. Johnson writes,

A codification of methods or knowledges (instituting them, for example, in formal curricula or in courses on "methodology") runs against some of the main features of cultural studies as a tradition: its openness and theoretical versatility, its reflexive even self-conscious mood, and, especially, the importance of critique (p. 1).
Critique in the cultural studies tradition has meant critique of the disciplines which proceeds through "raids" (Hall, 1990, p. 16) in which elements are lifted from areas such as sociology, history, anthropology, literary criticism, and philosophy—elements which are useful to theorizing culture and the movements and workings of power—and what remains is rejected. As such, it involves appropriation not just rejection. From this point of view cultural studies is a process, a kind of alchemy for producing useful knowledge. Codify it and you halt its reactions (p. 2).

Yet, pressures to define are real. At the level of daily politics of colleges and schools is the need to attract resources for jobs and research. In terms of the larger political field, there is need for resources to challenge conservative assaults on public educational institutions, and "to decide priorities for teaching and research" (p. 7). Johnson also sees a need for viewing cultural studies not as unity but as whole for the purposes of "reforming the elements of different approaches [appropriations from the disciplines, and theories] in their relations to each other" (p. 7).

Johnson suggested "strategies of definition" which would presumably maintain the integrity of cultural studies critique. His strategies are as follows: define (a) as an intellectual and political tradition, (b) in its
relations to the academic disciplines, (c) in terms of theoretical paradigms, or (d) by its characteristic objects of study. He favors the fourth one. I will not elaborate on these for the reason that, in terms of the CCCS, the question of departmentalization (a kind of definition) has become a moot one since Johnson’s writing of this. Under University pressure to be reabsorbed into the Department of English, CCCS managed a compromise whereby they became the Department of Cultural Studies. This meant creating and offering an undergraduate curriculum whereas before the Centre had sponsored only graduate students and provided only reading and research groups without formal classes (Turner, 1990, p. 79). With the diffusion of their (still) small departmental numbers to preparing and teaching undergraduate courses as well as directing graduate students, it is feared that what was the CCCS will lose the powerful influence it has had on the international scene. As Turner explains, prior to departmentalization,

it adopted a policy of encouraging its students to publish their work rather than produce assignments or even finish their degrees! While this did little for the Centre’s "academic throughput figures," it did make the work visible, disseminating the fruits of its research and establishing the reputations of its students (p. 80).

The issue of definition is less settled elsewhere. In Ellen Rooney’s article "Discipline and Vanish: Feminism,
the Resistance to Theory and the Politics of Cultural Studies" (1990) she suggests that research and practice in cultural studies might best survive the ravages of such groups as the National Association of Scholars (NAS) by emulating Women's Studies (with regard to their visible commitments and influences outside the university). She also asserts that cultural studies (in the United States) must resist the pressure to being incorporated as a discipline in order to retain its critical edge. If incorporated, it would "abandon its position as a critical reading of the traditional disciplines and of the disciplinary as such" (p. 17). Rooney draws an analogy to the situation for cultural studies in the U.S. from the history of American Studies. Its becoming an established discipline fragmented it politically such that "American Studies too frequently participates in the resistance to progressive work in the humanities" (p. 18).

On the other hand, other scholars of cultural studies are concerned about such distancing from the traditional academic disciplines. Rooney interviewed Gayatri Spivak, where Spivak expresses such a concern:

if one establishes an interdisciplinary space which does not engage with the most important arena (a silent, unemphatic arena) of warring power in the disciplines themselves, where the people who don't publish much, who don't teach very well, engage day after day, as with distribution requirements, let us say, if one doesn't budge them, but proliferates
interdisciplinary, anti-essentialist programs, in fact one provides an alibi, once again, for the ruthless operation of neo-colonialist knowledge (in Spivak, 1989, p. 133).

The question seems to come to this. Should cultural studies in the U.S. retain its distance from "the disciplines," evading the "border patrol" that seeks to constrain by a strategy of define-and-conquer, and better avoid the risk of losing its critical capacity, OR should cultural studies operate through "conversations" across and within, through self-critique, remaining within the traditional disciplines (where it has mostly been, de facto), and, perhaps, better avoid the risk of divisiveness and academic marginalization? This is not a simple question. Given the complexity of the situation whereby cultural studies scholars from many academic departments and with a tremendous diversity of interests are increasingly being lumped together and charged with being "politically correct" dogmatists, I am not sure the question is even a real one. My own hope is that reduction to such an "either/or" can be avoided, at least in some, important, respects.

When we look at the public ("non-academic") debates around multicultural education, the humanities, the canon, and "Western" culture that are directed at practice and curricula for primary schools through higher education, the problem emerges somewhat differently.
The "Culture Wars"—An Analysis of Debates Around the Humanities

The public discourse around current controversies over the humanities in the United States has been framed in large part by conservative and neo-conservative academics such as E.D. Hirsch, William Bennett, Alan Bloom, and to a lesser extent Lynne Cheney. This is not to say that they represent a monolithic position. Each of the above mentioned speaks from a different notion of "the good," and what is considered "good" is key to their arguments about what the humanities are and what purpose they serve. The "humanities" that they criticize do not teach "the good" as they conceive it. For Cheney the good is that which is "aesthetically pleasurable"; for Bloom it is that which is "true and eternal"; for Hirsch the good is what is shared in "common culture" and what is (thus) expedient for teaching; Bennett’s view of the good seems to be synonymous with what he considers to be Western culture, which for him means "civilization’s best thoughts and finest utterances" (1984, p.vii). Similar stances are taken by educationists Diane Ravitch and Chester Finn with reference to secondary education (1984, 1985, 1987), and later by Ravitch with reference to higher education (Ravitch, 1990).
Compelling arguments against such perspectives have come from a number of less publicly known critics, who also hold diverse viewpoints. Despite all the diversity, it is possible to see a major split between two rough categories of views: those who view Western cultural studies as both having a discernable "essence" and as primary, and those who question such essentialism and/or the primacy of "Western" culture to study of the humanities.

Also at stake is the very definition of the humanities. Does it include the "social sciences" as well as the usual--art, music, literature, drama, etcetera? Many seem to agree that it does, though to widely varying degrees. A problem with this question, of course, is that what we call the "social sciences" is not clear either. According to Clifford Geertz in his article "Blurred Genres," just about everything can be thought of as text and can thus be interpreted via literary criticism. If this is so then it would seem that nothing is completely outside the domain of the humanities. Geertz writes,

The great virtue of the extension of the notion of text beyond things written on paper or carved into stone is that it trains attention on precisely this phenomenon: on how the inscription of action is brought about, what its vehicles are and how they work, and on what the fixation of meaning from the flow of events--history from what happened, thought from thinking, culture from behavior--implies for sociological interpretation. To see social
institutions, social customs, social changes as in some sense "readable" is to alter our whole sense of what such interpretation is (Geertz, 1983, p.31).

Critics of this idea complain that such "definitions" reduce to absurdity the possibility of coming up with a core curriculum for humanities studies in the United States. For example, Ravitch and Finn, who advocate institution of a national core curriculum for secondary school humanities, also advocate the strict separation of those disciplines (history and literature, primarily) in high school teaching (1984, pp. 250-257). The desire for a core curriculum along with the rather convergent questions and answers about what constitutes "the good" represents the most striking difference between the two "rough categories" of viewpoints--a difference which most often generates an impasse to discussion about the subject among critics.

The Hirsch, Bloom, Bennett, Cheney contingent (which I will from now on refer to as the "essentialists" for simplicity's sake) share at least the assumptions that "the good" is to varying degrees knowable and is so in a fairly "objective" sense. Critics of this group doubt the possibility of an objectively knowable good that can be prescribed "across the board" for all curricula in the humanities. Particular styles and types of interpretation seem to be especially offensive to the essentialists.
These interpretations involve such ideas as historicizing literary works and re-interpreting those works on the basis of, for example, the social and historical contexts of the author. This sometimes results in readings that are less than flattering to authors of "canonical" texts. (Re)interpretation is the "essence" of the critical stance against the sort of essentialism which has a pre-set definition for what is called Western culture with its "best thoughts and finest utterances". These critics (the "anti-essentialists") see re-interpretation as the only way change (social or individual) takes place as well as the only way the world is understood (Rabinow and Sullivan, 1987, p.27). The possibilities for multiple interpretations--in terms of deciding what is good work and what is part of a "common culture" and thus what is valid material for study as well as what is knowable--implies an impossibility for certainty that shatters an essentialist structure.

Psychoanalysis might reveal differences in degrees of comfort with uncertainty as fundamental to the conflicting views in question here, but I want to emphasize that such an analysis may have little to do with material human beings under discussion. It is based on a reading of their language use that is in print and that I have read. As such it is based on a reading of a cultural construction.
of these individuals. An essentialist strong sense of certainty implies a sense of self that is defined via rigid boundaries between self and other. Thus those who define themselves in this way are dependent on having a strong sense of "other" — that is, one who is not me, those who are very different from me — as well as a strong sense of identity with "those who are like me". But the strong sense of "other" to which I refer does not mean a sense which is based on deeper understandings of the "other" and the very real differences between self and other. I mean "other" here in the psychoanalytical sense of one who is alien and thus threatening to the self — one who is despised and thus marginalized.

The imaginary order as explained by Jacques Lacan is the place of formation of positive self and other identities. It emerges from Lacan's "mirror stage" in which a unified (specular) image comes to be viewed as natural and fixed. As Whitson points out, the imaginary order is important to "the realm of ideology, particularly with respect to ideological recognition of race, class, gender and national stereotypes as intrinsic properties of the self" (1988, p. 298). There exist contradictory elements within such a psyche in the sense that there is so much need for rigidity (certainty) because of a lack of certainty about their own and others' abilities to act in
their best interests. It comes from a lack of faith (certainty) in "human nature." This is ironic, for such people often rigidly define a transcendental, transhistorical "human nature" (as does Allan Bloom).

By this somewhat crude generalization, I do not mean to imply that rigid personalities don't exist among those to the left of "Bennettites" or that there exist no "Bush-Republicans" with a sense of play about them. The search for certainty takes many different forms along the entire political spectrum. Indeed, it could be argued that a language of simple opposition regardless of the position taken is susceptible to this analysis. Still, "social psychoanalysis" of this sort seems at least to have some degree of usefulness in understanding fundamental differences among those framing such issues and thus among the issues themselves. It is most useful when taken in conjunction with cultural and historiographical analyses.

The essentialist view assumes that Western culture exists and can be studied and understood in isolation from other cultures. This notion is exemplified by Bennett when he writes, "in studying other cultures it is best to begin with a thorough knowledge of our own." The degree of naivete' expressed within such a notion is of the order of one who misunderstands the irony of Martin Mull's The History of White People. This sort of thinking plays out
at the level of practice when, for example, at one state university in northern Louisiana, an institution that is only about 7% black in a city that is 50% black, a course proposed on the history of black education was rejected on the basis that it "singles out one group and thus promotes race hatred."

The historiographical assumptions behind this essentialism are at the same time "monumental" (with regard to the grand "American System") and "antiquarian" (nostalgic for a mythical past) in nature. They fear, and understandably so, the dangers of a "critical" historiography (one which attempts to connect the past to the present through constant reinterpretation) advocated by, for example, the American Council of Learned Societies (Watkins, 1989), with regard not just to the study of the humanities, but also to what is perceived as perhaps the "American way of life." Such a view of history and the humanities strikes essentialists as "ideological" and "biased," and as wanting only to tear down. Again, this is an issue similar to that of who is "other." It is about notions of difference. Critical re-interpretation looks for differences as much as similarities/ commonalities. The critical historian would ask, "How can we even begin to arrive at opinions about "the good" unless we have bases for comparison and argument?" This is a
contradiction in the essentialist positions except when they admit to believing, as does Allan Bloom, that "the good" has already been determined for all time— it is transhistorical. Most of them don't go this far—at least not consciously or publicly. For to admit to this belief is to rather automatically exclude a multiplicity of cultural groups which constitute American society.

Ravitch, Finn and Hirsch defend themselves to critics who claim their project is elitist. Their defense is basically that they propose the same education for all—that everyone has a right to become knowledgeable of "our cultural heritage", with culture defined by Matthew Arnold. What they apparently fail to recognize is that it is that very definition of culture that has succeeded historically in excluding Others from the domain of legitimated knowledge. The point is not to replace in the curriculum that which has been generated by an Arnoldian view of culture with another canon—another list of "greats." Indeed, it is critical that we know the forces that have shaped us, and those forces include patriarchal and racist ideologies. The point is that a liberal education is one that provides a view to transformation of ideologies rather than mere transmission. Still the battle proceeds through simple oppositional language as though it were a simple opposition of them versus us.
Criticisms of so-called political correctness, of multiculturalism, and of the humanities seem to be increasingly strident and erupting from the same section of the gallery. At a conference held by the National Association of Scholars in November 1988, those assembled were exhorted "to redeem American higher education from intellectual and moral servitude to forces having little to do with the life of the mind or the transmission of knowledge." Such forces were characterized as consisting of academic "radicals" who engaged in "oppression studies." Other examples of comments made were: "the barbarians are among us. We need to fight them a good long time. Show them you are not afraid; they crumble," and "Say to the feminists, 'what do you mean by separate courses? You have no methodology.' When you lose, make them state their agenda to the world. They haven't got the guts to state it, and you'll beat them that way" (cited in Rooney, 1990, p. 15). This meeting was attended by such media figures as John Silber (often cited in the work of Ravitch and Finn) and Jeanne Kirkpatrick. Use of the term "barbarian" as opposed to "civilized" is found repeatedly in the Ravitch, Finn and Fancher book (1984, p. 82, 240) where barbarians are apparently those who do not have anything that can be called "the humanities"--they have no "culture", in the Arnoldian sense.
Yet, at points, as noted earlier in this chapter, conservative criticisms such as those of Ravitch, Schlesinger, Hirsch, and Bloom, converge with more radical critiques. All are concerned in some senses about the alienation that is symptomatic of what is called the failure of modernity—the fragmentation that devalues a liberal education, one rich with the insights provided by deep involvement with history and literature. A significant difference in the perspectives of the above mentioned critics and my own (as well, perhaps, as those of Gates, Spivak, and many others) is in an orientation toward language, toward textuality and interpretation, that recognizes the power of language to shape subject positions—the ways in which we view the world. Specifically, I speak of an orientation toward binary oppositional language—language of hierarchy, of patriarchy, of domination. Conservative critics seem to fail to see themselves as situated within the symbolic order whereby "identities" are constructed and reconstructed through language.

Finally, in looking at these debates, the problem (for cultural studies) emerges not so much as one of definition or "academic codification" as it is a problem of combating what Wilson Harris calls an "illiteracy of the imagination" (1989). That Ronald Reagan is known as
"the great communicator" elicits the following response from Harris:

So many things are eclipsed, so many things are lost sight of, and masses of people respond because the way he communicates allows him to operate within a certain sort of frame which seems to simplify everything and to make it easy, so that there is no difficulty in comprehending what is being said (pp. 16-17).

It is an illiteracy of the imagination among Reagan's supporters, Harris suggests, that explains Reagan's persuasiveness. It stems from the inability to read in any way outside a uniform frame, a uniform kind of narrative.

"No wonder," Harris writes,

we live in a world of such fanaticism. If we have cultures which are locked into certain functions, which read the world only in one way, then fanaticism grows out of that, terror grows out of that--a total refusal, a total difficulty to read the world in any other way, to make any other kind of adjustment (p. 18).

A Map of This Study

I have outlined the history of cultural studies and the debates around multiculturalism and the humanities in hopes of setting a context from which my work has emerged. My project is intended to address the problem of an undertheorized multicultural education in terms of difference and otherness as well as to explore a particular approach to practice in multicultural teacher education. The overall focus of my efforts is to expose the workings of an alternative to "illiteracy of the
imagination”. It is hoped that such an exposure can enter the debates around multiculturalism as a challenge to the narrow vision of mainstream, dominant discourse, as well as to some of those views opposing the mainstream. It challenges those who continue to use a language of simple or binary opposition exclusively, thereby allowing that which is opposed to set the terms of the debate.

In chapter two I lay out problematics that have been under-theorized in the multicultural education literature: marginality, essentialism, and a kind of communication across difference which I refer to as translation. Marginality is viewed as a complex and dynamic interaction among social and individual subjectivities. It is insufficient to view it in simple opposition to centrality or dominance. Essentialism, in this writing—reduction of ideas, phenomena, social actors to positive transcendental essences—is a problem that emerges out of attempts to discuss oppressions and subjectivities on the basis of race and gender. This problem is approached from feminist and poststructural philosophical perspectives. Given the problematics of marginality and essentialism, communication across difference becomes particularly challenging. The term communication is insufficient as a referent for this problem as it carries connotative baggage from over-use in such areas as popular psychology.
To indicate the greater difficulty, complexity, and multidirectionality involved in the construction of an educational space for cross-cultural conversation, I have chosen to explore the notion of translation.

Such "communication theorizing," I believe, remains insufficient without consideration of the powerful significance of place (Pinar, 1991). Serres's notion of "local pockets" of knowledge and communication as well as Deleuze and Guattari's "collective subjectivity" or "group-subjects" will provide some of the theoretical support. Encounters within (translation across difference within) differ from but inform and are informed by encounters between, and are explored through the literary examples in the next chapter as well.

Finally, this translation can not be understood outside notions of love. This word has been appropriated (made kitsch) repeatedly such that we are afraid to use the term--especially in theoretic works. I intend to reclaim it. It is about power. If it were not about power, it would not be so often stolen. But it is also, potentially, about power that is dynamic rather than static and asymmetrical.

Chapter three consists of readings of literary works that serve as demonstrations of the theoretical problematics framed in chapter two. The readings are
generated in such a way as to highlight the translation and subsequent conversation that takes place between and among certain texts. Through the literary, sometimes explicitly autobiographical, examples of both black and white southern American authors as well as some African-Caribbean authors I hope to expose the way in which encounters between are constitutive of and are constituted by place. These texts and readings serve as examples for possible inclusions in a teacher education course.

Chapter four deals with the idea of autobiography written in parallel with literary and various theoretical readings in a teacher education course. In this chapter I discuss autobiography theory and provide an example of my own re-reading of, and autobiographical writing with, a work of historical fiction that I initially read as a fourteen-year-old. The novel is set in Louisiana which is where I spent my childhood. This provides a passage for a demonstration of the significance of place to my teacher education project. Finally, I have included a sample of student autobiography produced from a class I taught for pre-service teachers in which my ideas for this project were explored.

In the concluding chapter I summarize my position and return to the debates around multiculturalism, cultural studies, and the humanities in order to situate this work
among them. From this the discussion moves to one of implications and recommendations for the curriculum field with respect to teacher education.
 CHAPTER TWO

Marginality, Essentialism, Translation: The "Place" of Love

I have divided this chapter into separate sections with subheadings for marginality, essentialism, translation, and love, but it should be understood that these separations are, to some extent, artificial as the categories function through and within one another both in terms of my vision of them and of my writing. The separations are intended to act as markers calling attention to key issues as they figure most prominently in this text. It should also be noted that the four subheadings are not the only problematics that emerge in this writing. They simply serve as organizing principles in my effort to promote a certain clarity. These theoretical categories are set up but not completed or enclosed in this chapter. These constructs become more fully developed as they are viewed in action—that is, as they are engaged in the literary and autobiographical readings that come later.

At this point my writing leaves behind, to some extent, the style that dominates the first chapter. I feel it necessary to demonstrate my project not merely through straightforward content, but, and perhaps even more importantly, through a style marked by certain
discontinuities and leaps—a style that is itself interdisciplinary and, as such, analogous to the cross-cultural imagination to which Wilson Harris refers (1983) as well as to the historical tracings of cultural studies.

Identity and the Currere of Marginality

The ways in which marginalized groups, individuals, and ideas come to be marginalized in a given culture, society, and/or place has much to do with what is considered to be knowledge and who is considered to possess it—who is perceived as knower and who is perceived as known. Clearly, education is deeply implicated in these processes, and these processes are themselves deeply implicated in the formation of identities or subject-positions. This notion of identity-formation has been systematically neglected in approaches to multicultural education. As Taubman observes,

Not only have they failed to address how identity is formed, what it might mean and how it functions, but they have also left unexplored the way the approaches themselves consciously or unconsciously are used to create identities (In Press, p. 3).

I will expand the discussion of Taubman’s thesis below as it relates in important ways to my own concerns.

Taubman has examined notions of the emergence of identity through three registers which, he suggests, are most precisely viewed as in dialectical tension with each
other. In the first register identity emerges as a construct of language and, thus, as a kind of fiction which alienates one from the complex interplay of differences within oneself and between oneself and others. It can be viewed from a psychoanalytic perspective, as a result of Lacan's "mirror stage" (mentioned in chapter one). This fictional register functions through a self-essentializing movement in which boundaries between self and not-self, margin and center, are rigidly drawn and assumed stable. In this register knowledge is discourse. As such, multicultural education conceptualized from within an awareness of this register may be approached by examining the way in which discursive practices (including those of multicultural education itself) "maintain oppression . . . block understanding . . . or produce paranoid knowledge" (p. 8). The danger for a multicultural education conceived within an awareness of this register only, Taubman observes, is that "it leaves unquestioned who or what puts the period at the end of its speech and thus reintroduces meaning" (p. 8). That is, it risks becoming nihilistic in its potential for endless signification and deferral. It is not rooted in action. It is "bloodless" (p. 8).

The second register, which Taubman calls the "communal as an identity-in-motion," (p. 9) involves group
membership and all that it implies for identity as it emerges in the relations among and between individual, group, and society. The term "identity-in-motion" is derived from Henry Louis Gates's explanation of the "mask-in-motion" exemplified by the Yoruba mask which only produces meaning when worn in front of an audience of initiates. This meaning-making evokes a sense of interior cohesion for the group involved in the process of producing this meaning. Taubman explains,

> Within the communal register identity is made the ground for action. The identity is not taken as a formation of language but as an identity-in-motion... In such a world only those who are members can explore the meaning of the identity (p. 10-11).

The socially marginalized (which I will discuss in more detail later) stand to benefit from the solidarity generated by such identity formation. It is through this register that multicultural education is approached as, for example, an Afrocentric curriculum. However, this register risks essentializing identity (also discussed in more detail later), freezing it into mere group membership, if its relationship to other registers is lost.

The third register Taubman describes is the autobiographical. Explication of the subtle difference he intends between this register and the others requires that I quote him at length.
Within the autobiographical register, unlike the fictional register, the narrative which the subject constructs does not create the real experience of living but rather posits the possibility of external validation. One's recounted autobiography therefore does not create one's experience but captures it. Thus autobiography as a means to self-knowledge is possible since a dialectic exists between narrative and actual experience. This autobiography is both the ground for action and what is to be transformed (p. 14).

Theoretical debates around the meaning(s) and definition(s) of autobiography will be raised in my fourth chapter. Suffice it to say for now that within this register is a vision for the possibility of responsibility, action, and agency from the perspective of transforming and transformative individuals in relationship to others. Nonetheless, as Taubman warns, there are many dangers when this register loses sight of the others. Fixation within this register alone ignores the extent to which race, class, gender, ethnicity, and the unconscious do determine identity and knowledge. For example, a multicultural approach that is frozen in this register may take the position of a "color blind" curriculum. But it is also through this register in interaction and tension with the others that the operation of those multiple and partial determinisms may be explored. As Paul Valery reminds us, "There is no theory that is not a fragment, carefully prepared, of some autobiography" (cited in Lionnet, 1989, p. 91).
The three registers of identity formation about which Taubman writes resonate with my theoretical conceptions of layers of marginality. At this time I will proceed to my discussion of marginality during which, as appropriate, I will return to Taubman's registers.

The texts I examine in this dissertation confront the issue of marginality from different racialized and gendered standpoints. I use the term confront to emphasize the problematic nature of marginality as it appears in the literary works examined in this writing as well as this writing itself. In these texts, and as Brazilian educator Paulo Freire notes, the marginalized are, in many senses, in a position to know more about the culture that keeps them far from the center than can members of that culture know about the margins (1970). Likewise, marginal aspects of even those who are in the center in the broadest sense are the aspects of self through which they gain a metaperspective or distance from self. This is because the margin must "know" the center in order to survive, but the reverse is not true to the same extent. Yet neither exists as such without the other. Hence there is an infusion of each in the other. I refer to this idea as the "currere of marginality."

Currere, as William Pinar explains (1975), is the Latin root of the word curriculum and its study "involves
investigation of the nature of the individual experience of the public" (p. 400). It is by the experiences and ideas through which I am marginalized, or through which I choose to dwell in the margins, that I experience the public as an individual (not as an indistinct member of a group). And it is from that experience that I gain multiple perspectives around notions of self, other, society as both separate and connected. The term currere is apt in the context of this writing in another sense: curriculum theory as a field of study is itself marginalized in academia generally. And, synchronous with Friere's characterization of the oppressed, this marginalization is at one and the same time oppressive (low funding, negligence, threats of obliteration, etc.) and enlightening (there is relative freedom to explore multiple perspectives due to a sort of "benign neglect" within power structures). As such, curriculum theory is a place of encounters between and translations among different local knowledges—a process which itself constitutes the generation of new knowledges.

The education professorate has historically been at the fringes of academia as teacher education has been seen as an instrumentally vocational, service-oriented field that cannot claim a discipline of its own. It has been a field that was seen as derivative of disciplines such as
philosophy, history, and psychology. The curriculum field was "born [in the 1920's] . . . of administrative convenience rather than intellectual necessity" (Giroux, Penna, & Pinar, 1981, p. 1). Curriculum, in recent history due to economic and demographic trends, has been subordinated to educational psychology and administration departments to the point that it was declared "moribund" in 1970 by Joseph Schwab (Giroux, Penna, & Pinar, 1981, p. 6). It has since climbed out of that hole a bit but largely remains in the same relative position. Part of this climb has been a result of its diversification, "reconceptualization," and commitment to scholarship more resembling that of other disciplines from which it was seen as derivative. It is not simply derivative of other fields. This idea places curriculum theory, in many senses, in a similar situation to cultural studies. We either became "artists" and scholars or we died--fulfilling "the role of the artist and the role of curriculum theorists as seers of the intersections of humanity and things condemned by vocation to marginality" (C. McCarthy, personal communication, May, 1990).

Marginality both as theoretical and embodied existence is a source of big trouble. It "lives" within the very language/world that makes it necessary and that it must oppose. Paradoxically, it must oppose the notion
of opposition. Frequently marginality is placed in binary opposition to centrality or dominance where it is further reduced to social categories such as race, class, and gender with little or no regard for the intersection of these categories with smaller group and individual contexts. That is, it is viewed only from Taubman’s second register--the communal. Social theories and institutions as well as philosophical writings based on the logic of binary opposition are ill-equipped to deal with the nuances of these (non)categories and their implications for the production of subjectivity. Literature is often the only written source of assistance and encouragement for one who wishes to think about these issues in a multidimensional way. Ralph Ellison, in his Shadow and Act, echoes these concerns in the context of expressing his reasons for writing fiction:

Unfortunately many Negroes have been trying to define their own predicament in exclusively sociological terms, a situation I consider quite short-sighted. Too many of us have accepted a statistical interpretation of our lives and thus much of that which makes us a source of moral strength to America goes unappreciated and undefined (1953, p. 16).

Probably no one would deny that literature has value far beyond that of pleasure and escape (not that those values are not inextricably linked to the others), but in many of the social sciences--and even the natural sciences (e.g., Michel Serres, 1982b and N. Katherine Hayles,
1990)—including my own field of curriculum theory, the potential power of literature to inform those fields has only recently begun to be articulated.

But marginality, in this writing, is not only about the socially marginalized. Marginality can be viewed from at least two perspectives or layers: social marginality and individual marginality. The socially marginalized refers to lives which lie outside the dominant culture (the center). While I am aware that race, class, gender and other categories are social, historical and cultural constructions and not natural ones, at this particular historical juncture it seems accurate to refer to the margins of larger United States society (the socially marginalized) as, in part, non-white or "racialized", economically deprived and feminist/"feminine." Still, it can be argued that everyone is marginal in at least some aspects. The way we attempt to define ourselves has a great deal to do with who or what we attempt to define as "other" to us. And it is at the frontier between this self and this other (these selves and these others) that our own individual marginality lies. For example, if I situate myself as a white, middle-class woman, then anyone who I situate as non-white, non-middle class, and/or male would be an other to me. But, I may also exhibit characteristics that are traditionally thought of as masculine, I may come
from a working-class background, and my physical appearance, manner of speech and behavior may be "racially ambiguous." Therein rests part of my marginality in what might be called the individual layer. This particular example of individual marginality also illustrates, albeit simplistically, the interaction between social and individual layers in that the individual layer differs from the social layer by virtue of ambiguity around categories that define the social layer. In other words, there exists something beyond these two layers, an interactive space where these layers enfold one another, which reveals the leakiness of boundaries between different forms of marginality and between margin and center.

The problem with defining margins and, by default, centers as such is that in doing so we are stuck in a language of oppositions whereby the only option for change is to move from one pole to the other, a complete reversal, or to merge the two in dialectical synthesis, obliterating differences and flattening out the cultural landscape. Either the insidious structure of hierarchy is maintained or the integrity of individual difference and autonomy is endangered. Perhaps a more desirable state of affairs could result from deconstruction of that hierarchical system—and I speak here of deconstruction as
set forth by Derrida. Gayatri Spivak explains this notion in the context of the feminist concern with the public-private split (opposition):

The shifting limit that prevents this feminist reversal of the public-private hierarchy from freezing into a dogma [synthesis] or, indeed, from succeeding fully [reversal] is the displacement of the opposition itself. . . . The opposition is thus not merely reversed; it is displaced. . . . The peculiarity of deconstructive practice must be reiterated here. Displacing the opposition that it initially apparently questions, it is always different from itself, always defers itself. It is neither a constitutive nor, of course, a regulative norm. . . . It is in terms of this peculiarity of deconstruction then that the displacement of male-female, public-private marks a shifting limit rather than the desire for a complete reversal (1988, p.103).

As such, what I have called the interactive layer of marginality is not a synthesis of social/individual or even larger social/community/individual—it is a deconstruction of those layers, which undermines claims to a "positive" stable identity for either self or other, margin or center.

At this point I should call attention to a difference between my vision of the interactive layer as a deconstruction and Taubman’s understanding of a dialectical tension among the three registers of identity formation. There are, of course, many different accounts of "dialectics." I am basing my discussion of the difference between dialectics and deconstruction on a
particularly lucid account of marxist dialectics by Bertel Ollman (1986). In the paragraphs that follow I go into perhaps more detail than such an interlude in my arguments should warrant. I do this for two reasons: first, the differentiation is complex; and second, I have been unable to find this explicitly done elsewhere.

A dialectical approach assumes that the processes by which events take place are knowable and, somehow, sensible. Thus, it must assume a certain transparency of language (through to reality). Analysis or investigation that proceeds through dialectical thinking is indeed complex and dynamic. In that sense it is not mired in chains of certainty or pre-determined outcomes. However, in a total sense, such analysis can proceed only through a kind of faith in the knowable— an epistemological faith. Dialectical thinking as it is most often characterized in contemporary theory is dependent on a notion of structure which presupposes a center of meaning of some sort (even those structuralist theories that regard social formations as a "decentered" structure). "This centre governs the structure but is itself not subject to structural analysis (to find the structure of the centre would be to find another centre)" (Selden, 1989, p. 87). A dialectical approach depends on conceptualization as direct connection to the real—thus giving rise to the possibility for
synthesis or incorporation. It is a movement between concepts in search of the knowable. The concepts with which it deals are necessarily assumed to be opposites, at least in key aspects. This would imply that to some extent the concepts (in this case the three registers) can be thought outside one another. (Derrida's notion of the supplement in deconstructive thinking denies this possibility.)

Dialectical thinking is predicated on what Serres calls the "ordered structure." In one essay he begins his account of this with a quote from La Fontaine's "The Wolf and the Lamb" parable: "The reason of the stronger is always the best" (1982b, p. 15). The ordered structure, like the positioning of the wolf and lamb (and shepherd and dog) along the running stream "designates a set of elements provided with an ordering relation" (p. 16). This can be diagrammed as three points (a, b, and c) on a line with a direction (irreversible). Each point is either preceded or succeeded, or both, by another point. No point can precede or succeed itself, so the relation is irreflexive. From this model of the ordered structure one can define processes of dominance ("strength"), reason, causality, hierarchies in general. "The order of reason is only a particular exemplar of order in general. And this has immense consequences" (p. 17). The operation of the
ordered structure proceeds through a series of trials in which the first task is to establish responsibility. In order to win in this trial it is necessary to "play the role of the minorant" (p. 20)—to demonstrate injury or victimization. The game is a never-ending dialectical process. "Stable structures and dialectical processes are inseparable" (p. 21).

Given this characterization of dialectical thinking I do not dismiss it as an important strategy for approaching certain types of problems, especially at a theoretically "local" level. As Guattari explains,

Certainly, in the field of social ecology in particular, there will be times of struggle in which all men and women feel a need to set common objectives and act "like little soldiers"—by which I mean good activists (1990, p. 7).

However, such a synthesis inevitably gives rise to new contradictions, and this is where a deconstructive approach to thinking and reading may provide relief. (It should be noted, ironically, that setting up this comparison as an essential opposition is "antithetical" [a term that introduces another ironic turn] to the spirit of deconstruction.)

Deconstruction is based in re-readings—the refusal of final meaning (or synthesis), even momentarily. It proceeds in search of a space between concepts—a marking of the unknowable. Realist representation that can emerge
from dialectical thinking and synthesis is viewed as an illusion of presence. Not unlike notions of power for Foucault, for deconstruction meaning is not inherently a problem until it becomes (viewed as) static, and asymmetric in its stasis. As such, a deconstructive approach may sometimes be inappropriate to particular problems of an immediate, daily or local nature (problems that Jacques Daignault refers to as difficulties) because of its infinite deferral and lack of closure. That is, to think of it as a "method" which is applied to difficulties whereby "solutions" are perpetually deferred can result in a nihilism and passivity.

On the other hand, a deconstructive approach to the problem of identity in three registers could indeed have strategic interventionary value for specific (i.e. local and particular) problems in that it allows for a play of reversals among those registers, as long as the reversals are not made static. Sometimes, even for difficulties, solutions need to be temporarily deferred. Deconstruction also acknowledges the extent to which Taubman's registers cannot even be thought outside or apart from one another, at the same time they are not collapsed onto one another. For a dialectical approach, a kind of sublation among registers is the goal. Such an approach is unable to take into account breaks and discontinuities in meaning.
A deconstructive approach to the three registers would seek spaces between, by virtue of these breaks and discontinuities in meaning, which defy categorization (knowledge), but which nonetheless mark a persistence that is unsayable. Its expression in words (or otherwise) is not possible by any direct approach. Such expression is found in literary works, for example, where direct and positive categorization of "messages" or "morals" cannot be drawn, but where, perhaps, a sensibility remains—where a good reading leaves in its wake the trace of cross-cultural experience, a partial translation that is never final but always open to re-reading, re-interpretation, re-translation. It is not an attempt to subsume through synthesis, incorporating differences and discovering oneself in every other.

Deconstruction is a conscious acknowledgment of the ordered structure and an attempt to subvert it—-an attempt which is ultimately impossible in any total sense. In terms of issues surrounding multiculturalism, racism, sexism, the value of deconstruction over dialectics is its "self-conscious" recognition of the ordered structure and the way in which the structure itself produces, necessarily, victims. Possibilities and visions for processes/movements capable of minimizing violence and victimization seem most likely through this awareness
which works to keep power and meaning in motion—similar, perhaps, in operation to Taubman's "identity-in-motion."

Finally, the idea of identity almost "begs the question" of whether or not to approach it dialectically or deconstructively as these approaches ultimately signal particular orientations toward identity and subjectivity in their very constructions. For example, the fictional register was conceived by Taubman as being informed, in part, by Derridean deconstruction. Another example: both Merleau-Ponty and Levinas argue "that the subject can never grasp its own act of grasping" (Taylor, 1987, p. 204). As such, Merleau-Ponty posited a "dialectic without synthesis" to replace the "bad dialectic [which] is that which thinks it recomposes being by a thetic thought, by an assemblage of statements, by thesis, antithesis, and synthesis" (cited in Taylor, p. 79). I will not attempt to elaborate on Merleau-Ponty's work in this writing.

Ultimately, decisions about approaches to problems or difficulties with identity formation and multiculturalism require a local and situational judgment. Such judgment, I insist, requires a competence that is a "literacy of the imagination" (Harris, 1989).

Paulo Freire could be said to operate through dialectical thinking in his approach to the oppressed (the marginalized), and thus to identity. According to Freire,
the marginalized, or the oppressed, are the only ones who can understand the full significance of oppression, hence they are the only ones who will have the vision and the strength to eliminate it. The greatest obstacle to their accomplishing this feat, he says, is that the oppressed "are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized. The conflict lies in the choice between being wholly themselves or being divided . . . " (1970, p.32). This idea is an example of what is known in dialectical thinking, as it is laid out by Bertel Ollman (1986), as the "interpenetration of opposites." However, according to Friere, once this process begins there is a danger of complete reversal due, in part, to internalization of oppression and the consequent identification of oppressors as embodying what it means to be human. Another danger comes from attempts (by whom is not clear--perhaps, for example, by individually marginalized people at the social center?) to facilitate the activism of the oppressed through the use of "monologues, slogans, and communique's" rather than dialogue. This is an "attempt to liberate the oppressed with the instruments of domestication" (Freire, 1970, p. 52).

While Freire's sense of marginality as expressed here most closely corresponds to what I have called social
marginality, part of his concern is similar to Spivak's "deconstructivist" warnings about being subsumed within the very discourse being opposed. The difference is in Spivak's insistence that one can never oppose a discourse from a position entirely outside it. In so doing, Spivak is able to encompass a broader sense of marginality to include the interactive layer. That idea is illustrated (and was alluded to earlier in this writing) by the very use of the word "oppose" for a "project" that wants to displace binary oppositions (Spivak, 1988, p. 106, 108, 110). This problem, however, is not a contradiction so much as it is a paradox. (A paradox, as I use the term here, is a problem that does not require--indeed can't have--a solution. It requires deconstructive reading.) Displacement is not the same as elimination.

Another problem with Friere's position is that in referring to a choice of becoming "wholly themselves" he seems to discount the degree to which the oppressed are within and constitutive of the oppressors, as well as the degrees to which the oppressed (and the oppressors) differ from one another. Excavation of these relations provides the possibility for opening spaces to dialogue and reinterpretation. As Russell Ferguson explains,

The intent is not to create a new center of authority based on a spurious unity of the marginalized, but rather to open up spaces for
new ways of thinking about the dynamics of cultural power (1990, p. 9).

Indeed, marginality in all its layers is constituted by encounters. The social margins result from encounters across differences between (in terms of race, class, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, etcetera) -- encounters that often have necessitated one-way translation by the marginalized of those who suppress and oppress them; that is, "translation with a master" (Rajchman, 1991, p. 7). Encounters across differences between transform all of those involved in some ways. When translation takes place without a master, the transformations that take place can set cultural power in motion, blurring the boundaries between margin and center.

Individual margins can be thought of as encounters across differences within -- differences generated by socially and culturally produced psyches within "singularized" subject-positions. Clearly, these margins emerge in the context of the social, but are not, in many respects, predictably determined by social structures, in part because the social structures are themselves highly contradictory. My margins are precisely those areas in which I am unpredictable, a surprise. When that unpredictability becomes a surprise even to myself then I have been set up to learn.
When those margins are set in the context of their interactions with the larger (social) margins, the readings required become more complex, richer. I learn through good readings of the world (and that includes readings of myself), just as good reading is reading that is situated to allow for the "surprise of otherness" (Johnson, B., 1987, p. 15). Good readings are those that operate at some conscious level through all three of Taubman's registers.

That is, a reading that sets up the conditions for a knowledge-within-difference would proceed through some degree of awareness of collective and individual histories of the movement and ambivalence of desire, of exploitation and privilege, and of the possible relationships among these. (Autobiography is one place to explore those relationships.) For example, William Pinar's essay "Understanding Curriculum as a Racial Text" is both itself such a reading at the same time it is a call for and a description of the conditions for eliciting such readings from teacher educators, teachers, and students. In this essay Pinar explains how, psychoanalytically, the repression of African-American history, literature, and culture can be understood in terms of attempts at American identity formation and stabilization. Such an identity can only be sustained through a kind of willful ignorance that
distorts and deforms at the level of the individual and the social both European-Americans and African-Americans alike. Such a national identity can only be sustained through deployment of a "border patrol" between center and margin.

Desire operates through this labor (of sustaining national identity) from within a history that lives in the present, not unlike the lie that is told and goes out of control, snowball-like, requiring constant re-creation to protect not only the perpetrator, but all who were taken in. The desire itself (to perpetrate a lie, for example) is what must be explored. What is needed, Pinar suggests, is a kind of social psychoanalytic therapy to expose the lie and save the subject--to de-center then "re-center" the subject on the basis of cross-cultural encounters that assist the continuous (re)constituent of it. That subject is himself. It is also the rest of us, as citizens of the northern United States and of the southern United States in particular. Exposure and exploration of the lie and what drives it presents a surprise of otherness when I discover that as a European-American I am being constituted also by that which is African-American, that this infusion lives and moves through a collective unconscious and memory of which I am part and from which,
at the same time, I differ. Now I can read in a new way. Ground is provided for a new assemblage.

The Essence of Essentialism

The problem I refer to—margins and centers, frontiers, boundaries, outsides and insides, the places of reified (and re-reified) structures—is about the necessity for coming to terms with difference and otherness. As Mark Taylor reminds us, "The history of society and culture is, in large measure, a history of the struggle with the endlessly complex problems of difference and otherness" (Altarity, 1987, p. xxi). Learning is about difference and perception. And difference that is perceptible is necessarily concentrated at the boundaries, fluid and dynamic though they be, the borders between margin and center. Thus a society that values learning also values and loves and listens to its so-called margins. Yet too often, to be marginalized is already to be situated in a kind of "double bind" with respect to the so-called centers of society. That is, the socially marginalized are expected to adopt and function within a cultural "memory" that is not truly their own at the same time they must struggle if they wish to be included in that society.
At the same time that the margins are posed with a double bind, their questions and other responses to the center take the form of another kind of double bind—a kind of chiasmus to the double bind imposed on the margins by the center of expectation/exclusion. Margins, being both advantageous and dangerous territories, ask us to abandon an ostensibly rationalist discourse by posing questions and responses to the center in the form of mixed messages that say "I am this," "Don’t label me as this".

For example, in challenging the common wisdom about race among white people as well as among her peers in the literary community Zora Neale Hurston frequently played with stereotypes and cliches about race. She does this in an essay called "How It Feels to be Colored Me" published in *World Tomorrow* in 1928 (examined by Barbara Johnson in 1987). Hurston divided the essay into small separate parts and responded to the question differently in each part. By so doing she, at times, appears to give contradictory answers to the question as she reverses and re-reverses cliches about race. Her "answer" comes, therefore, from the piece as a style. Hurston’s reversals play between herself as essentially black (different from you, white person) and essentially nothing (the same as you, white person). Johnson’s speculation is:

In the first essay, Hurston describes the jungle feeling as an art, an ability to feel, not a
reversion. In the second, the jungle appears as a result of "strain." In the first, Hurston can proclaim "I am this"; but when the image is repeated "you are that," it changes completely. The content of the image may be the same, but its interpersonal use is different. . . The difference between difference and sameness can barely be said. It is as small and as vast as the difference between "like" and "as" (1987, pp.177-8).

This call for abandoning a rationalist discourse is often heard through literature, poetry, and art--symbolic arenas that have historically been more often excused from the "responsibility" of rationalism. Through such literature, the problematic of an anti-essentialism/essentialism binary is exposed and, as I see it, calls up two notions of essentialism: essentialism as it is typically used in a pejorative sense--that is, one that absolutely prevents translation (the signifier becomes the signified), and another that ambiguously simultaneously demands and rejects translation--"translate me" or "I am this, understand me" and at the same time "do not translate me" or "do not label me as this."

(Translation will be discussed further below.)

The first sort of essentialism is based on the notion that identities of persons and things are stable and definable according to transcendental essences and/or standards of judgment. The second is a destabilized essentialism that is locally and strategically deployed as resistance to the first as well as to terrorism generally.
The difference, as expressed by Diana Fuss, is that the first type of essentialism is "inherently reactionary—inevitably and inescapably a problem or a mistake" (1989, p. 20). The second type when deployed "may have some strategic or interventionary value. . . the radicality or conservatism of essentialism depends, to a significant degree, on who is utilizing it, how it is deployed, and where its effects are concentrated" (P.20).

The case of Susie Phipps in Louisiana (in 1982) in conjunction with much of civil rights legislation provides an example that demonstrates the political problematics coming out of the anti-essentialism/essentialism binary opposition. Susie Phipps contested her legal definition as black which was arrived at by conformation to a Louisiana state law (1970) that asserted that anyone who had "1/32 black blood" was indeed black. This was to be determined by genealogical records which, in Phipps case, indicated that a great-great-great-great grandmother had been a "Negress and a number of other ancestors mulattoes, quadroons, and octoroons" (Domínguez, 1986, p. 2).

The trial involved expert testimony from anthropologist Munro Edmonson who argued on Phipps behalf that by virtue of the way genes are "shuffled" before birth it is at least theoretically possible for one to inherit all genes from just two grandparents. Furthermore,
he cited "modern genetic studies [that] show that blacks in the US average 25% white genes and that whites average 5% black genes, and that by these statistics, using the 1/32 law, the entire native-born population of Louisiana would be considered black!" (p. 2). (How these statistics were arrived at is another interesting question that I am not now prepared to deal with.) Though Susie Phipps lost her case, nervous Louisianians overturned that law in 1983. But the question of legal racial identity remains, though now, at least ostensibly, for different purposes. With the hard-fought battles over civil rights legislation, legal racial distinctions are deemed necessary in order to insure equal protection under the law, etcetera. The contradiction that arises is one where legal distinctions on the basis of race may both limit choice at the same time they enhance it in other ways.

This case demonstrates the demand for deconstruction of that binary which opposes essentialist definitions of race (as in blood, for example) to "anti-essentialist" claims of uncertainty, at the same time it points to the second form of essentialism/translation, that is, the ambiguous and shifting one, as politically strategic for the marginalized. Replacing what is dynamic with static essences (or, for that matter, static "anti-essences" that claim to know the essence of essentialism) is a
characteristic of modern social and economic structures. It is what Milan Kundera calls "totalitarian kitsch" which is, he says, "the absolute denial of shit," the expression of a desire to reach "an agreement with being as such" (Unbearable Lightness of Being, 1984, pp. 248, 249). It "deprives people of memory and thus retools them into a nation of children" (The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, 1981, p. 235). Robert Boyers writes in a letter to Kundera, "Collective activity inevitably entails parades, slogans, and the belief that one is right. So you suggest. To oppose totalitarianism is to ask questions and to refuse to become a model of anything, not even of dissidence" (1985, p. 231).

But, if democracy is possible it should by its very definition resist totalitarian kitsch. It is difference that puts the pressure on governments to live up to democratic ideals. And kitsch, as conceived by Kundera, is the absolute denial of difference. But how does one "deconstruct" such a binary when deconstruction itself is often touted as a paradigm of anti-essentialism? Herein lies another aspect of the double bind presented to us all by the margins.

This double bind has been articulated and explored extensively by such literary figures as Milan Kundera, Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison, and Ralph Ellison. They
all deal either explicitly or implicitly (or both) with notions of double binds and the schizophrenic insight that they induce. I see an interesting linkage between the language and literature of schizophrenia and the characterization of the reader of literature in a state of engagement with a text. The engaged reader is said to experience a dissolution of the reading self—a "moment of dispossession of the reading ego: as separation of itself from itself" (Ricoeur). Of course, those who are "clinically schizophrenic" probably suffer a "dispossession of the ego" which goes far beyond the momentary.

Gregory Bateson, in his *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972) included an essay "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia" (pp. 201-227) in which he reflects upon his work with schizophrenics. He notes that schizophrenics spent their childhoods caught in a double-bind sort of logic. That is, they received incessant, inescapable, contradictory messages with regard to their own behavior and feelings from one or more significant family members. The "way out" for these people is to develop different systems of logic in order to deal with the situation and to translate from other systems to their own. Such logic is often circular and rich in metaphor. The difference between this metaphor use and ordinary metaphor use,
Bateson suggests, is that schizophrenics use "unlabeled" metaphors in the form of distorted syllogisms. For example: "Men die. Grass dies. Men are grass" (p. 205).

In drawing analogies among a debilitating schizophrenia, the marginalized, and the reader engaged with a text, by no means do I wish to imply the existence of a pathology to be exorcised from the latter two. It is just that it occurs to me that when one is confronted with a challenge to one’s logical system, such as what often occurs with reading and learning and living in the margins, one is forced to compensate and does so through a schizophrenic moment. There is also a decontextualization about schizophrenia that seems similar to those aspects of reading in which the reader is submissive to the text. Again, they are but moments for the reader in which s/he is confronted with difference, challenged to be creative of new systems but temporarily relatively unanchored to history. As Alan Nadel explains, as we read,

we may even rest on one set of connotations, but we do so very tentatively, for the pleasurable compact of reading is that we are always open to moments of acquisition and surrender--in which we recover and discard implications brought to the surface by the text (1988, pp. 51-2).

For Wilson Harris, the process of writing is also schizophrenic:

the unity or density of original expression in a work of profound imagination, is paradox; it is both a cloak for, and a dialogue with, eclipses,
of live "otherness" that seek to break through in a new light and tone expressive of layers of reality. Sometimes this combination and breakthrough . . . is schizophrenic (1983, p. xvii).

I wonder if it is these rebellions against logic, this playfulness, the schizophrenia in us all that allows for the construction of new "schema," configurations, categories, via something like "unlabeled metaphors." For Deleuze and Guattari there exist "positive schizophrenic lines of escape" (1983, p. 363) which I interpret to be similar to this state of reading/learning/engagement/dispossession. The problem with the "sick schizo" arises, they say, when s/he is "effectively neuroticized" (p. 363), paralyzed by the double-bind. Bateson notes that psychiatric institutions are often themselves productive of the double-bind (Bateson, 1972, p. 225). Likewise, I would argue, other institutions and the theories that produce them can be. I see theory based on the movement of difference as providing a "line of escape" whereas much social theory within a privileged rationalist discourse attempts to enclose us in the double bind by telling us that our experiences and feelings are insignificant.

Calling once again on Nadel:

the great value of Derrida is that he . . . makes a strong argument for the idea that . . . were we not constantly readjusting everything we know (recognizing difference and deferring understanding) -- we could not make sense of anything (1988, p. 57)
Resisting from the margins, we can avoid that trap, and often do so through literature, poetry, art, storytelling, ritual, popular culture.

**Translation and Tradition**

Translation in this writing emerges as a composite notion from my readings of the idea through several authors. For some of them, translation includes but goes beyond the purely linguistic categories set forth by Roman Jakobsen. Those are: intralingual translation, or paraphrase; interlingual translation, or translation in the most common sense; intersemiotic translation, in which for example, verbal signs are reencoded in nonverbal sign systems. In going beyond, for example, Michel Serres writes of translations among the disciplines of literature, philosophy, and science which call into question the whole notion of separate "disciplines" (similar, in this regard to cultural studies). Philosopher John Rajchman theorizes a "translation without a master" that is a kind of cultural translation (1991). Cultural studies scholar David Murray envisions a cultural translation as something that is almost always possible, but always problematic, undecidable, and dynamic (1991). Derrida writes of the problematics of translation as being the problematics of the difference between signifier and
signified—also undecidable. Because this difference is impure, he prefers a notion of transformation to translation: "a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another" (1981, p. 20). (Indeed, this transformation that takes place is clearly embodied in literary works of Afro-Caribbean writers.)

Henry Louis Gates shares Derrida's notion of translation as transformation but "translates" it to accommodate his African-American literary theory. He differs from Derrida in that, for Gates, the texts in which he is interested demand constant re-translation, or at least bitranslation, just as the hyphen between African and American suggests a doubling (in Fuss, 1989, pp. 82-83). I will begin more detailed constructions of these various notions of translation with Michel Serres.

For Serres, a major (global) problematic involves finding passages between the sciences and the humanities. These passages exist, he contends, but they are not as simple as they have sometimes been made to be. Knowledge from all domains exists only as local pockets or islands or spaces. The problem of these spaces has been repressed in favor of time which, ordered linearly, can be contained in an ordered structure (i.e., globally applied). The spaces of knowledge are local, not global, between which passages exist--but these passages are not generalizable.
Spaces are disorderly multiplicities that resist a totalizing and linear history (1982b, p.xiii).

These passages or translations are found and demonstrated not through similarities, metaphors, or analogies but through formal operations of translation (which may appear to be "unlabeled metaphors") whereby fundamental structures are found to be "isomorphic"—that is, Serres explores the identical workings of the "ordered structure" in different domains. Thus, in Zola's texts for example, "The narrative does not function like a motor, it is a motor; thermodynamics is part of its very textuality" (p. xxxvi). Science, literature, philosophy, and myth of a period are equivalent cultural formations, according to Serres. Consequently, models of knowledge can be read to function in the same way across domains. Still, such connections are not obvious and require what Serres calls "rigorously disordered" readings.

This sort of translation can occur across identity registers, and does so in certain literary works. For example, as Francoise Lionnet suggests, Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography *Dust Tracks in the Road* amounts to autoethnography, that is, the defining of one's subjective ethnicity as mediated through language, history, and ethnographical analysis; in short, that the book amounts to a kind of "figural anthropology" of the self (1989, p. 99).
Translation, in Serres's sense of it above, is similar to the inter-, or more accurately, anti-disciplinarian efforts of cultural studies. His method for locating isomorphisms between different fields (or spaces of knowledge) is at the same time historical, literary, and anthropological; his analysis is philosophical and social. As the editors of his book of collected essays, Hermes, explain:

if the separation of knowledge into regions, formations, or disciplines is no longer applicable, then knowledge must be reformulated on new bases, new practical and theoretical operators must be discovered, and new operations must be defined. As we have seen, Serres calls these operations, interference, translation, distribution, and they all converge toward the idea of communication (1982b, p. xxxv).

It is his notion of communication (that includes, for him, translation) that links his specific notion of translation described above to that of other theorists here. For Serres, communication is contingent upon exclusion—not the result or demonstration of a dialectic movement between opposites. Fluid movement across boundaries without obliterating boundaries (margins, differences) is paradoxically hostile to communication and necessary for it. That is, there must be difference, the "excluded third man" ("parasite", "noise") in communication: It is what the communicators (interlocutors) team up against and try to destroy.
Communication occurs in the search for sameness but it is necessarily a reaction to and against difference. As such, communication always risks violence.

Perhaps translation, given that it is always partial, can serve as an approach to communication that is not based in a desire to eliminate the noise of otherness. The notion that translation can take place presupposes some common meaning—some "common sense." Rajchman advises, "If it is sense that translation preserves, where there is translation, there can be no altogether new sense. There is always some sense in common" (1991, p. 6). Yet, too often the translation that takes place between dominant and subordinant groups in institutions called schools is such that the "common sense" ("common culture") is attributed only to a single dominant cultural identity. This is certainly true of any form of "cultural deprivation" theory. But it is also, more subtly, true of those multicultural models or approaches that fail to recognize the complexity of difference and the production of subjectivity. "Conversely," Rajchman continues, "translation without a master would be the art of breaking with those with whom one nevertheless identifies, while exposing oneself to the singularities of those one nevertheless tries to understand" (p. 7).
Again, translation without a master is a two (or multi) way process. As Murray points out with regard to early encounters between aboriginal Americans and whites in the United States,

In a situation of dominance, the cultural translation is all one-way, and the penalty to the subordinant group for not adapting to the demands of the dominant group is to cease to exist. Knowledge of the processes of this translation, though, must be repressed by the dominant side, in favour of a reassuring image of mutual intelligibility which does not register as significant who has had to "translate" (1991, p. 6).

This assumption of the transparency of language, this "unspoken belief in the isomorphic relationship between language and reality" (Greenblatt, 1976, p. 572), is precisely the trouble with an ideology of positivism which has such a firm grip on current theory and practice in the curriculum field and in education generally. Rajchman asks,

Can there exist a common sense, a public, or public space—a glasnost—which is not identified with a single tradition, or with a single way of classifying the plurality of traditions, but which is so divided up that each tradition remains exposed to the singularities of the others, and of those yet to come? (1991, p. 6).

Such translations within the multicultural curriculum need not succumb to the criticisms of those who fear the "loss" of Western culture and tradition. Tradition in such a new assemblage, contrary to accusations by conservative
critics of multiculturalism, is not tossed out; it is rearticulated, reinterpreted, eventually reterritorialized (a continuous cycle); it is translated. Encounters among positions in the margins and the center result in such rearticulations of traditions—rearticulations that initially deterritorialize elements of the old. Just as the margins are simultaneously advantageous and dangerous positions, so is this deterritorialization. Deterritorialization, as explained by Guattari, is a breaking up into singularities, it is ruptures of meaning, and it constitutes existential territories that have "always sought refuge in art and religion" (1990, p. 6).

Each of the existential territories . . . exists . . . as a precarious, finite, finitized entity for itself; it is singular and singularized; it may bifurcate into stratified and death-laden reiterations; or it may open, as process, into praxes that enable it to be rendered "inhabitable" by human projects (p. 8).

Such "human projects" become reterritorialized, transformed by cross-cultural imagination as, for example, in literary allusion—which is "to translate out of time" (Nadel, 1988, p. 49). Allusion is a linguistic expression of encounters between, for example, in the case of post-colonial Caribbean nations, the traditions of colonizer and colonized, as well as between those traditions and "original" expression. The paradox of tradition, Alan
Nadel indicates, is that "when we deal with the concept of tradition, we see that only its own manifestation can alter it" (1988, p. 30). In elaborating on the implication of allusion (in Ellison's *Invisible Man*) in "translating tradition" Nadel argues that the artist must . . . both invoke and overcome his or her historical sense. He or she must know the difference between the past and the present so well as to be able to afford not to know it . . . . Tradition, for Eliot, means the manifestation of the past in the new (p. 29).

It becomes a "revisionary repetition" (Moreland, 1990, p. 4).

Nadel's theoretical use of literary allusion as a kind of revisionary repetition resonates with other theorists of the margins: Wilson Harris's development of "cross-cultural imagination," Francoise Lionnet's appropriation and extension of Edouard Glissant's "metissage," and Henry Louis Gates's "signifyin'." For Harris, forgotten pre-Columbian traditions return in his novels to interact with traditions brought by the Western colonizer, and the encounter produces a revisionary moment. Within each of his novels, he writes, there are different texts playing against each other, as much as to say that if you were to have a profound, creative democracy, you must have various texts playing against each other in such a manner that the tradition comes alive so marvelously that one begins to break the apparition of tyranny, the habit of conquest (1989, p. 27).
Lionnet retains Glissant's notion of metissage in French rather than translating it to English (as "half-breed" or "mixed-blood" or "creole") as, in French, its meaning does not carry the negative connotation of the English translations. Metissage involves the braiding of "cultural forms through the simultaneous revalorization of oral traditions and reevaluation of Western concepts" (p. 4) for the purpose of recovering unwritten pasts. It parallels

the Greek art of metis [which] is an art of transformation and transmutation [alchemy], an aesthetics of the ruse that allows the weak to survive by escaping through duplicitous means the very system of power intent on destroying them (p. 18).

This evokes notions of the "trickster" and "signifyin'" as explained by Henry Louis Gates with reference to African-American literary theory, and which can be seen in the works of Maya Angelou and Zora Neale Hurston, for example. "Signifyin'" involves repetition and reversal of an idea—a chiasmus—which is carried out so as to "constitute an implicit parody of a subject's own complicity in illusion" (Gates, 1987, p. 240).

The concepts developed by Nadel, Harris, Lionnet, and Gates will be more fully explored through literary readings in the next chapter. (Lionnet also provides autobiography theory which is useful to my project in chapter four.) I mention them now in the interest of
elaborating a theory of marginality which is wary of the dangers of thoughtless essentialisms at the same it insists on the possibility for dynamic self-creation for the margins through translation and love.

Implicit in all this is the notion that a truly creative alchemical response to crisis and conflict and deprivation—a response that engages with formidable myth—may well come from the other side of a centralised or dominant civilisation, from extremities, from apparently irrelevant imaginations and resources (Harris, 1983, p. 30).

The case of Susie Phipps illustrates one-way translation imposed on the margins from the center ("centralised or dominant civilisation") "Ironically, the 1970 Louisiana law was enacted to supersede an old Jim Crow statute which relied on the idea of "common report" in determining an infant's race" (Omi and Winant, 1986, p. 162). However, this case represents faulty translation on three levels: (a) it represents an attempt to impose a language of scientific rationality on situations where multi-dimensional aspects of human experience are at play and at stake, (b) given that its authors buy into a scientific rationalism, they misread or fail to read scientific understandings, in this case, about recombinant DNA and a social construction is natural scientifically defined, (c) they attempt to make the local the global. Boundaries between margin and center are rigidly defined on the basis of a "purity," and that purity operates in
only one direction—from center to margin. As such, the center is clearly defined as only that which is in no amount "other." The margins are left to fend for themselves out of a neglect that is sometimes benign, but more often not.

To communicate (to know), to translate, is always to risk killing, Serres reminds us. Communication/translation is always an attempt to eliminate the noise of otherness, to exclude, to marginalize, both symbolically and literally that which paradoxically forms a necessary backdrop for that same communication—that is, something against which exists the need to communicate. But maybe that violence can be best resisted if communicating discourses (essentialisms) are localized journeys traversed in love (listening). The margins, like the creoles of Louisiana, are local phenomena. The particular historical relations of diverse cultural groups in a particular locale carry immense import for the processes of translation which continue to shape subjectivities for a region. It is in this sense that the multicultural curriculum need attend to the notion of place. For translation to be a truly two-way process, local historical circumstances (relations among cultural groups of a place) have to be excavated and acknowledged. For even those who are relatively new to a region are
affected by the region’s history as well as by the specific histories they bring with them. Indeed, this movement constitutes new encounters which continue to shape the character of local and national cultures. These encounters cannot be explored outside a deep listening among and between marginalized and dominant groups. Such listening is, inherently, a part of translation that is a two (or more) way process.

The pedagogy that I seek attends to the identity politics of individual student experience of literature and life without collapsing under such politics to new "atheoretical" essentialisms. The deconstruction and translation that must take place in the classroom is situation specific and, as such, must fall back on questions of judgment. Judgment not based in love can only give rise to terrorism.

**Love in the Margins**

I begin this section with two quotes that represent a spectrum of love inclusive of mind and body, eros and agape’, and something else beyond those dualisms. Perhaps that space beyond that Michel Serres and Zora Neale Hurston differentially explore in these quotes could be referred to as "eco-erosic" love.

Love has just been defined as an intermediary. It is neither a god nor a mortal, neither rich
nor poor; it occupies the middle spot between knowledge and ignorance. Love can be thought of as being among the fuzzy subsets. He is the included third. He is between. (Serres, 1982a, p. 246).

And,

She was stretched on her back beneath the pear tree soaking in the alto chant of the visiting bees, the gold of the sun and the panting breath of the breeze when the inaudible voice of it all came to her. She saw a dust-bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom; the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace and the ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest branch creaming in every blossom and frothing with delight. So this was a marriage! She had been summoned to behold a revelation. Then Janie felt a pain remorseless sweet that left her limp and languid.

Oh to be a pear tree--any tree in bloom! (Hurston, 1978, pp. 24-5).

I write about a problem that has no solution other than love—and that is no solution because it resists the framework that anything called a "solution" requires. Not being "rational," love is well suited for dealing with the call to abandon the privileging of certain rationalist discourses. This love that I speak of is also listening—listening on many perceptual levels. Listening, as a part of language, is itself marginalized by so much philosophical writing that privileges the saying aspects of language (Fiumara, 1990). Zora Neale Hurston loves us with her novel Their Eyes Were Watching God at the same time she makes demands on our rationalist conditioning
(with regard to double-binds, for example). She teaches us to listen. Michel Serres does the same.

With regard to my earlier positioning of feminist/"feminine" in the margins of larger society and my emphasis on love as integral to the workings of all the other oppositions operating within this text, I would like to preface my discussion of love with some notes about the connection between love as agape'/eros and notions of masculine/feminine. Again, stressing my intent to avoid successful reversals (new essentialisms) I should perhaps clarify my use of the term "feminine" and thus also "masculine." I believe that probably every man and every woman possess characteristics from both of the cultural categories feminine and masculine so that what are considered feminine and masculine are not necessarily coexistent with female and male respectively. Yet "feminine" perspectives toward love are mostly marginalized in the philosophical literature, particularly in Western philosophy and theology. It is the "feminine" conception(s) of love, therefore, on which I wish to focus.

In my search for meaning in the idea of love I have examined some of the historical discussions stemming from my own "Western Judeo-Christian" cultural heritage, a heritage in part "inherited" by African-American people in
the United States (Plato, the Disciple Paul, St. Augustine, and finally Freud were read via Donnelly, French, Kristeva, O'Donovan, Soble). As several of the sources I consulted point out, such discussions are rich with possibilities, but they are largely lacking with regard to female/feminine (as well as black racial) perspectives. For female/feminine perspectives I have turned to a contemporary feminist theological interpretation of the Christian concepts of agape' and eros (Donnelly, 1984). My thesis (and Donnelly's as I read her) is that a "feminine" conception of love is one that does not hierarchicalize (and thus artificially split) agape' and eros—a hierarchy which necessitates dualistic thinking with regard to mind and body, spirituality and sexuality. Donnelley and others call it "radical love" (p. 30-34).

Agape' refers, historically, to selfless love—especially the sort of love that is said to exist between God and human beings, but also within some forms of human friendship. It is considered to be the highest form of love in much of Christian (male) theological literature. Eros involves, but is not limited to, sensual, sexual and/or romantic love between human beings. Both terms have, however, been variously interpreted over time. True to Derrida's insistence on the indeterminacy of origins,
contradictory readings of early usages of these terms abound. The opposition deconstructs itself when looked at historically.

Both eros and agape' were concepts developed by men. Plato spoke of eros, the disciple Paul spoke of agape'.

Erosic love for Plato was desire—to love was to seek and to love what is lacking. Still, Plato separated mind and body within eros by differentiating between a raving or vulgar eros (body) and a sublime eros (mind). Thus, for the philosopher, love involved lacking and seeking beauty, truth, the good. Freud's notion of the libido (which, is only male) is Plato's eros (Kristeva, 1987, pp. 59-82).

St. Paul first announced agape' as a sort of three-tiered plan for moving the concept of love away from eros and desire and passively under the thumb of the Father/God who bestows it. He emphasizes first, God's disinterested love for man, second, His sacrifice of the Son to prove it, and third, the importance of loving one's fellow man, including (especially) enemies and sinners as proof of allegiance to the Father (pp. 139-150).

Alan Soble interprets erosic love as being "property-based and reason-dependent," one in which we appraise the worth of the "object" to be loved, and agapic love as love which bestows value on the loved one regardless of prior properties (1990, p. 12). According to Soble, Eric Fromm
sees mother love as agapic (unconditional) and father love as erosic, whereas Irving Singer considers all parental love erosic (p. 13). Soble's definitions point to male imagery for eros and female for agape if one takes "property-based" and "reason-dependent" to be characteristics of modern patriarchy, and nurturing to be a "feminized" concept.

St. Augustine, like Plato, divides love on the basis of mind (spirit) and body while introducing the notions of sin and shame (O'Donovan, 1980, p. 10). In the scheme of St. Augustine women had little to say or offer as they were viewed as virtually all body with no mind or spirituality and limited souls (French, 1984, p. 107). With woman as body and man as mind the (one-way) translation in Christian thought to woman's love as erosic (erotic) and man's love as agapic was easy. Both Plato and St. Augustine saw mind and body as separate and hierarchicalized—a dualism that has since proven vicious, but which is still very much in place in what has been called "Western rationalist masculine discourse."

Is another hierarchy emerging with these notions of feminine and masculine? Only in a limited sense, I think, because as stated before I do not believe these categories are natural, let alone restricted to associations of feminine to female and masculine to male. The limited
sense of hierarchy I present here is an example of strategic use of fluid essentialisms. It is an inherently unstable one in that concepts/categories of feminine/masculine are historically and culturally defined moment to moment, and as such are synchronically, diachronically, and linguistically unstable. With this and my female status in mind it should come as no surprise if my arguments and discussion favor a feminist standpoint. I do not claim innocence, but neither do I apologize. Spivak speaks of this issue as follows:

By pointing attention to a feminist marginality, I have been attempting, not to win the center for ourselves, but to point at the irreducibility of the margin in all explanations. That would not merely reverse but displace the distinction between margin and center. But in effect such pure innocence (pushing all guilt to the margins) is not possible, and, paradoxically, would put the very law of displacement and the irreducibility of the margin into question (1988, p. 107).

Soble argues a case through a logic of binary oppositions (although he neither explicitly formulates it on the basis of hierarchy nor on prior marginalization) for complete reversal of the agape'/eros hierarchy and the non-necessity, then, of agape', forgetting that the terms of language derive meaning from difference (if not differance) and the only difference at work in his system is that of opposition. Thus he obliterates all meaning in his "structure of love" by attempting to discredit and
eliminate the term to which eros is opposed (and thereby derives its meaning).

A "feminine" complete reversal of the agape'/eros hierarchy is a fallacy no less than the "masculine" version. The problem for everyone is the same insofar as an incomplete reversal or displacement is the goal. The ways to approach that problem are different—different broadly for masculine and feminine standpoints and different particularly for each individual. Still, I would argue for the existence of a certain advantage for the feminine standpoint through what I have called a currere of marginality. The feminine standpoint in which eros (or feeling) is often allowed to supersede agape' (rationality) is a marginalized standpoint in Western market society. (Although true agape' is marginalized as well . . . a kind of pseudo-agape' prevails--what Donnelley calls "sloppy agape'") As expressed earlier, those coming from marginalized standpoints are typically more driven to deal with other more dominant standpoints and thus reach broader understandings encompassing multiple possibilities. This is why I feel some comfort in referring to the non-hierarchicalized yet non-contradictory conception of eros-agape' as feminine.
It is through the multiplicitous experience of an entity, idea, or concept—both in mind and body—that we come to know it non-violently. "True love" for anyone or anything comes from both mind and body, selflessness, and a kind of selfishness. I conceive of this selfishness as one where the lover attempts to soak up as much experience of the other, the loved, into the self as possible, though not in an intrusive (violent) sense, and not in a self-obliterating sense. It differs from pure agape' (altruistic, selfless love) in that it involves more of an emotional investment and risk of rejection. But in order to truly be established such that it can grow and evolve it cannot be rejected—it must be reciprocal, the lover must receive a "return" on that emotional investment. Otherwise it never goes beyond agape', which by my interpretation of agape', need only be a one-way affair (as in "love your enemies"). This is not to say that agape' is an inferior form of love—just that agape' is neither superior, isolable, nor is it all there is. I am also suggesting that displacement of these hierarchies is more easily associated with the feminine at this particular cultural moment, since such a standpoint could be conceived of as displacement of at least three oppositions: masculine/feminine, agape'/eros, margin/center. The displacement or deconstruction of
hierarchicalized love, I believe, is found in the idea of transference love—transference that is peculiar to the pedagogical situation. An explanation of this follows.

Love as multi-layered engagement with life is a prerequisite for translation, and translation is essential to the multicultural curriculum. The implications that psychoanalysis holds for pedagogy are manifested by the significance of love to both. Henceforth in this writing love functions as an analogy for teaching/learning at the same time it is often, as in psychoanalysis, more than an analogy; it is a very real and necessary condition for the pedagogical situation. Returning to the initial quote in this section by Serres, this (transference) love "occupies the middle spot between knowledge and ignorance." These assertions are detailed in the immediately following paragraphs.

Love (in the sense of "in love") effects a stifling of imagination (as in "love is blind") at the same time it totally disrupts. It is a dangerous moment at the same time it renews (like the margins). "One speaks [of it (one learns; imagination returns)] only after the fact" (Kristeva, 1987, p. 3). It subverts and problematizes language providing an opening for translation. "I" becomes an "other." It makes one unique and special (particular) at the same time it blurs boundaries between self and
other. Fear shares its symptoms. Indeed, it is "fear of crossing and desire to cross the boundaries [margins] of the self" (p. 6). And, like learning, it is schizophrenic.

The experience (love) ties a knot with strands made of the symbolic, the imaginary, the real.

Strangled within this tight knot, reality vanishes: I do not take it into account, and I refer it, if I think of it, to one of the three other realms. That means in love I never cease to be mistaken as to reality (Kristeva, p. 7).

Like learning/teaching, these are dangerous territories, disruptive, unsettling, risking blowing apart all that is official or certain. Love and learning are marginal passages. Love (learning) calls into question the very notion of identity.

Indeed, in the rapture of love, the limits of one's own identity vanish. . . . Do we speak of the same thing? And of which thing? The ordeal of love puts the univocity of language and its referential and communicative power to the test (p. 2).

What do we mean by love? Searching the question reveals a "linguistic profundity"—love as "solitary because incommunicable" is nonetheless translatable. Versions of love (languages of love) "commune [only] through a third party: ideal, god, hallowed group" (p. 3) (sometimes, the communal register).

Can a classroom be one such place (Serres's "included third"; "between"), political problematics and all?
Love probably always includes a love for power. Transference love is for that very reason the royal road to the state of love; no matter what it is, love brushes us up against sovereignty (p. 9).

Transference takes place through a granting of authority by the analysand (student? teacher?). We ask our students to "suspend disbelief" in our competence. We ask them to grant us authority.

But it is they who are to listen as we tell our stories. Here lies the "swerve" in this analogy. The swerve is the surplus, the place of nonsense, the uncultivated (Serres, 1989). It is a margin (a "margin of mystery" [p. 8]). The swerve gives us time, "breathing space" (p. 11). There is still something left to do; to fill. This particular swerve means sovereignty is not complete. If it is they, our students, who listen, are they not the analysts and we the analysands in this analogy? Yet, it is we, the teachers, who are "presumed to know." And "as soon as there is somewhere a subject presumed to know, there is transference" (Lacan, cited in Felman, 1987, p. 35).

Psychoanalysis proceeds, as does teaching, through a kind of "mutual apprenticeship" (p. 33). The analyst "attempts to learn from the students his own knowledge" (p. 33). Love, then, is two-way. Lacan insists:

I deemed it necessary to support the idea of transference, as indistinguishable from love,
with the formula of the subject presumed to know (cited in Felman, p. 35).

and

The question of love is thus linked to the question of knowledge (cited in Felman, p. 35).

and

Transference is love . . . I insist: it is love directed toward, addressed to, knowledge (cited in Felman, p. 35).

Listening is a love; love pays attention to listening. It occurs in an open system. Kristeva writes, "As implied in modern logical and biological theories dealing with so-called 'open systems,' transference is the Freudian self-organization" (p. 14). With this, as Felman reminds us,

the position of the teacher is itself the position of the one who learns, of the one who teaches nothing other than the way he learns. The subject of teaching is interminably--a student; the subject of teaching is interminably--a learning (p. 37).

It (learning/love) is also indefinitely deferred.

A coincidence between findings of psychoanalysis and modern physics (Heisenberg's uncertainty principle) led Lacan to the following pedagogical principle:

Until further notice, we can say that the elements do not answer in the place where they are interrogated. Or more exactly, as soon as they are interrogated somewhere, it is impossible to grasp them in their totality (cited in Felman, p. 29).

As most dramatically evidenced by those students who
return later to marvel at what they learned in a class and how little they realized it at the time, it is always after the fact—always deferred.

"Hate is the integral of all contraries," says Serres (1982b, p. 25). Is the "center" also the integral of all contraries? If so, love can not be the opposite of hate, nor can the margins be the opposite of the center as both would then themselves be contraries. There is no "solution". The best we can do is attempt to read well, to listen, to set ourselves up for the "surprise of otherness" (Johnson, B., 1987, p. 15). As such, the "integral of all contraries" is a poor reader. It reads itself into all texts, denying, repressing, and suppressing difference. Denying learning, growth, experience—yet requiring all of those for its very existence and continued dominance. Thus it cannot remain dominant for all situations, for all events, for all time. It moves about and around the margins where it recuperates by appropriation, by gaining just enough insight to fling itself back to the center to rest and re-atrophy—to re-reify.

Love—transference love (?)—will resurface in this dissertation. It provides the texture of novels read in chapter three. It appears in the autobiographical writings
of some of my students in chapter four. And it is the subjective state within which I have written.

**Conclusion**

I have argued that a "racialized" standpoint is a marginalized one in addition to a feminine/feminist standpoint, and that a feminine/feminist standpoint is more capable of displacing at least three hierarchicalized oppositions (center/margin, mind/body, agape'/eros) than is a standpoint at the center. In light of the novels examined in this dissertation, an obvious next question is how capable of displacement is a racialized standpoint relative to the feminist one? I have no intention of attempting to quantify such a comparison in any way. My intent is only to entertain the notion that arguments similar (not identical) to those for a feminist standpoint could be effectively employed for a racialized standpoint.

Expressions of and beliefs about love, indeed, emotion in general, are culturally specific (for example, see Catherine Lutz's *Unnatural Emotions*, 1988). As such, when I call upon Western Christian concepts as well as Western psychoanalytic concepts of love, limitations must be acknowledged. African-American and African-Caribbean people have, however (as mentioned before), "inherited" much that has been called "Western." Still, one of the
more emphatic points of my writing here is to call attention to, and to explore the ways in which, encounters between cultures are what constitutes the very notion of culture, and results of these encounters are manifested in regionally particularistic forms. To the extent that this is so, then, it seems reasonable to look at notions of love through "Western" lenses as long as the lenses are acknowledged and their limitations brought to the surface. It is through readings of literary works that I hope to encounter some of the translations and transformations of these Western notions.

In comparing novels by authors of different racial and gendered positions, a point of interest will be to what extent does the "non-synchronous" nature of these subjectivities affect their approaches to love and marginality. By non-synchrony I am referring to a concept of dynamic and contradictory relations of race, class, and gender as theorized by Cameron McCarthy (1988a) whereby, for instance, one's racial interests will under some circumstances come into direct conflict with one's gendered interests. Non-synchrony refers to complex dealings with differences between. Differences within require an appeal to feminist psychoanalytic, poststructural, and "schizoanalytic" theories. It should be noted that explorations, of "difference within" are
often relegated to the status of luxury when held next to the necessity of dealing with difference between created by historically specific exclusions and oppressions. However, I argue that readings of differences within and their interactions with differences between are crucial to development of multicultural theories that do not disarticulate radical minority and feminist concerns.

Difference is approached in different ways for different historical periods. For the characters of Morrison's *Beloved*, for example, the difference between is the difference that most occupies the energies—the difference between being social categories of difference that determine historical exclusion and oppression of marginal groups. Still, for these characters to have lives that include love, pleasure, etc. other levels/layers of difference had to come into play. Barbara Johnson's "difference within" is useful but limited for understanding the particular issues at play here. According to this theory differences between are often illusions created by repression and projection of differences within. Both difference between and difference within connote a negativity to differences in the context of my usage of it for the immediately preceding writing—that is, either I have an identity foisted upon me from without and I am excluded or I am repressing parts of
myself and thus excluding some ones or some things from my consideration. These connotations belie the positive potential of difference and of marginality. Already I have mentioned the currere of marginality which begins to reveal causes for celebration in difference (without ignoring historically oppressive consequences).

I would like to offer the suggestion that there is another way of thinking about difference that is neither purely within nor between and is not based on repression or exclusion in any life-denying senses of those terms, and that is conducive to action in the ethico-aesthetic realms. Invisible Man's invisibility-becoming glimpses at this, I think. The dual or perhaps paradoxical sense of marginality whereby it serves as both a force that excludes and includes--excludes one from power and yet includes one by promoting forms of knowledge that can be translated into forms of power--seems to parallel Ellison's usages of "leaping outside history." Leaping out in search of a kind of psychic relief from the pressures of invisibility and marginality can be viewed as an act of hopelessness, of abandoning social and political action and retreating into self--an ultimately conservative move much like those of the hysteric and the sorceress as described by Catherine Clement and Helene Cixous (1988). On the other hand it can be viewed as leaping outside
recorded or official history and self-consciously into the more compelling, unwritten history. In this sense it might be thought of as taking "the ultimate" political action of rejecting systems that forbid joy; a way of converting the hysterical laughter into the "god-laugh," ("the god-laugh always seems frivolous" [Robbins, 1987, p. 232]), and searching out and acting out the marginality within.

It seems to me that Ellison is attempting to find a way of taking this leap outside history while continuing to maintain a level of "realism" in which social/political action is more outwardly and materially manifested. That sense of difference, I think, can be theorized through love and learning and through notions such as Taubman's three registers of identity formation where individuals are viewed as connected, not harnessed. That sense of difference and identity through cross-cultural imagination and translations of tradition are explored through readings of (and translations across) literary works by Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, William Faulkner, Zora Neale Hurston, Mark Twain, and Jamaica Kincaid in chapter three.
CHAPTER THREE

Literature, Cultural Studies and the Multicultural Curriculum

The pages of this chapter are devoted to exploring the ways in which the novels' margins are situated—in relation to social centers, individual centers and centers of the novels themselves—and ways in which they translate between and among one another and/or between and among tradition(s) (e.g., canonical works). A central question in these endeavors is: How are margins and centers represented? In exploring the margins (and centers), essentializing movements and gestures are uncovered as well as the ways in which these movements and gestures negotiate with registers of identity formation.

Love and learning—the pedagogical imperative within each novel—are also organizing themes for my approach to reading. Indeed, as I have implied before, reading is not possible outside these themes. Where appropriate, the pedagogical relations between the texts are also highlighted. The search for voice (key to the search for identity) impels much of the "literature of the margins" to proceed through a pedagogical imperative. In Twain and Faulkner, for example, voice is not found for key characters to the same extent that it is in the novels by Hurston, Morrison, Ellison and Kincaid. The journey for
Huck and Jim is one of love and learning (learning to love), but Huck's search for voice is repeatedly frustrated, and Jim's is practically unpursued or unexamined. The same frustration is found in Absalom, Absalom! Major characters remain obsessed up to their deaths. In both novels the limits of voice seem somewhat pre-figured.

Learning to "read the world" is inseparable from learning to read one's "self." Richard Wright defines literacy as "at best, no more than vicarious cultural transfusions" (cited in Cooke, 1984, p. 83). Michael Cooke adds, "a voice means, in addition, independent strength and form and clarity" (p. 83). A combination of these two ideas might produce an equation to Wilson Harris's "literacy of the imagination" (also known as "cross-cultural imagination") (1989). Such a literacy insists on a cautionary note with regard to Cooke's use of the term independent. Perhaps Althusser's notion of relative autonomy translates well to this purpose. Althusser is referring to a model of social formation whereby the level of ideology is relatively autonomous from social structures in constructing the individual subject (Hall, Hobson, Lowe and Willis, 1980, p. 184). Guattari uses the term "relatively mutually autonomous" to refer to "vectors of subjectification" (1990, p. 1). "Interiority would
appear as a quality produced at the meeting-point of multiple components which are relatively mutually autonomous—in certain cases, openly discordant" (p. 1). In other words, certain of these "vectors of subjectification" pass through a "terminal" (the position of the individual) whereby they are taken up, or not, to produce interiority at a particular time. If voice is the articulation of the individual subject, then it seems that relative autonomy substitutes well for Cooke's independent. Voice issues forth from particular subjects not as independent expression, but as, at least in part, particular translations of traditions that are encountered.

In this same spirit it should be noted that many of the readings covered in this chapter are borrowed from other literary critics/theorists. My primary purpose in this chapter, as stated earlier, is to demonstrate the theoretical problematics laid out in chapter two. I found that done, on occasion, in certain others' readings of the novels selected. Some of the readings, of course, are "my own," or at least less derivative ones. Still other readings are more explicitly a braiding (a métissage) of my own ideas with ideas of other readers.

Morrison's and Ellison's novels are dealt with at greatest length as they are the two novels out of those
selected in which I was able to discover the most intertextuality or encounters with other texts and traditions. Readings of the other texts spin off of these two centrifugally, but without "letting go." I write of my readings within the tradition of literary criticism that assumes of its readers a certain familiarity with the texts under consideration.

**Intertextual Literary Readings**

Love as an explicit thought comes late in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* though its expression is implicit throughout. It seems that invisible man approaches and touches the power of his own displaced (interactive) marginality repeatedly but he always heads back for his (non-displaced) center. While at first read the "feminine"/feminist standpoint seems notably absent from the text, closer readings reveal female characters as more significant and mutually marginalized players. They seem to lead him into consciousness of his marginalization and victimization (invisibility). They are, according to Claudia Tate,

> like the underground station masters of the American slave era [assisting him] along his course to freedom. . . . They embody the knowledge he needs to state his escape (Tate, 1987, p. 164-5).
In Tate's essay "Notes on the Invisible Women in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*," she theorizes that the women in this novel are crucial to each major turning point in invisible man's growing self and social awareness. The nude "magnificent blonde" at the battle royal "provides . . . his first lesson in invisibility" (p. 167) as he recognizes their mutual objectification/exploitation and her "Kewpie Doll mask" response to it (p. 167). The second major breakthrough occurs, according to Tate, after Mary Rambo emotionally and physically nurtures him back to a state of greater self esteem such that he can "depart from the world of 'Keep This Nigger-Boy Running'" at least for a while (p. 168). His third and fourth lessons come from the women of the Brotherhood. He is able to overcome the anxiety of confronting the taboo around sexual encounters between black men and white women with Emma and the anonymous rich white woman as well as to identify somewhat with their common exploitation. Finally, with Sybil he comes not only to recognize invisibility but also to appreciate the potential power in it.

But before he can clearly see his relationship with the magnificent blonde, Emma, and the anonymous seductress and acknowledge their respective marginality, alienation, and ultimately their respective invisibility, he must dance his third and final dance, in which his partner is Sybil. . . . Sybil, like Mary, is another surrogate mother who comes to deliver the young protagonist from the deception of his false identity with the Brotherhood. She is also
another symbolic blonde, who ushers him to the threshold of the final battle royal. In addition, she is his last teacher, who propels him along the course to freedom by making him aware that invisibility is not necessarily a liability but possibly a valuable asset (pp. 169-70).

And it is this recognition of mutual marginalization that finally brings invisible man to an appreciation for the necessity of love to life and to action—love, but not to the exclusion of justifiable and motivating anger; love, but not self-obliterating or self-submerging love.

So why do I write, torturing myself to put it down? Because in spite of myself I've learned some things. Without the possibility of action, all knowledge comes to one labeled "file and forget," and I can neither file nor forget. Nor will certain ideas forget me; they keep filing away at my lethargy, my complacency. . . . I denounce because though implicated and partially responsible, I have been hurt to the point of abysmal pain, hurt to the point of invisibility. And I defend because in spite of all I find that I love. In order to get some of it down I have to love (Ellison, 1952, pp. 566-7).

When Ellison writes of love at this time I do not feel that he means it in terms only of agape' or "brotherly love." Indeed, it was his encounter with Sybil which was simultaneously sexually, emotionally and intellectually moving for him that seemed to trigger thoughts of love and the connections between love and social action. Further, he displaces the "masculine" hierarchy of thinking/feeling in the following passage:

There is, by the way, an area in which a man's feelings are more rational than his mind, and it
is precisely in that area that his will is pulled in several directions at the same time (p. 560).

Listening is love. Or at least that might be what Kristeva is saying when she calls transference love "optimum"--optimum because it "avoids the chaotic hyperconnectedness of fusion love as well as the death-dealing stabilization of love's absence" (1987, p. 15). Sybil listened. It was an agapic listening without judgement, an erosic listening with her body, and there was exchange of those between them. Invisible man seemed to be shocked into awareness that this mass of human beings outside consisted of individuals who love and listen and are loved and listened to.

Listening, like engagement with a text, effects a dissolution of the boundaries of self, as does love. Simultaneously frightening and exhilarating it allows the "outside" "inside", opening up channels of possibility, sharing languages, inspiring action. Love conceived in this way could become part of what Guattari calls a "mental ecology"--i.e. one that can "face up to the logic of the ambivalence of desire [eros?], . . . re-evaluate the ultimate goal of work and human activities in terms of criteria other than those of profit and productivity [relationality], acknowledge the need to mobilize individuals and social segments in ways that are always
diverse and different [difference]" (1990, p. 9). It is schizophrenic—"his will is pulled in several directions at the same time" (Ellison, 1952, p. 560)—leaping into difference and otherness. But this schizophrenia can become a "positive schizophrenic line of escape" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p. 363), or it can become "neuroticized" (p. 363) as narcissistic "fusion love" (pure eros) and from other manifestations of codes relinquished to institutions (Kristeva, 1987). I should add that in Kristeva’s terms, as for Lacan, narcissism is not used pejoratively, but as an inescapable condition of human love and life.

What stands between the subject and his desire for death is narcissism. The relationship between narcissism and aggressiveness makes for the fact that narcissism, the ecstatic affirmation of one’s being alive, is always enacted at someone’s expense. The affirmation of one’s life entails the exploitation of someone else’s life (Schneiderman, 1980, p. 6).

Just as for Serres, where the risk in communication or pursuit of knowledge is the risk of violence, the pursuit of love, teaching, the work that strives to eliminate violence, is interminable, impossible, and essential.

"Fusion love" is excessive in its narcissism—"its Highness the Ego projects and glorifies itself, or else shatters into pieces and is engulfed" (Schneiderman, 1980, p. 6). This is eros, untempered by agape’. Fusion is what, in Toni Morrison’s Beloved, Sethe’s love for Beloved (the
ghost) became for a time (more on this later), but I do not believe it started that way with Beloved (the child). Love can be murderous as a result of fusion, but love—especially perhaps mother-love—complicated by the ravages of the almost total social marginalization of slavery can be cataclysmic. Killing the child to save her (and the others) from slavery might have been, as Morrison said, "the right thing to do [but] she had no right to do it" (Otten, 1989, p. 83).

Paul D is suspicious and frightened of loving too big or too much. Sethe's love seems often all-consuming and without boundaries. Paul D first becomes aware of and is alarmed by Sethe's seemingly boundless mother-love when she attempts to apologize for Denver's (Sethe's daughter named after the poor white girl, Amy Denver, who helped Sethe) rudeness to Paul D, and then to disallow him to confront Denver directly about it. He feels that it is "very risky. For a used-to-be-slave woman to love anything that much" given the fate of so many relationships under slavery. One must "love . . . everything, just a little bit [so that] maybe you'd have a little love left over for the next one" (Morrison, 1987, p. 45). Later, upon discovering that Sethe had murdered her baby girl, Paul D is horrified and uncomprehending of the source, meaning, and implications of such love.
This here Sethe talked about love like any other woman, ... but what she meant could cleave the bone. This here Sethe talked about safety with a handsaw. This here new Sethe didn’t know where the world stopped and she began. ... More important than what Sethe had done was what she claimed. It scared him.

"Your love is too thick". . . "You got two feet, Sethe, not four," he said, and right then a forest sprang up between them; trackless and quiet (pp. 164-5).

The murderous spectacle put on for the white inquisitors (the masters from whom Sethe ran away) was indeed sufficient to save herself and other children from returning to slavery. (Spectacular expressions such as the woman who responded to her first bidder at the slave auction by chopping off her own hand with a hatchet were not so uncommon to slave women (Fox-Genovese, 1988, p. 329).) Finally, she is heard. But the incident was permanently inscribed in the memory of herself, her sons and the community as a horrifying reminder of the tenuousness of their integrity as a community, as loving individuals, as families. She buried the memory with the child, purchasing a headstone with yet another indignity—selling her body to another white exploiter.

With the unexpected arrival of Paul D the task for Sethe and he and Denver becomes that of dealing somehow with this repressed past that interferes with their abilities to feel for themselves and one another. Paul D had always "dealt" with his own past by moving around,
effectively denying it. But now he wanted to stop and settle with the person who had known him longer than anyone else.

The ghost (proper) of Beloved, who had earlier been maintaining Sethe and Denver without serious challenges, had now been run off by Paul D. Sethe, Denver, or both had to bring her back in a form that could not be denied by Paul D. Beloved’s (re)appearance at a crucial point in the development of the (love) relationship between Sethe and Paul D has the effect of stopping the painful process of love/analysis (pedagogy). Paul D and Sethe had been serving as one another’s "analysts" teachers, but a new analyst had to enter the picture for the cure to be effected.

The analysis proceeds pathologically. Paul D participates in exhuming this past by impregnating the ghost, the analyst, Sethe’s past. This act of his could be seen as a response to fear of love—fear, indeed, of the object of Sethe’s love, knowing what her love can lead to. On the other hand he provided her past, her ghost with possibilities (pregnant with possibilities), but in doing so it almost consumed Sethe. With Beloved as analyst, Sethe’s transference love quickly escalates out of control. As the boundaries between Sethe and the one she loves obsessively (Beloved) are further diminished by this
love of hers, her "self" declines mentally and physically to a dangerously marginal place. Boundaries dissolve to the point that Sethe's love must be a kind of self-love/self-hate, excessively narcissistic.

But what is Denver's stake in all this? She is fascinated with the ghost (Sethe made?). Why? Sethe, the one Denver loves, is afraid of her own love, understandably, and that fear/love takes the form of the ghost. Denver is fascinated with the "abject"--the object of her mother's fear and love. Kristeva writes that the abject is at the margins of life/death, "the edge of non-existence," and is signified by waste, corpses (ghosts?) (Kristeva, 1982, pp. 1-11).

Meanwhile Paul D is plowing through an emotional crisis of his own. It is when their respective crises of love reach a climax (the analysis is complete when the pregnancy "ends") that both Paul D and Sethe together find a place for love that could be characterized as displacement of the agape'/eros or of the (self-obliterating love)/(fear and distance) hierarchy. Much of this work is done via Stamp Paid and Denver through the legacy of love left behind by Baby Suggs who had arrived upon a "deconstruction" of those dualisms long ago. Suggs preached love of body, love of self and, in the "same breath," Christian love (Morrison, 1987, pp. 88-9).
While in Beloved's conclusion the possibility for love not based on opposition seems imminent, the fate of invisible man is less clear. He has become aware of his invisibility/marginality and what that can do for him. But his notion of love is still quite vague and undeveloped and he has yet to sustain an intimate relationship in the context of this new self awareness.

Recognition of marginality and allusions to its paradoxical nature and its "usefulness" are sprinkled throughout the experience of invisible man as represented by Ellison. Invisibility can be used synonymously with marginality at the social level in the sense that it means invisible to "others." At the individual level invisibility is synonymous with marginality in the sense of its being self awareness that is most difficult to come by--it is hidden from the self. Invisible man begins his journey blind to his own invisibility but by the end of this text he insists that he is "invisible, not blind" (Ellison, 1952, p. 563).

In the beginning he is unable to draw on the power that his marginality can provide. He is baffled and plagued by his Grandfather's dying words about what it means to "yes them to death," and he participates in his own exploitation and display in order to attend a school where he is "named . . . and set running with one and the
same stroke of the pen" (p. 555). This pattern continues far beyond the point at which he has caught the first glimpses of his invisibility on into his work for the Brotherhood where he thought he could lead an "historically meaningful life." It seems significant that the most explicit and clearly articulated verbal lessons he was given about invisibility were from a "fat man" (also black) who was committed to an insane asylum and was formerly a physician--one who seems to embody "order out of chaos" (or vice-versa). Speaking of invisible man:

Already he's learned to repress not only his emotions but his humanity. He's invisible, a walking personification of the Negative, the most perfect achievement of your dreams sir! The mechanical man! (p. 92).

And then later, on the train to New York:

You're hidden right out in the open--that is, you would be if you only realized it. They wouldn't see you because they don't expect you to know anything, since they believe they've taken care of that . . . (p. 152).

To merely hear it verbalized was not enough because it did not yet name his experience sufficiently. Invisible man had to experience more. If naming experience is the first step to forming a sense of autonomy, as Paulo Freire claims, then "claiming ownership of that freed self" (Morrison, 1987, p. 95) is one step beyond that. Upon finally realizing the true agenda of the Brotherhood, invisible man is flooded with the realizations that,
They had set themselves up to describe the world. . . . It was as though I'd learned suddenly to look around corners; images of past humiliations flickered through my head and I saw that they were more than separate experiences. They were me; they defined me. I was my experiences and my experiences were me, and no blind men, no matter how powerful they became, . . . could take that. . . . Here I had thought they accepted me because they felt that color made no difference, when in reality it made no difference because they didn't see either color or men . . . I now recognized my invisibility (Ellison, 1952, pp. 496-7).

This is the point at which Sybil becomes instrumental in invisible man's "loss of illusions." Allusions throughout the book to loss of eyes, a glass eye, blindness, and castration begin to coalesce into a network of symbolism. Houston Baker claims that black male sexuality is a key theme of the novel and that it is rarely dealt with by literary critics (p. 329). Trueblood as object of fascination for whites, merges with Norton's phrase "casting out the offending eye," the imagery of blindness and illusion, the threat of castration at the factory hospital, and finally invisible man's dream of having been castrated by Jack--his testicles at times described more like eyes. Confronting the repression of black male sexuality with regard to white women becomes a crucial interconnected symbolic expression of freedom, marginality, and love. White woman represents, the means by which black people in general were penalized for exercising the freedom of choice, in that the penalty was translated into the
accusation of rape and the sentence was death. The symbolic linkage between the white woman and freedom, therefore, finds its origin in hundreds of years of southern race relations (Tate, 1987, p. 166).

Returning to his grandfather’s dying advice, invisible man asks the question again, what did he mean by saying "yes"? As he explores the possibilities, more capable of imagination now, he stumbles upon an "currere of marginality":

Was it that we of all, we, most of all, had to affirm the principle [upon which the country was built], the plan in whose name we had been brutalized and sacrificed—not because we would always be weak nor because we were afraid or opportunistic, but because we were older than they, in the sense of what it took to live in the world with others and because they had exhausted in us, some—not much, but some—of the human greed and smallness, yes, and the fear and superstition that had kept them running. (Oh, yes, they’re running too, running all over themselves.) (Ellison, 1952, p. 561)

And he further captures the notion of the paradox of marginality both in a Freirian sense and in the more subtle sense of Spivak’s deconstructivist thought:

Weren’t we part of them as well as apart from them and subject to die when they died? . . . It’s "winner take nothing" that is the great truth of our country or of any country. Life is to be lived, not controlled; and humanity is won by continuing to play in face of certain defeat. Our fate is to become one, and yet many--This is not prophecy, but description (1988, pp. 562, 564).

Like Ellison, Morrison uncovers a paradoxical currere of marginality in Beloved. The carnival, which allowed for
a "Colored Thursday," was a chance unbeknownst to the white carnival-folk for black people to "see the spectacle of whitefolks making a spectacle of themselves" (1987, p. 48). Another example of black "Signifyin(g)" on whites is Paul D’s "chain-gang":

With a sledge hammer in his hands and Hi Man’s lead, the men got through. They sang it out and beat it up, garbling the words so they could not be understood; tricking the words so their syllables yielded up other meanings. . . . They killed a boss so often and so completely they had to bring him back to life to pulp him one more time (pp. 108, 109).

The power of marginality in the external world is dampened in Beloved compared to Invisible Man, due to the difference in the larger social situation of the time settings. Nor is it a given—it is problematic and paradoxical. The "meanness" of the black community toward Sethe resonates with invisible man’s recognition that only "some—not much, but some—of the human greed and smallness,. . . and the fear and superstition" had been exhausted in blacks relative to whites (Ellison, 1952, p. 561).

Boundaries between social categories that are represented as natural ones are exposed as fraudulent in Beloved as they are in Invisible Man ("a part as well as apart"). This displacement also arises in the blurring of self/other for black/white, but Morrison approaches it from a different perspective than that of Ellison—namely,
she sees black in white whereas Ellison sees white in black.

White people believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle. Swift unnavigable waters, swinging screaming baboons, sleeping snakes, red gums ready for their sweet white blood. In a way, he thought, they were right. The more colored people spent their strength trying to convince them how gentle they were, how clever and loving, how human, the more they used themselves up to persuade whites of something Negroes believed could not be questioned, the deeper and more tangled the jungle grew inside. But it wasn't the jungle blacks brought with them to this place from the other (livable) place. It was the jungle white folks planted in them. . . . It spread. . . . it spread, until it invaded the whites who had made it. . . . The screaming baboon lived under their own white skin; the red gums were their own (Morrison, 1987, pp. 198-9).

Ultimately, for Sethe it is the love she negotiates with Paul D that allows her the awareness that she is indeed her own "best thing." Like invisible man this negotiated, "deconstructed" love provides the turning-around place for a more autonomous, yet connected, life. The difference between the two novels with regard to love that is most pronounced is the different directions from which the deconstruction was approached. For Morrison, Sethe had come from an almost complete reversal of the agape'/eros hierarchy in her mother-love for first Denver, then Beloved (as ghost). For Ellison, invisible man seemed to begin with very little self definition for the concept of love. But in those situations, dominant oppositions
tend to win by default. These different starting places affected approaches to other oppositions as well. Blurred boundaries in *Beloved* became more distinct, clear distinctions became more fluid in *Invisible Man*—more fluid in spite of his wary tendency to keep things divided.

Love and the pedagogical imperative that lives in these novels are not bounded by the confines of expressions among characters only within their respective texts. That is, Sethe "speaks" beyond the pages of *Beloved* and invisible man beyond the pages of *Invisible Man*. For example, both have been read as, in part, re-readings and re-writings of Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Moreland, 1991, & Nadel, 1988). In *Beloved*, Sethe, a pregnant woman who had just suffered a severe beating by her master, runs away from slavery by crossing the Ohio River from Kentucky into Ohio. But before she makes it across, exhausted, hungry and about to deliver, she collapses where she might have died had not a young poor white runaway girl, Amy Denver, happened upon her, taken care of her and helped to deliver the child. As Richard Moreland notes, there are parallels with the relationship between Sethe and Amy and the one between Huck and Jim, a difference being it is Sethe’s journey (Jim’s counterpart), not Amy’s (Huck’s counterpart), that is of
primary concern in Morrison’s story. Furthermore, Sethe and others, find a voice in Morrison’s story. Neither Huck nor Jim are ever able to fully articulate their positions in Twain’s story.

Ellison’s Invisible Man, on the other hand, represents an effort to continue the search for a voice not only for Jim, who might seem the logical counterpart to invisible man as both are black, but also for Huck. Alan Nadel sees invisible man as vascillating between Jim and Huck.

The point is that at various stages throughout the book, the invisible man plays Huck and at others Jim, as often subconsciously as consciously.

The problem for Ellison at the time he was writing Invisible Man was that we didn’t have a literature which permitted those roles for blacks (1988, p. 143).

"For Ellison," according to Nadel, "Twain was the last great American author to see the full implications of the connection between the black and the fundamentals of democracy" (p. 127). In this spirit, in 1947 Ellison re-reads and re-writes Twain’s story of Huck and Jim amidst a sea of unfavorable criticism for Twain’s book, particularly its last section.

This sort of retelling can be thought of as an example of what Henry Louis Gates calls "Signifyin’"—a tradition in Black English vernacular. Zora Neale Hurston was possibly the first to theorize about black
"Signifying" through her studies as an anthropologist on African-American and African-Caribbean culture, particularly through folk story-telling. It is a major tropological strategy employed in her novel Their Eyes Were Watching God. Henry Louis Gates has made this trope a focus of much of his recent work. He calls it the trope of the "Signifyin(g) Monkey." The "g" in Signifyin(g) is a "Signifyin(g) upon" Derrida's "mispelling" of the French difference to differance, which Gates does, as does Derrida, in order to retain an instability for meaning of the term. Signifyin(g) is a repetition and a reversal (chiasmus) of a sentence, phrase, or idea, and has been a part of African-American vernacular tradition since antebellum America—even referred to in common conversation as "signifyin upon" (1987).

In order to more clearly explicate this concept I'll pull out some examples provided by Gates. Jazz music often proceeds through "signifying riffs." For example, when John Coltrane performs My Favorite Things he is Signifyin(g) upon Julie Andrews "vapid original." It is "repetition of a form and inversion of the same . . . Resemblance . . . evoked cleverly by dissemblance" (1987, p.243). And as an example in language Gates provides the following anecdote in an endnote from Figures In Black:

While writing this essay, I asked a colleague, Dwight Andrews, if he had heard of the
Signifying Monkey as a child. "Why, no" he replied intently. "I never heard of the Signifying Monkey until I came to Yale and read about him in a book." I had been signified upon. If I had responded to Andrews, "I know what you mean; your Mama read to me from that same book the last time I was in Detroit," I would have signified upon him in return (1987, p. 293).

Signifyin(g) "constitutes an implicit parody of a subject's own complicity in illusion" (p. 240). It has no equal in "standard English" usage. It is at a level of sophistication in common usage unique, in north America and the Caribbean, to "Black English." A key aspect of Signifyin(g) is its "indirect intent":

The apparent significance of the message differs from its real significance. The apparent meaning of the sentence signifies its actual meaning (Mitchell-Kernan, 1973, p.325).

Signifyin(g) can take the form of irony, parody, or pastiche, and thus as a language form is not the exclusive province of black people; but black people named the term, invented the unique rituals associated with it, and self-consciously use both the strategy and the term itself in everyday conversation (Gates, 1988, p. 90). Parody is the form taken by what Gates calls "motivated Signifyin(g)" and involves negative critique or polemic. Pastiche corresponds to "unmotivated Signifyin(g)" which is not to imply a lack of intention but more a lack of negative critique. As examples of each Gates calls upon Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* for "motivated Signifyin(g)" on Richard
Wright's *Native Son* and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* as "unmotivated Signifyin(g)" on Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Gates explains the difference as follows:

Whereas Reed seems to be about the clearing of a space of narration, Walker seems to be intent on underscoring the relation of her text to Hurston's, in a joyous proclamation of antecedent and descendant texts. . . . This form of the double-voiced implies unity and resemblance rather than critique and difference (1988, p. xxvii).

In *Invisible Man* Ellison not only re-tells Twain's story, he also, according to Alan Nadel, alludes to literary criticism of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that was written by Leslie Fiedler (Nadel, 1988) where he signifies on Fiedler in the sense parody--albeit a loving parody. Briefly, what Fiedler had suggested was that the relationship between Huck and Jim was a homoerotic one which, according to Fiedler is the only possible response to feelings of love between black and white men in America.

So buried at a level of acceptance which does not touch reason, so desperately repressed from overt recognition, so contrary to what is usually thought of as our ultimate level of taboo--the sense of that love can survive only in the obliquity of a symbol, persistent, obsessive, in short, an archetype (Fiedler, 1977, p. 416).

In *Invisible Man* young Emerson (another allusion) is the homosexual son of a man to whom invisible man was sent
to find a job. Invisible man enters this place of business with an unopened letter of "recommendation" in hand that turns out to be a slanderous letter of non-recommendation. Finally, it is young Emerson who reveals to invisible man what has happened. But he does so under the condition that invisible man not tell Emerson's father what he has done, leaving invisible man helpless to defend himself. In telling invisible man his own story, Emerson refers to himself as "Huckleberry" and invites him to a gay black and white nightclub.

The purpose behind Ellison's subtext response to Fiedler in Invisible Man, Nadel suggests, is to demonstrate the consequences of Fiedler's reading of Twain and implicitly of American society. If Fiedler is correct, then "Huckish" attempts to help black people out of untenable situations that result from racism are meaningless--only Huck's guilty conscience is real, and his act of freeing Jim amounts to nothing. As Nadel explains,

Huck does not feel guilt about Jim's enslavement nearly so much as he does about his desire to end that enslavement, and Huck's act of personal responsibility is defined by what he does in spite of his guilt, not because of it... Fiedler, on the other hand, does not see in Huck's story that his action defies his guilt so much as that his guilt substitutes for action (1988, p. 129).
I have called Ellison’s parody loving though "motivated" because it retains a sense of the plausibility of Fiedler’s conclusions for particular people, places and times. In fact, Ellison wrote directly to Fiedler’s criticism ten years later in which he explains how Twain’s depiction of Jim understandably produces misreadings by black critics.

Twain fitted Jim into the outlines of the minstrel tradition, and it is from behind this stereotype mask that we see Jim’s dignity and human capacity—and Twain’s complexity—emerge (cited in Nadel, 1988, p. 130).

And by depicting Huck "with his street-sparrow sophistication," (cited in Nadel, p. 130) Ellison adds, Huck seems more adult than Jim. Because of this affront, it is understandable that a black reader would be upset.

Of Fiedler’s reading Ellison says,

I believe him so profoundly disturbed by the manner in which the deep dichotomies symbolized by blackness and whiteness are resolved that, forgetting to look at the specific form of the novel, he leaped squarely into the middle of that tangle of symbolism which he is dedicated to unsnarling, and yelled out his most terrifying name for chaos (cited in Nadel, p. 131).

Through much of the text of Invisible Man Twain’s text is commented upon directly in what more closely resembles "unmotivated Signifyin(g)". Nadel refers to this re-reading and re-writing as allusion and "translating tradition" rather than "Signifyin(g)", but I want to
insist on the similarity between the two. Just as with parody and pastiche, allusion is not the sole province of black literary practice. However, the idea of Signifyin' which goes by that name is explicitly named and practiced within African-American vernacular tradition, whereas parody, pastiche, irony and allusion are literary modes or tropes common to perhaps all literary traditions. Allusion as Nadel discusses it in his theoretical text is not directed only at a black literary tradition but is intended for more general application.

Signifyin' has been useful for thinking about black literary theory in that it can signal very specific modes of parody or pastiche such as those that focus on black vernacular language usage and Black English usage in particular. Such culturally specific theoretical categories are important to reveal and to apply to culturally specific literature such as African, African-American, or African-Caribbean, Gates and others insist and I agree, in order to avoid what Anthony Appiah calls "the Naipaul fallacy" (cited in Gates, 1986, p. 405). This fallacy refers to attempts to establish the worthiness of, say, African literature by holding it up to European literature in order to show that they are the same. It can likewise involve attempts to "understand Africa by embedding it in European culture," for example (p. 405).
Nadel traces the Signifyin(g) or alluding parallels between Ellison’s and Twain’s texts intricately. A detailed reproduction of his reading does not serve my purposes at this point. Following, however, are highlights of his reading: Nadel compares the paint factory incident where invisible man is tricked into having a serious accident (at the factory where young Emerson sent him to work) with the destruction of the raft in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by the riverboat; members of the Brotherhood are referred to by Nadel as "latter-day Tom Sawyers" in their betrayals of invisible man; invisible man is, at times, compared to Jim as being one who is also invisible, and at times, to Huck in his journeying to find a place where he wouldn’t have to be ashamed.

The last third of Twain’s book has been the most controversial. It has been variously regarded as bad writing, a mistake, or misplaced. Ernest Hemingway wrote, "If you read it you must stop where the Nigger Jim is stolen from the boys. That is the real end. The rest is just cheating" (cited in Nadel, 1988, p. 22). Contrary to this opinion Ellison writes, "Huck Finn’s acceptance of the evil implicit in his ‘emancipation’ of Jim represents Twain’s acceptance of his personal responsibility in the condition of society. This was the tragic face behind his comic mask" (Ellison, 1953, p. 50).
Ellison re-writes this part of Twain’s text through invisible man’s encounters with the Brotherhood, a group of mostly male, mostly white orthodox Marxist activists. Invisible man was selected by the Brotherhood to be their "mouthpiece" for the people of Harlem. However, when invisible man delivers a particularly moving speech that speaks to the hearts of Harlem residents the Brotherhood becomes upset. They now insist on training invisible man in the correct "scientific" way to work for them—to give speeches. This as opposed to his appeal to the heart, the emotions of his audience . . . This reversal and subsequent effects of his training on his humanity create a discomfort similar to the one created when Tom decides to show Huck the "proper" way to free Jim (Nadel, 1988, p. 137).

This alludes to Tom Sawyer’s rules for his and Huck’s plan of escape for Jim. Rather than simply releasing Jim from the prison-hut where he is chained in the easiest, quickest most obvious manner, Tom insists,

It don’t make no difference how foolish it is, it’s the right way—and it’s the regular way. And there ain’t no other way, that ever I heard of; and I’ve read all the books that gives any information about these things (Twain, 1985, p. 304).

The Brotherhood represents those (literary) theorists who "define history and exclude from it those who don’t confirm their theories" (Nadel, 1988, p. 137). Jim’s treatment at the hands of Tom parallels the Brotherhood’s
treatment of invisible man in many ways. Tom/the Brotherhood sabotage Jim/invisible man in their quests for freedom/black empowerment. A reversal in this repetition is that invisible man is Huck as much as he is Jim. It is Huck who is being manipulated by Tom as well as Jim. Huck’s complicity in his own manipulation also resembles that of invisible man’s involvement with the Brotherhood. In doing this Ellison directs us toward the last part of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn—the part that is Twain’s "way of showing the seriousness of Huck’s and Jim’s dilemma, the full implications of recognizing Jim’s humanity" (p. 138).

Ellison reveals the frustration of hopes for freedom and democracy in this part of Twain’s novel through his allusions to it and Signifyin(g) upon it in Invisible Man. Richard Moreland suggests, "it is this frustration that I think Morrison brilliantly addresses in Beloved" (1991, p. 2). As such, insofar as Morrison’s text is Signifyin(g) upon Twain’s, it too seems to fit more closely Gates notion of an "unmotivated Signifyin(g)".

Moreland reads Morrison’s "put[ting] his [Twain’s] story next to hers" (p. 2), in part, through the ecosophy of Felix Guattari, whose notions of deterritorialization and reterritorialization I have related to my use of translation earlier (in chapter two) (1990). For Guattari
the beginning of this process is marked by "a-signifying ruptures" which Moreland sees as represented by the frustration repeatedly provoked in generations of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn readers—frustrations born of the persistent resistance of his novel to providing satisfactory resolutions. Language and style that were needed to express such resolutions were not available to Twain until Morrison's text entered it. Moreland cites Guattari,

At the heart of all ecological praxes is an a-signifying rupture in a context in which the catalysts of existential change are present, but lack expressive support from the enunciative assemblage which frames them (p. 8).

And further,

In the absence of ecological praxis, those catalysts remain inactive and tend towards inconsistency; they produce anxiety, guilt, other forms of psychopathological repetition (p. 8).

Moreland adds, "by putting Twain's novel next to Morrison's, anticipating Morrison's" (p. 8) one finds an example of Guattari's hope:

But when expressive rupture takes place, repetition becomes a process of creative assemblage, forging new incorporeal objects, new "abstract machines" (cited in Moreland, p. 8).

Such a new assemblage means, in this context, the extension of Twain's "realist" approach to include "incorporeal objects" in the form of "real" ghosts, such as the ghost of Beloved, which energizes a new pedagogical
situation—"a new condition of knowledge" (Felman, 1987, p. 31). For example, Huck's elaborate lies with which he hopes to protect Jim can now be read as "creative assemblages" in the context of Morrison's re-reading. "Lies" that Huck tells are in the service of a larger social truth, the discovery of which can now be seen as a "work in progress" (Moreland, 1991, p. 12) that requires "new codes of love" (Kristeva cited in Moreland, p. 12).

The elaboration of both negative and positive freedoms in a discourse of love is a "work in progress" more easily traced in Twain's novel thanks to the similarly new and particular codes of love elaborated still farther and more explicitly in Morrison's novel between another runaway slave in Sethe and another young poor-white runaway who helps her in Amy Denver (p. 12).

Moreland reads Twain through Morrison and Morrison through Twain demonstrating his thesis at some length—an exercise that, once again, I need not repeat. Instead, I will offer my own reading of a conversation among Twain, Morrison and Ellison following this "summarizing" passage from Moreland:

This work in progress, drawing out the frustrated duet in Huck's (and the canon's?) monologue, involves not only exploring more of the runaway slave's own parallel, separate consciousness . . . but also tracing Denver's task for herself and her communicating her mother's story for herself and her community (and for us?) in a different form with different, more bearable, more liveable consequences (1991, p. 25).
It has been said of the American South that we are obsessed with the past, but that it is a romanticized mythical past that we remember and as such is ahistorical. Still our history presents itself in daily life in hidden ways. It surfaces in the form of violence and guilt that some theorists say is peculiar to the South. We seem torn between what W.J. Cash called a "frontier" mentality of radical individualism and what are sometimes suffocating community ties (1969). If this is so, and we suffer from a repression of collective memory as a society, perhaps the South needs a kind of social psychoanalysis, as William Pinar has suggested (in press), and perhaps novelists, as I have taken some effort so far to suggest, are capable of being an important part of that analysis.

Twain seems to be addressing the well-worn conflict between radical individualism and community responsibility that takes a particular form in the South. He does this, according to Richard Gray, by "dissecting the Southern myths and exposing their faults and weaknesses" (1986, p. 115). However, Jim's story is not told and, at the end of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Gray suggests that Twain seems even to give up on his hero. As Gray states,

Huck is pushed to one side of the action, Tom Sawyer is permitted to play his familiar games, and the issue of Jim's slavery is reduced to the level of farce. For all Huck's occasional protests at Tom's behaviour, or his famous final
cry of defiance, the comedy loses its edge, the moral problems are minimised (p.115).

As discussed above, Ellison disagrees with this reading. Here is where, perhaps, Morrison picks up the story one hundred years after Twain, and fifty years after Ellison.

Just as Sethe, Paul D., and Denver begin to trust in the possibility of a new life together, the past comes back to haunt them in such a way that they cannot dismiss it. Similarly, an "innocent" reading of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and perhaps other Southern literature might lull us into complacency before fully confronting our repressed past. Morrison teaches us (as, Ellison points out, Twain alluded to but was unable to teach us directly) that past suffering is most scarring only so long as it is repressed. Confronted, that repressed past becomes a source of wisdom—wisdom that may otherwise be unattainable. (A "line of flight" from structures that oppress is hollow without a preliminary and ongoing inner search.)

Huck’s painful childhood experiences take him on a line of flight of often solitary excitement and adventure. But, one might ask, where is Jim’s "line of flight"? Huck is able to do this because he has discovered his "invisibility" in a social and historical moment when a young white boy on a raft is not particularly noticeable. This assurance of a kind of invisibility affords him a
freedom of movement not available to a black runaway slave. Ellison is able to discover the benefits of such invisibility only because his character lives in mid-twentieth century inner city New York. But, as Nadel explains, "Ellison's imagery highlights the dilemma of which both he and Twain were well aware—that there was no place for Jim to go" (1988, p. 132). As Morrison's story reveals, the most marginalized are able to attain a "line of flight" of sorts only through an internal search coupled with the assistance and cooperation of a community. Invisibility of the sort that Huck (and later, invisible man) is able to utilize is unavailable to Jim or Sethe or Paul D. On the other hand, Huck seems less able to look inward than are, ultimately, Morrison's characters.

Still, this inner search in which a repressed past is exhumed is not without danger. The past can take over the present as it did for a time in Beloved when Denver had to shift her protective efforts from Beloved to Sethe (as did the rest of the community). Southern ahistorical obsession with the past must be confronted with history in order to overcome obsessiveness. That history lives in the present, in part, through that obsessiveness. But when love (such as Sethe's love for Beloved) and historical consciousness become overwhelmed by guilt, growth is no longer possible.
In order to be a mobilizing force the past must be exorcised from dwelling under the skin, so to speak, but not from conscious memory. The ambiguously positive ending for Beloved seems to hold the possibility of that promise both for the novel’s characters as well as the reader.

Examples of pasts that dwell under the skin are manifested by irony, cynicism and guilt and can be found scattered throughout Faulkner’s Absalom, Absalom! This manner of approach to history points to particular approaches to theory as well. Returning to the visual metaphors in Ellison one can detect a (I want to say focus, but that is yet another visual metaphor) gathering, a cacaphony, attention directed, around the notion of the gaze that intends to control by way of surveillance—a gaze that does not really "see" anyone, but least of all itself. "Outside the Brotherhood we were outside history; but inside of it they didn’t see us" (Ellison, 1952, p. 488). Attention is directed, via Ellison’s brightly lit and illegally electrified city basement filled with jazz and blues sounds, toward the ways in which "official" written history (including literary theories) means to control as well as toward that which it cannot control—the criminal, the schizophrenic, the marginal, the noisy, the invisible, the perverse, the phantasm. Ellison’s writing highlights the possibilities for a different
approach to social, historical, and literary theories—a point made by Eamon Halpin in his essay "The Ocular and the Otic: Theoretical Paradigms in Faulkner and Ellison" (1990). The generation of alternative theoretical possibilities is yet one more way in which literature translates tradition. In this case the translation is noted by Halpin to occur between Ellison and Faulkner.

A "social theory" which "sees" itself (that is, is aware of its own complicity in the knowledge it produces) is very different from theory that underpins the Brotherhood or theory that emerges, as Halpin notes, from a particular reading of Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*

Literary (and other) theories which are "visual"—that is, they represent an all seeing eye/"I"—are compared to literary theory embodied in Ellison's writing. The sense in which Ellison's writing exhibits a different—in some senses opposite—literary theoretical paradigm from that displayed in *Absalom, Absalom!*, is another way in which his novel "converses" with Faulkner, (now) a traditional canonical author.

Faulkner's Rosa Coldfield is obsessed. She wants to know—wants to control—the way the story of Sutpen's Hundred and of Thomas Sutpen himself gets told and is received. Rosa repeats, to a reluctant young local man, Quentin Compson, her story of the past in the small
Mississippi town where she lives and where, years earlier, a stranger who moved there disrupted her life. Rosa is not the only one who is repeating the story, but it is her version which dominates the novel in its excessively personal, hyperbolic and paranoid tone. For Halpin, the only outsider who hears and repeats the story, Shreve (a Canadian college student who is Quentin’s friend),

in his imagined detachment from the events which both he and Quentin attempt to understand, ... exemplifies the literary critic’s tendency towards irony and readerly autonomy (1990, p. 5).

Further,

in Shreve the crisis in criticism is effaced or at least only dimly represented. In the figure of Rosa Coldfield, by contrast, Faulkner provides us with a fuller understanding of the psychology of the literary critic. Whereas Shreve embodies the critic’s representation of himself to himself, Rosa allows us to see the conditions out of which such a representation arises (p. 5).

She resembles the literary critic in the sense that her living of her story, "her condition is one of belatedness" (p. 6). Her "methodology is a hermeneutics of suspicion . . . For Rosa meaning is always concealed, lurking in secrecy and guilt beneath an illusory surface" (p. 7). "Her role in the novel’s events is one of surveillance" (p. 8). Like Ellison’s Brotherhood, Rosa believes herself able to see things in others that others can not see for themselves.
Her penetrating vision allows her, or at least seems to allow her, to occupy a position of greater power than either Ellen [Rosa's sister who married Sutpen] or her children, whom she tends to see as hapless victims. Their visibility is the opposite of Rosa's own condition, which is a kind of invisibility. Rosa sees but for the most part cannot be seen herself (p. 8).

In her monumental efforts to know, she exemplifies Lyotard's description of the "opposition between scientific and narrative knowledge" (Halpin, 1990, p. 10):

The scientist questions the validity of narrative statements and concludes that they are never subject to argumentation or proof. He classifies them as belonging to a different mentality: savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology. Narratives are fables, myths, legends, fit only for women and children (italics added) (cited in Halpin, p. 10).

As such, Rosa's approach to interpretation operates within a complicated opposition of "scientific objectivity"/superstition or narrative knowledge. She--"almost despite herself--provides us with an insight into the profoundly interested nature of interpretive and critical discourse. In her the scientific observer is exposed as a kind of paranoid voyeur or spy" (Halpin, 1990, p. 10). For Halpin, Rosa represents the paradigm of modernist literary criticism.

Ellison's invisible man, on the other hand, in feeling victimized by this paradigm of interpretive strategy, begins to look for alternatives--alternative
subjectivities. While at times he responds to his victimization in kind, that is, by using his own invisibility as a means of "power or control over those who can be seen" (p. 16), at other moments his invisibility seems creative of a movement away from static, asymmetric and violent power relations. Here, invisibility seems to offer him a path to a different kind of subjectivity, a subjectivity which is not linked to the omniscient eye, but to the unpredictable and unbounded reverberation, to echoes and acoustics, to sound and music (p. 16).

This "music of invisibility" signals an alternative "experimental subjectivity" in which the subject is able to move into or out of "at any point" (p. 17). "The subject is never quite in time, never part of a regular and predictable beat within which it could feel in full control of itself and its destiny" (p. 17). Such an experimental subjectivity is inherently aware of its own complicity in positioning by virtue of the fact that it is "experimental." It is "invisible, not blind" (Ellison, 1952, p. 563). Invisible man seems to find considerable power at last through his awareness of his invisibility—invisibility which he says is not the same thing as blindness such as Jack's (of the Brotherhood). This awareness is brought into "sharp focus" when invisible man is forced to leap outside history in a very literal sense as he burns the papers signifying his own history in
search of light and escape from a manhole. This idea is extended in the epilogue when he says, "so after years of trying to adopt the opinions of others I finally rebelled. I am an invisible man" (p. 560).

Still, to fall (or jump) into a hole never to emerge is to respond to blindness with blindness—merely a response in kind. "The politics of infinitely advancing while looking over the shoulder is a very dangerous exercise. You tend to fall into a hole" (Stuart Hall, 1987, p. 45).

Fit Only for Women and Children

While Rosa's narrative strategy may indeed offer insight into the paranoia of much modernist criticism, her own story comes through in another manner—a manner that points to the significance of absences, in terms of race and gender, in this novel. For me the most intriguing absences are the voices of Judith (Rosa's niece, Sutpen's daughter) and Clytie (Sutpen's mulatto daughter and slave), while the most intriguing presence is the voice of Rosa. They are powerful characters who are crucial to the novel. Rosa has the only female voice, and that voice is represented as near hysteria. The relationship between Rosa and Clytie strikes me as the most complex and perhaps the most suggestive.
It seems to me that the complexities, ambiguities, and psychology of racism, Southern racism in particular, are most significantly explored through these female characters. And through exploration of racism, the perhaps more universal themes of love, hate, and sexuality are confronted in their particularistic, Southern regional forms. Rosa is clearly obsessed with the Sutpen family in general, Sutpen in particular, and appears to live vicariously through them even after their deaths. This apparent preoccupation with Thomas Sutpen gets projected onto Clytie after the death of Charles Bon (Judith's mulatto half-brother, unbeknownst to her, and her lover)—a death of one who represents for Rosa her own potential for love and passion as expressed through her "summer of wistaria" at age fourteen. (Rosa’s erotic fantasizing in her "summer of wistaria" is reminiscent of Hurston’s Janie and her "pear tree in bloom.") Indeed it is Clytie’s physical touch, "touch of flesh with flesh which abrogates, cuts sharp and straight across the devious intricate channels of decorous ordering, which enemies as well as lovers know because it makes them both" (Faulkner, 1936, p. 139), that shocks Rosa into an awareness of the problematics of race, sex, love, and hate. Awareness, however, does not constitute understanding. Minrose Gwin in her book *Black and White Women of the Old South*
expresses Rosa's awareness-without-understanding as follows:

Rosa's driving need is not so much to discover the nature of the "something... living hidden in that house," but to know herself—to understand why her life has turned out as it has. She finds in Clytie an objective correlative for the intense ambivalence, the love and the hate, she feels for herself as white southern woman trapped by gender, history, culture, and her own racism. Rosa may intuit Clytie as a female shadow-self, the product of pure sexual passion which young Rosa envisions, but never experiences (1985, p. 117).

According to Catherine Clement (in her reading of Freud), a collective repressed past survives in the hysterical woman more than in anyone else (1988, pp. 3-39). Rosa's hysteria certainly seems to bear that out in this novel where it takes the form of a paranoia that is exemplary of the entire South in many ways. In paranoia, according to Paul Smith, "the 'subject' thus endows the external world with what it takes to be its own worst tendencies and qualities... [Projection] is undertaken in order to maintain the fiction, exactly, of a wholeness and wholesomeness in the subjects' internal economy" (1988, pp. 95-96). "Rosa reflects the darkness of the white self which rejects human connection with the black Other" (Gwin, 1985, p. 111). As one defines oneself, in part, by who one defines as other this division and destruction of the racial other is division and destruction of the self. It is a self divided against
itself. Indeed, it is the relationship between Clytie and Rosa which finally destroys them both. Rosa's noted tendency toward an interpretation through the gaze, or a hermeneutics of suspicion could be thought of as a kind of hysterical male identification. How else could Faulkner write her except as "male"?

These "silences" are indeed noisy. Faulkner's seeming neglect or exclusion of certain stories and voices are telling. They do not necessarily reflect an unconscious exclusion on Faulkner's part, or a malevolent exclusion. He leads us to speculate on a vast and complex interiority to women and black people, even though such is not provided overtly in the narrative. It seems possible that his narrative strategy reflects a kind of representational honesty on his part—a reluctance to speak for women and black people in the same ways he speaks for white males. In Zora Neale Hurston's novel Their Eyes Were Watching God, published just one year after Absalom, Absalom!, we see a "corrective" to missing black speech, black female speech in particular.

The historical moment among the black literatti in which Hurston wrote Their Eyes Were Watching God was one of contestation over what constitutes an appropriate tone in black writing. Hurston was in the clear minority as one who wrote in "dialect" and as one whose work was not
preoccupied by black struggles with racism. One of her most vociferous critics was Richard Wright who felt her lack of bitterness toward whites and the "minstrel image" her work perpetuated were counter-revolutionary (Hemenway, 1977, p. 241).

Hurston wanted her work to be far-removed from what she called "the sobbing school of Negrohood," (p. 220) and claimed that such writing was even a distortion: "We talk about the race problem a great deal, but go on living and laughing and striving like everybody else" (p. 221). Hemenway expands on this thought in his biography of Hurston.

By leaving out "the problem," by emphasizing the art in the folkloric phenomenon, Hurston implicitly told whites: Contrary to your arrogant assumptions, you have not really affected us that much; we continue to practice our own culture, which as a matter of fact is more alive, more esthetically pleasing than your own; and it is not solely a product of defensive reactions to your actions. She felt that black culture manifested an independent esthetic system that could be discussed without constant reference to white oppression. The price for this philosophy was an appearance of political naiveté and the absence of an immediate historical presence (p. 221).

Still, as Michael Cooke points out, there is a potential regressiveness to particular forms and/or timing for Signifyin(g), a major trope for Their Eyes Were Watching God. (I will return to this later as I introduce Jamaica Kincaid's writing.)
Hurston’s novel begins with "definitions" of men’s desire (which, according to Gates [1988], is a revision, or Signifyin(g), of Frederick Douglas’s 1845 text) and women’s desire opposed to one another, and which Hurston reverses later within the text. She characterizes men as "watchers" of distant ships, and women as "dreamers" creating their own "truth" (lives), and then reverses this as the protagonist’s (Janie’s) grandmother (Nanny) talks about the distant ship carrying her dreams, whereas Tea Cake (Janie’s third husband) sees the distant ship, and all else that has to do with his fate, as under his control. This reversal is ever-reversing throughout the text--those "definitions" never stable.

Broadly speaking, the text is the story of a black woman in search of self-awareness, which is "thematize[d] through an opposition between the inside and the outside of things" (Gates, 1988, p.184)--or, a kind of divided self. The advantages to keeping things (self) divided, as referred to by Ellison’s invisible man, are strikingly demonstrated in Their Eyes Were Watching God and brilliantly interpreted by Barbara Johnson (1987).

Johnson recalls Jakobson’s discovery of patterns of aphasia (speech dysfunction) as falling into two main categories: similarity disorders and contiguity disorders. With such disorders the ability to follow one topic from
another on the basis of its similarity or contiguity is restricted or totally blocked. Personality, cultural style, and verbal style in "normal" (that is, non-aphasic) verbal behavior—behavior where both processes are continually operative—will exhibit preference for one process over the other, but some facility with both is necessary. One with a similarity disorder is unable to follow one topic from another metaphorically; with a contiguity disorder, one is unable to follow one topic with another metonymically.

Johnson points out, as has Paul de Man, that metaphor is the privileged trope of the two in Western culture, and together metaphor and metonymy constitute an interdependent opposition. Metaphor as a kind of analogy presents a necessity—an inference of identity and totality. Metonymy, because it has to do with contiguity, is perceived as coming about through chance—it is purely relational. One problem with this—a problem that is highlighted by Hurston's use of these tropes—is that it is often difficult to tell the two tropes apart, for example, as in "birds of a feather flock together." This proverb sums up the tendency of contiguity to become overlaid by similarity, and vice versa... One has only to think of the applicability of this proverb to the composition of neighborhoods in America to realize that the question of the separability of
similarity from contiguity may have considerable political implications (Johnson, B., 1987, p. 157).

Johnson demonstrates how Hurston is "acutely conscious of, and superbly skilled in, the seductiveness and complexity of metaphor as privileged trope and trope of privilege" (p. 159) through her analysis of the following passage from Their Eyes Were Watching God that I will reproduce in part after setting the context. The passage follows an argument between Janie and her second husband, Joe Starks, over her handling of a business matter in their store. Joe has told Janie that "Somebody got to think for women and chillun and chickens and cows" (cited in Johnson, p. 159) as they cannot think for themselves.

Times and scenes like that put Janie to thinking about the inside state of her marriage. Time came when she fought back with her tongue as best she could, but it didn't do her any good. It just made Joe do more. He wanted her submission and he'd keep on fighting until he felt he had it. So gradually, she pressed her teeth together and learned how to hush. The spirit of the marriage left the bedroom and took to living in the parlor. It was there to shake hands whenever company came to visit, but it never went back inside the bedroom again (Hurston, 1978, p. 55).

Janie's thoughts at this time take her back to an incident which revealed to her that "She wasn't petal-open anymore with him" (p. 56). Joe had slapped and berated her after she had ruined a meal.
Janie stood where he left her for unmeasured time and thought. She stood there until something fell off the shelf inside her. Then she went inside there to see what it was. It was her image of Jody tumbled down and shattered. But looking at it she saw that it never was the flesh and blood figure of her dreams. Just something she had grabbed up to drape her dreams over. In a way she turned her back upon the image where it lay and looked further. She had no more blossomy openings dusting pollen over her man, neither any glistening young fruit where the petals used to be. . . . She had an inside and an outside now and suddenly she knew how not to mix them (cited in Johnson, B., 1987, pp 161-2).

Janie's self-division into her inside/outside opposition is expressed through her use and reversals of the metaphor/metonymy opposition. Her marriage situation is related to metaphorically, analogically, as the house and the store. Her marriage space is related to metonymically, "a movement through a series of contiguous rooms" (p. 163). In the first paragraph of the passage where "the spirit of the marriage left the bedroom, [there is an] externalization of the inner, metaphorically grounded in metonymy" (p. 163). "Something fell off the shelf inside her" (p. 163) in the second paragraph reveals an "internalization of the outer, metonymically grounded metaphor" (p. 163).

The reversals operated by the chiasmus [above] map out a reversal of the power relations between Janie and Joe. Henceforth, Janie will grow in power and resistance, while Joe deteriorates both in his body and in his public image (p. 163).
At the point Janie realizes "how not to mix them" is the point at which she acquires the power of voice. This power "grows not out of her identity but out of her division into inside and outside" (p. 163). The ability to articulate, to have "the power of voice" requires this division in figurative language—the simultaneous presence of distinct poles, inside and outside, similarity and contiguity, metaphor and metonymy, and "not their collapse into oneness" (p. 163). But distinct does not mean that they can be spoken outside one another. It should be reiterated that a peculiar characteristic of hierarchical oppositions is their interdependence upon one another. This division, therefore, requires deconstruction for its "resolution," not dialectical synthesis.

It must be remembered that what is at stake in the maintenance of both sides [as divided]—metaphor and metonymy, inside and outside—is the very possibility of speaking at all. The reduction of a discourse to oneness, identity—in Janie's case, the reduction of woman to mayor's wife—has as its necessary consequence aphasia, silence, the loss of ability to speak: "She pressed her teeth together and learned to hush" (p. 164).

There is a difference, then, between self-division that is divided against the self—a "difference within" that creates frustration, hatred, xenophobia, "sick" schizophrenia, neurosis, division that is a sort of surgical cutting off between self and other as in Lacan's mirror stage—and self-division that is for the "self"—
division that enables voice, prevents (critical) aphasia, avoids essentialistic collapsing of differences. The differences at stake here point to a dynamism among the three registers of identity formation as mentioned earlier.

It is only through a faith in and seeking of love that Janie is moved to action, to speech, moved to learn. And it is finally through the realization of the love she sought (with her third husband, Tea Cake) that Janie gains the self-knowledge required to understand a history that lives in the present.

Dis is uh love game. Ah done lived Grandma’s way, now Ah means tuh live mine... She was borned in slavery time when folks, dat is black folks, didn’t sit down anytime dey felt lak it. So sittin’ on porches lak de white madam looked lak uh mighty fine thing tuh her. Dat’s whut she wanted for me—don’t keer whut it cost. Git up on uh high chair and sit there. She didn’t have time tuh think whut tuh do after you got up on de stool uh do nothin’. De object wuz tuh git dere. So Ah got up on de high stool lak she told me, but Pheoby, Ah done nearly languished tuh death up dere. Ah felt like de world wuz cryin’ extra and Ah ain’t read de common news yet (Hurston, 1978, pp. 171-2).

The story ends with her in relative solitude (what Michael Cooke calls "accomplished solitude" [1984, p. 84])—reflective of the way Hurston’s own life-story ended. But it is a different solitude than that of invisible man who has yet to sustain an intimate relationship with anyone. Still, Janie’s intimacy has been
limited, for the most part, to one other. Her friendship with Pheoby signals hope for her connection to the community—a connection that she desired earlier but that was largely stifled by Joe Starks. Tea Cake stifled this connection in his own way as well. It was he who convinced Janie he could be trusted to return from long absences from her, yet it was also he who could not stand, eventually, to allow her out of his sight.

This love for her reached its pinnacle with his madness. Bitten by a rabid dog, he was "mad with love," jealous to the point of murder at which time Janie shot him in self defense. Once again Janie took control of her life by refusing to be canceled—this time by what may have been becoming fusion love, although that possibility is steeped in a rich ambiguity. The drama of this final scene is descriptive of the risk of love, ambivalence of desire, the potential violence though necessity of knowledge, of the pedagogical relationship. She chooses to sustain the love she’s known with Tea Cake through place and memory.

So Ah’m back home agin and Ah’m satisfied tuh be heah. Ah done been tuh do horizon and back and now Ah kin set heah in mah haouse and live by comparisons. Dis house ain’t so absent of things lak it used tuh be befo’ Tea Cake come along. It’s full uh thoughts, ‘specially dat bedroom (Hurston, 1978, p. 284).
Of Janie's ending in "accomplished solitude," her rejection of the social sphere, Cooke writes, "Her home is a symbol of her condition, free and proud and yet radically unshared" (1984, p. 84). Her solution is to deny, to some extent, the significance of the communal register.

She pulled in her horizon like a great fish-net. Pulled it from around the waist of the world and draped it over her shoulder. So much of life in its meshes! She called in her soul to come and see (Hurston, 1978, p. 286).

This rejection of the communal in favor of the individual is, as a personal solution, perhaps ironic for an author whose life-work was to preserve the community of African-American folk culture. Rather than view it, as Cooke does, as a rejection of all but solitude, a rejection of intimacy--an ironic and thus cynical turn--her refusal to sever herself from her past and the pedagogical situation she sets up between herself and Pheoby ("'Lawd!' Pheoby breathed out heavily, 'Ah done growed ten feet higher from jus' listenin' tuh you, Janie. Ah ain't satisfied wid mahself no mo'" [p. 284]) could be thought to signal a beginning in her conclusion. The celebratory note with which Hurston ends the novel (Janie embraces all of the life within the mesh that is her horizon) is not a note of disconnection or isolation. It differs radically from Ellison's ending with invisible man.
still in the hole—albeit contemplating leaving that hole for love and social action. She did, after all, return to her community. It is hard to imagine that she came back there only to isolate herself from the others. The power of the fictional register (of language) is recognized by her earlier in the novel as she "kills" Joe Starks with her words—an act of "motivated Signifyin(g)"—thereby avoiding her own cancelation and, further, creating her "self." Yet the strength of her words depended on the public, communal witnessing (and understanding) of their utterance. Her act of telling the tale, to herself, to Pheoby, signifies her recognition of the autobiographical register in forming identity.

Like Hurston, and in another sense, Faulkner, Jamaica Kincaid's project consists of an exploration of self through discovering history that lives in the present. Much of the writing in her latest two texts proceeds through a discourse of anger. But to read her only as this is to miss the greater significance in her stories. One literary mode of expression for Kincaid, particularly in Lucy, is a metissage—"initiating a genuine dialogue with the dominant discourses they hope to transform, thus ultimately favoring exchange rather than provoking conflict" (Lionnet, 1989, p. 3). This mode of writing inherently presents a challenge to essentializing
tendencies in the written history of Western (or any
dominant) culture. As such, as a literary mode and
theoretical category, it holds some cultural specificity
similar to the ways in which "Signifyin(g)" does. Its
specificity, however, is not derivative of any one
particular culture so much as it belongs to a notion of
"post-colonial culture."

The difference between this mode of writing and that
of Signifyin' is in its directness. Both constitute a kind
of translation and, in the case of "unmotivated
Signifyin(g)" at least, a kind of dialogue. However,
metissage conceived of as a "cultural braiding" does not
necessarily proceed through chiasmus—repetition and
reversal. It is this very indirectness in Signifyin(g)
that sometimes renders it regressive rather than
subversive or socially active and creative. As Cooke
observes,

Signifying always involves questions of power on
two levels, the social and the mental, and the
signifier is the one who as best he can makes up
for a lack of social power with an exercise of
intellectual or critical power (1984, p. 26).

This strategy amounts to little or, at worst, it can
backfire when one is

busy signifying, but no one [can] tell.
Signifying and wishful thinking tend to coincide
here. Signifying becomes an idle secret and, as
Gates has justly remarked, dangerously close to
tomming (p. 29).
When, for example, a black artist "signifies on" white racial stereotype in certain ways and at certain times, "both black and white come out the worse" (p. 29), the white for maintaining ignorant beliefs, "the black for playing not so much on as down to that belief" (p. 29). Kincaid entertains no such play.

Jamaica Kincaid warns of the dangers of reading like a tourist--of pre(sub)suming a particular text, of mis-translating, of failing to remember one's own deep unknowing of the "known," the "native" in the text. We begin with her book A Small Place (1988) as a tourist (or would-be tourist) of Antigua who Kincaid hopes to teach. Later, in her book Lucy (1990), she comes to the United States as an au pair and finds us still mis-translating (even ourselves), or else not bothering to translate at all, placing the entire burden on the immigrant, choosing ignorance.

A Small Place is not called a novel. It is an essay about life among tourists, natives and neo-colonizers in "post-colonial" Antigua. However, I am struck by its similarities to her autobiographical fiction, Lucy. Both are angry works. Kincaid, in an interview with Donna Perry, says she is through being "charming"--"when people say you're charming you are in deep trouble" (cited in Perry, 1990, p. 498).
Kincaid plays with a kind of complete reversal of the colonizer/colonized or tourist/native hierarchies through her words of utter disdain for white tourists from England and North America. Tourists become for her the embodiment of all that is ugly, dirty, stupid and, in some senses, evil---characteristics colonizers typically ascribe to colonized.

And you look at . . . the way they [Antiguans] squat down over a hole they have made in the ground, the hole itself is something to marvel at, and since you are being an ugly person this ugly but joyful thought will swell inside you: their ancestors were not clever in the way yours were and not ruthless in the way yours were, for then would it not be you who would be in harmony with nature and backwards in that charming way? An ugly thing, that is what you are when you become a tourist, an ugly, empty thing, a stupid thing, a piece of rubbish pausing here and there to gaze at this and taste that, and it will never occur to you that the people who inhabit the place in which you have just paused cannot stand you (Kincaid, 1988, pp. 16-17).

This reversal is sustained almost throughout the entire text but with interludes for describing and explaining Antiguan internalization of oppressor modus operandi and values in post-colonial Antigua. Then, the last two sentences:

Of course, the whole thing is, once you cease to be a master, once you throw off your master’s yoke, you are no longer human rubbish, you are just a human being, and all the things that adds up to. So, too, with the slaves. Once they are no longer slaves, once they are free, they are no longer noble and exalted; they are just human beings (p. 81).
Kincaid's rage is most likely shocking to her (intended) readers (intended for the *New Yorker* magazine initially, but the first time any of her writing was ever rejected by them [Perry, 1990, p. 497]). But the colonial history of Antigua lives in the present—undeniably for those subject to its excess. Antiguans, long since "emancipated," are still servants to foreigners and Antiguans corrupted by foreigners. Where else, Kincaid asks, could we have learned about capital, Gross National Product, and so on?

I realized in writing that book that the first step to claiming yourself is anger. You get mad. And you can't do anything before you get angry. And I recommend getting very angry to everyone, anyone (p. 498).

For the sake of her arguments, she deploys essentialisms of both tourist and native; British, North American and Antiguan. In her last two novels (the ones examined here) she exhibits, at times, a bitterness toward all of the above that is quite different from novelistic approaches of African-Caribbean Wilson Harris. His novels, for example, could be said to be *themselves* a view or views to the transformations he imagines rather than didactics for the way to get there or admonitions against obstacles to getting there. Some of Kincaid's earlier works (*At the Bottom of the River* [1978] and *Annie John* [1983]) could be said to more closely resemble what has
been called Harris's "postmodern" or "poststructural" style (Covi, 1990, pp. 345-354). I have chosen, however, to deal only with the two most recent texts as Kincaid claims to have abandoned her older style for good, and as these two texts are such clear demonstrations of the ways repressed histories live—particularly through language:

> For isn't it odd that the only language I have in which to speak of this crime is the language of the criminal who committed the crime? And what can that really mean? For the language of the criminal can contain only the goodness of the criminal's deed. The language of the criminal can explain and express the deed only from the criminal's point of view. It cannot contain the horror of the deed, the injustice of the deed, the agony, the humiliation inflicted on me (Kincaid, 1988, pp. 31-2).

In this way her writing is a clear example of cross-cultural encounter as it reveals the operation of translation with a master.

The bitterness and anger remain in Lucy. However, she finds as invisible man discovered, "too much of your life will be lost, its meaning lost, unless you approach it as much through love as through hate" (Ellison, 1952, p. 580). Lucy indeed loves Mariah, wife and mother in her au pair family, at the same time she is an astute observer of her foibles and contradictions and the connections of these to larger American society—to patriarchy, to commodification, to alienation and angst. It is toward these connections that Mariah seems oblivious except from
a very limited "liberal feminist" and "liberal environmentalist" perspective.

Mariah says, "I have Indian blood in me," and underneath everything I could swear she says it as if she were announcing her possession of a trophy. How do you get to be the sort of victor who can claim to be the vanquished also?

I now heard Mariah say, "Well," and she let out a long breath, full of sadness, resignation, even dread. I looked at her; her face was miserable, tormented, ill-looking. She looked at me in a pleading way, as if asking for relief, and I looked back, my face and my eyes hard; no matter what, I would not give it. . . .

I said, "How do you get to be that way?"
The anguish on her face almost broke my heart, but I would not bend. It was hollow, my triumph, I could feel that, but I held on to it just the same (Kincaid, 1990, pp. 40-1).

Mariah is unaware of the psychosocial and political dynamics of otherness. Yet Lucy loves Mariah’s warmth and innocence at the same time she resents her seemingly willful ignorance. Lucy sees her own mother in Mariah—her mother being the major reason she left Antigua. Seeing her mother in Mariah seemed to help Lucy to deal with her own contradictory feelings toward her. Through this love Lucy and Mariah enter a pedagogical relationship in which both teach and learn.

The pedagogical imperative with which we are faced in Kincaid’s work is that of cross-cultural imagination—literacy of the imagination—which includes a re-reading of our own place in colonial history. It is not read as history per se, but more as history that lives in the
present—much like Pinar's characterization of the repressed but living racial history (in press). One illustrative episode in *Lucy* is when Mariah took Lucy to a favorite clearing in the woods in order to surprise Lucy with the extravagant beauty of an entire field of blooming daffodils:

"Mariah, do you realize that at ten years of age I had to learn by heart a long poem about some flowers I would not see in real life until I was nineteen?" . . . This woman who hardly knew me loved me, and she wanted me to love this thing—a grove brimming over with daffodils in bloom—that she loved also. Her eyes sank back in her head as if they were protecting themselves, as if they were taking a rest after some unexpected hard work. It wasn't her fault. It wasn't my fault. . . The same thing could cause us to shed tears, but those tears would not taste the same (Kincaid, 1990, p. 30).

Both Kincaid and Wilson Harris write of West Indian children having to memorize Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (the daffodil poem). Both express a kind of ambivalence to the educational practice that is characteristic of Harris's notion of cross-cultural imagination—an ambivalence that is "unsettlement." As Harris explains:

That unsettlement is rooted in paradox and in auction block histories, it is rooted in centuries of the conquest of species in nature, it is rooted in the conversion of conquistadorial biases into the humour of finity and infinity. Schoolchildren in the West Indies used to write quite naturally and innocently, it seemed, of English snow and Wordsworthian daffodils that they had never seen, rather than palm-groves or cane-fields or rainforests. The
absurdity has often (and rightly so) been quoted as a caveat of blindness inculcated by colonial institutions stereotyped and bound within other cultural landscapes (1983, p. 134).

What Harris calls the "unconscious infinity of humour" (p. 134) results in West Indian writing that grew out of such schooling in which, for example in a poem called Snows by Martiniquan poet, St.-John Perse, "'strange alliances . . . white nuptials of noctuids, white festivals of mayflies' may come into attunement, on cross-cultural loom," (p. 134) with poets and poems of other cultural and natural landscapes.

Kincaid's ambivalence about learning the Wordsworth poem, and other items from the British canon, is expressed in her interview with Donna Perry:

Every colonial child has to do that. It's a two-edged thing because I wouldn't have known how to write and how to think if I hadn't read those things. I wouldn't have known my idea of justice if I hadn't read Paradise Lost, if I hadn't been given parts of Paradise Lost to memorize. It was given to me because I was supposed to be Satan. The last chapter of the book I have written has a lot of things about that. The book is called Lucy, short for Lucifer (Perry, 1990, p. 507).

Kincaid reads history from a multi-faceted perspective. Columbus's "discovery" of Antigua in 1493 fascinates her (she intends to read his personal journals) and she sees it from the perspective of the poetics of exploration as well as the way that this "great curiosity in every human being [is] . . . bound up in this horrible
thing that happened (slavery—the domination)” (cited in Perry, p. 501). Indeed, her approach to studying history generally is through studies of domination. While angry at the abominations, Kincaid sees no simple "solutions": "If you remove the apparatus for the game [of domination as a game of musical chairs] to go on, then permanently sitting down is its own prison" (cited in Perry, p. 501). "There’s no such thing as a fresh start" (cited in Perry, p. 502).

Kincaid writes autobiographical fiction. As will be shown in the next chapter some theorists would claim all autobiography is fiction and/or all fiction is a kind of autobiography. I go to that chapter now to explore my own and some of my students’ connections to those (uneasy) relations—relations displayed and disturbed by theoretical and literary readings that have gone before.
CHAPTER FOUR

Autobiography: Fact, Fiction, Truth and Lies

In Plato's writings, dialogue gave way to the literary pseudodialogue. But by the Hellenistic age, writing prevailed, and real dialectic passed to correspondence. Taking care of oneself became linked to constant writing activity. The self is something to write about, a theme or object (subject) of writing activity. That is not a modern trait born of the Reformation or of romanticism; it is one of the most ancient Western traditions. It was well established and deeply rooted when Augustine started his Confessions (Michel Foucault, 1988, p. 27).

Autobiographical writing, writing and theorizing about autobiography in education, and other, related notions such as "teacher lore" (Schubert, 1991), "voices of teachers" (Aoki, 1990), "narrative dialogue" (Witherell & Noddings, 1991), "reflective practice" (Schon, 1983, 1991), and "teacher stories" (Pagano, 1990, 1991) have been increasingly appearing in curriculum discourses over the last several years (for example, in addition to the above mentioned, Abbs, 1974; Ayers, 1989; Grumet, 1980, 1988a, 1988b; Miller, 1990; Pagano, 1991; Pinar, 1980, 1981, 1988, in press; Pinar & Grumet, 1976; Taubman, in press). Many of these projects have been explorations into the uses of autobiography for teacher education and their implications for curriculum praxis. Some have been for the purpose of self-exploration for curriculum theorists and teacher educators. Some also investigate and generate
theorizing about autobiography itself. It is this latter mode of inquiry that I wish to address and participate in initially in this chapter.

My intent is to survey some prominent theories in autobiography that have emerged outside the curriculum field, more often from literary and philosophical disciplines, as well as some of the theorizing that I have encountered among curriculum theorists. Autobiography as approached in this study is embedded within a cultural studies orientation in that it is viewed as operating across identity registers to include political critique—critique at and about the borders between traditional academic disciplines, and critique of social hierarchies that forbid or limit participation of particular voices in the creation of legitimated knowledge. Autobiography in conversation with literary works is a notion that also draws explicitly from cultural studies approaches given that cultural studies as a "field" of inquiry originated in the literary disciplines and remains significantly there at present. After a theoretical exploration into autobiography I will provide demonstrations and discussion of autobiographical writing by myself and some of my students for the purpose of illustration. These specific examples represent a part of my study that is yet
"embryonic" and, as such, not to be interpreted as "data" in support of a particular method.

**Theory and Autobiography**

Autobiography as a "genre" has been a theoretical problem for literary critics from the first appearances of critical literature about autobiography, and contemporary theory is no exception (although the way the problem is framed is often very different now) (Olney, 1980, pp. 3-27). It has been argued that, (a) all autobiography is fiction because even the "self" is a fiction (Sprinker, 1980), (b) autobiography provides "truths" that nothing else does (Olney, 1980, p. 13), (c) all historical and autobiographical writing contains elements of fiction and elements of fact or at least "truth" (Kerby, 1988), (d) autobiography, or the writing/written self, is represented metaphorically by style (Starobinski, 1980/1976), (e) autobiography exists only as "the late product of a specific civilization" (Gusdorf, 1980, p. 29). One which holds "conscious awareness of the singularity of each individual life" (p. 29). as opposed to those societies/cultures that exist as interdependent communities.

For curriculum theorists Jacques Daignault and Clermont Gauthier (1981) the search for identity--which is
what autobiography may be thought to be—is a search for a moving target. As such, the search reveals a "paradox of sense" (p. 180) which is within the "paradigm of infinite regression" (p. 180). "For example, in order to define a phenomenon we use words but these words also need to be defined and the words used in these definitions need to be defined too and this infinitely" (p. 180). The search is a game that never ends. Writing an "autobiography" would seem to be a way of saying "Here I am; the search is over" if autobiography is concieved as discovery of the self, or even, in some senses, as creation of the self—for example, in the sense that creation is believed to be complete or finished. It is these conceptions of autobiography that Daignault’s and Gauthier’s paradoxical identity challenge.

Michael Sprinker, in his essay "Fictions of the Self: The End of Autobiography" (1980), echoes the above ideas about identity, making his case for the implications of this for autobiography through selected writings and discussions of Vico, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Freud. He recounts stories from Kierkegaard’s texts Repetition and Fear and Trembling, both written under pseudonyms, to assert their resemblance to Kierkegaard’s own life, one told "through a re-creation of Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac" (Fear and Trembling), and the other "through the
fictional narrative of the relations between Constantius and the nameless young lover" (p. 330). Some time later, Kierkegaard admitted to assuming the pseudonyms but denied having uttered any of the words written under them. In this way Kierkegaard

refuses to assume the traditional responsibility of an author for his text, and in so doing he undermines the conventional notions of author and text, self and discourse (p. 332).

Sprinker follows this example of Kierkegaard's condition of writing as an intertextual "multiplicity of subjects" (p. 332) with a reminder of Nietzsche's "obliterat[ion of] the authority of the subject by exposing it as a deception" (p. 334)—a deception designed to cover over the only "real" authority: the will to power. The will to power, Nietzsche warns, is precisely what may drive one, in the name of autobiography, to find it "useful and important for one's activity to interpret oneself falsely" (cited in Sprinker, p. 334).

Freud took this admonition seriously in writing psychoanalysis, but Freud also serves, for Sprinker, as another personal example of one whose life demonstrates the ways in which "the life and the thought are, in fact produced in the writing" (p. 337).

To turn Freud back upon himself [as did Lacan] is to discover a discourse trapped in its own discursiveness, or to put it another way, it is
to discover in Freud a neurotic impulse to uncover the secrets and mechanisms of neurosis (p. 336).

And through an extended reading of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, Sprinker draws an analogy from dream (text) interpretation and autobiography whereby both interpretation and "inquiry of the self into its own origin and history" always "return to confirm" themselves (p. 342). That is, autobiography

is always circumscribed by the limiting conditions of writing, of the production of a text. Vico, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche all contend that the self is constituted by a discourse that it never completely masters (p. 342).

This last line is reminiscent of Felman's reading of Lacan's reading of Freud where she finds the pedagogical imperative implicit in their work to be for a knowledge that is not in mastery of itself (Felman, 1982). Like any other knowledge, self-knowledge is only that which has discovered "that this master text, the unconscious, is perpetually changing" (Sprinker, 1980, p. 342) -- Daignault's and Gauthier's paradoxical "search for identity" (1981), truly an "identity-in-motion" (Taubman, in press). The necessary intertextuality implied by Sprinker's "multiplicity of [writing] subjects" (1980, p. 332) is also vaguely reminiscent of Francois Lionnet's metissage which is "all . . . a reading practice that
allows me to bring out the interreferential nature of a particular set of texts" (1989, p. 8).

Sprinker was criticized by James Olney for his "Fictions of the Self" in the volume of collected essays in which Sprinker's essay appears (a collection edited by Olney). In response to poststructuralists in general, Sprinker in particular, Olney admonishes:

what they are still troubling about is the self and consciousness or knowledge of it, even though in a kind of bravura way some of them may be denying rather than affirming its reality or its possibility. And this is the crux of the matter, the heart of the explanation for the special appeal of autobiography to students of literature in recent times: it is a fascination with the self and its profound, its endless mysteries and, accompanying that fascination, an anxiety about the self, an anxiety about the dimness and vulnerability of that entity that no one has ever seen or touched or tasted (1980, p. 23).

Janet Varner Gunn in her book Autobiography: Toward a Poetics of Experience, also criticizes Sprinker's essay:

Michael Sprinker goes one step further in the last essay of the volume [Olney's book]. Drawing on the work of Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, his essay joins autobiography to the ranks of livres sans auteurs. The struggle against writing's law of gravity is finally in vain, since "no autobiography can take place except within the boundaries of a writing where concepts of subject, self, and author collapse into the act of producing a text" [p.342, Sprinker]. . . . For Sprinker, the "self-written" cannot exist outside of [the text] (Gunn, 1982, pp.5-6).

Gunn, I believe, misinterprets Sprinker as she does Derrida's statement "there is nothing outside the text"
(1976). The text to which she seems to refer is the particular autobiographical text. Perhaps a better translation of that statement is Jo Anne Pagano's "there is nothing that is not a text" (1991, p. 202). Apparently, Gunn, and perhaps Olney, reads a pessimism into the idea that what one writes about oneself is not reducible to that self or vice versa.

There is another critique to be directed toward Sprinker's essay, however. While he writes of a "multiplicity of subjects" and intertextuality, he implies through his particular choice of examples and discussions around them that this multiplicity is somehow still "centered," in a sense, within individual human beings. That is, there is no sense of the cultural communal in his characterization of identity, writing and autobiography. Autobiographies of the socially marginalized emphasize (typically) a multiplicity that is also a plurality, a collectivity of subjects and a collective subjectivity. It is this sort of intertextuality, interreferentiality, inter-subjectivity--a full and complex metissage--that is central to this study that Sprinker ignores, resists, or represses.

The above discussion is evocative of Olney's recognition, in this same collection, of some of the particular, popular uses of autobiography.
Autobiography has become the focalizing literature for various "studies" that otherwise have little by way of a defining, organizing center to them. I have in mind such "studies" as American Studies, Black Studies, Women's Studies, and African Studies. According to the argument of these critics (who are becoming more numerous every day), autobiography—the story of a distinctive culture written in individual characters and from within—offers a privileged access to an experience . . . that no other variety of writing can offer (1980, p. 13).

Georges Gusdorf, however, sees autobiography as a fiercely individual act—a perspective that necessarily denies even the possibility of autobiography for such (marginalized) groups except insofar as they mirror the dominant Western ideology of radical individualism.

The author of an autobiography gives himself the job of narrating his own history; what he sets out to do is to reassemble the scattered elements of his individual life and to regroup them in a comprehensive sketch . . . . Autobiography . . . requires a man to take a distance with regard to himself in order to reconstitute himself in the focus of his special unity and identity across time (1980, p.35)

Shari Benstock points to the ways in which such a definition of the autobiographical act [as Gusdorf's] . . . strikingly recapitulates the effects of Lacan's mirror stage . . . a recognition of the alienating force within the specular (the "regard") that leads to the desperate shoring-up of the reflected image against disintegration and division (1988, pp. 14-15).

Traditionalists, like Gusdorf who reject the spirit of collectivity in the autobiographical act, are searching
for that which is a kind of "final authority," at least implicitly. As Pagano insists, such a search

betrays a hunger for something outside, something beyond judgment according to which we might be absolutely certain—according to which any one of us might be the one presumed to know. This is, of course, the logic of domination (1991, p. 201).

This self-authorized authoritative version of the subject, the self, is autobiography in which "the Subject is made an Object of investigation. . . . This view of the life history, is grounded in authority" (Benstock, 1988, p. 19).

But just as with the conservative versus liberal or radical debates around Afrocentrism, the humanities, and "political correctness" discussed in chapter one, these issues and problems cannot be simply divided into polarized camps. This complexity is well illustrated in African-American autobiography, for example. African-American autobiography (which includes slave narratives), in addition to questions around identity and subjectivity, also has to be thought through in the context of who its expected audience is and has historically been (typically privileged, dominant, those who read and have access to books) as well as its pedagogical imperative for that audience and that author. Of course, any autobiography must be thought through contextually in this manner, but I point to African-American autobiography in particular in
order to highlight the very specific and often overlooked historical context of African-American writing. Often, in "writing the self into existence" such authors are also actively engaged in writing an entire people along with them. This alters the context for theorizing about autobiography from the apparent context for much written autobiographical theory. This context, with its larger pedagogical and emancipatory project, can render arguments about "fictions of the self" pedantic, but, at the same time it renders the isolated, unified, "self-identical" self obsolete—a distortion. Somehow, the notion of the "fictional register" must be drawn into conversation with the communal, as Taubman has suggested. An autobiographical register which, through such conversation, deconstructs these identity "constructs" holds such a possibility.

The problem of the divided self that emerged through readings in chapter three resurfaces here. The self divided against itself is the self of the mirror stage—a stage which signals a search for unity that "derives from an experience of self as fragmented, partial, segmented, and different" (Benstock, 1988, p. 12). It is a division between self and other which is experienced as absolute. And the self-division that is for the self is that which works through difference, thereby enabling voice,
preventing a sort of critical aphasia, learned illiteracy. Need is for the re-cognition of both divisions—re-cognition that is available only as the autobiographical register operates consciously within the context of the others. The deconstruction that takes place through this operation is eloquently described by Benstock:

If the autobiographical moment prepares for a meeting of "writing" and "selfhood," a coming together of method and subject matter, this destiny--like the retrospective glance that presumably initiates autobiography--is always deferred. Autobiography reveals gaps, and not only gaps in time and space or between the individual and the social, but also a widening divergence between the manner and matter of its discourse. That is, 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 (p. 11).

"Marginal" autobiography is in a unique position to come to this re-cognition. The fragmented, "postmodern self" that is so widely hailed as a (the?) "sign" of the times, seems, in some senses, ludicrous to those whose communal histories have long known fragmentation, displacement, and dispossession in the most material senses as well as symbolic ones. W.E.B. DuBois's recognition brought to print of the "double consciousness" necessary for African-American individuals' survival is a very well-known example (1969). As Stuart Hall explains,

Identity is formed at the unstable point where the "unspeakable" stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture. And
since he/she is positioned in relation to
cultured narratives which have been profoundly
expropriated the colonized subject is always
"somewhere else": doubly marginalized, displaced
always other than where he or she is, or is able
to speak from (1987, p. 44).

Our relations to such autobiographies (literatures),
whether we are members of socially marginalized
(colonized) groups or not, are extra-ordinarily
significant to any notion of identity--both national and
individual. Indeed our identities can only be thought
through difference. It is only in our relations to others
that identity, and thus autobiography, has meaning at all.
Such a "relational theory" of autobiography guides my own
"autobiographical" reading/writing of a novel (below) read
by me as an adolescent, and re-read for this writing.

As Pinar implies, our autobiographical writing
depends on our particular relations to marginality (In
press, p. 395). Those of us who are indeed newly
"victimized" as "fractured identities" within a particular
(negative) facet of the "postmodern age," Christopher
Lasch's "minimal self" (1984), need to attend to that
self-division in our autobiographical constructions. Such
a construction is what Pinar calls an "architecture"--a
construction that takes seriously the boundaries one has
erected as well as dissolved (in press). One who has not
experienced what Hall calls "centering of marginality"
(Hall, 1987, p. 44), on the other hand, may benefit from
abandoning "the image of an architecture of self" (Pinar, p. 395), for a deconstructed self. Hall's sentiments seem similar as he writes,

I believe it is an immensely important gain when one recognizes that all identity is constructed across difference and begins to live with the politics of difference. But doesn't the acceptance of the fictional or narrative status of identity in relation to the world also require as a necessity, its opposite—the moment of arbitrary closure? Is it possible for there to be action or identity in the world without arbitrary closure—what one might call the necessity to meaning of the end of the sentence? (1987, p. 45)

In another theoretical twist of the autobiographical matrix, rather than focusing on the fictional status of identity, theory also points toward the autobiographical, or "truthful," status of fiction. Kerby, believes that history and autobiography ("self-narration") are necessarily narrative, and that this narrative does not exclude the "fictional." He expresses this notion as follows:

Narrative truth may not do for an historical or biographical study that aims at "objectivity" (supposing this goal were even possible!), but it is, nevertheless, a curious fact of human reality that, to quote Ricoeur, "It makes little difference whether [the stories we tell] are true or false, fiction as well as verifiable history provides us with an identity." A "truthful" or "authentic" story of the human subject need not be one that achieves or even aims at objective historical verisimilitude (1988, p. 238).
This position is not incompatible with Jean Starobinski's in the view that "truth" can be read from a text in ways unrelated to factual accuracy—for example, through "style" and through what is selected for narration. Starobinski seems to feel that since style is what distinguishes one author from another (one individual from another) that style is therefore the "essence" of autobiography and thus we can not talk about the style of an autobiography or limit theory about it to genre.

The conditions of autobiography furnish only a large framework within which a great variety of particular styles may occur. So it is essential to avoid speaking of an autobiographical "style" or even an autobiographical "form," because there is no such generic style or form. Here, even more than elsewhere, style is the act of an individual (1980, p. 73).

In a similar sense, philosopher of curriculum Jo Anne Pagano makes pedagogical use of the self-narration that emerges from fictional writing of her students. They are, she suggests, much better able to expose their "desire for ignorance" (1991, p. 201) and thereby encounter the "surprise of otherness" through fictionalizing their journalizing of student teaching. In doing this "we go beyond ourselves" (p. 202). Pagano expresses concern that in ("non-fictional") autobiographical writing, even that which is not to be graded, students may cover over their own "resistance to knowledge" or "desire to ignore" (p.
In fictionalizing those accounts we are more inclined to probe our ignorances and to create new conditions for knowledge. . . . The advantage of fiction writing over autobiography is that the writer can claim a greater distance, and, consequently, the desire for ignorance is more readily exposed (p. 201).

Fictions allow one to write the ambiguity that is "identity"—"I am this, but not now; I was this, but not really." Jamaica Kincaid demonstrates this possibility, I think, in writing her novels as self-conscious autobiographies and her autobiography as fiction. Stories over the same chronological time sequences differ as she differs (and defers) from herself. Perspectives toward autobiography as self-authorized authoritative stories about ourselves that discover and unify the self remove us from relationality, politics, ultimately from meaning. These perspectives deny the active role of ignorance, the will to ignore. As Pagano suggests, fictional writing is one way to counter this.

The major issues in these arguments seem to revolve around subjectivity (What/where is it? If we do not know, can we even discuss autobiography?), the social and individual usefulness of autobiography, and the literary limits and functions of autobiography. If autobiography is fiction does this mean that a project such as the one I suggest here is impossible and thus
useless? That one cannot know more about the "self" in this way because one cannot write the "truth"? Or even, one cannot know more about the self because there is no unified "self" to know; the entity we call our "self" is so constantly in a state of flux that it makes no sense to attempt autobiography at all? Or that what we write exists only as a particular text and is not in the least representative of the "real" person who wrote it, or of anyone or anything at all aside from that particular text (it is a "thing-in-itself")?

It seems to me that there is a kind of truth to an affirmative answer to these questions, but that to leave it at that and dismiss autobiography misses the greater significance revealed in theoretical debates about identity and pedagogy. More to the point perhaps are the questions: Does it matter if this is "fact" or "fiction?" If it is all fiction, is there a "truth" in it? What is to be gained by doing this? Part of the "truth," I believe, lies in a negative answer to those earlier questions, and that is the part I am concerned with now. As Pinar understands, "we aim, in autobiography, at truthfulness, not truth, at expanding and complicating the lived space in which we dwell, through which we experience the world—as that space expands, so does the world to which we have access" (W. Pinar, personal communication, July, 1991).
Like most of the theorists mentioned above, I feel that much "truthfulness" lies completely outside the realm of the "factual." I also would argue that "truth" is contextually bound such that if I ask the question, "Is the self a fiction?" for one purpose, the answer might be the opposite of the reply to that same question when asked for a different purpose.

The particular "method" I am interested in for my own autobiographical writing in this chapter involves the interreferential reading of literature (autobiography, fiction, historical fiction) set in or near my own home or region, accompanied by reflective writing as a means of gaining insights into "self" and "other," how I construct who the "other" is, how I am constructed as the "other," and how a "sense of place" is itself built on notions of the "other." Certain literary works can serve as highly accessible resources (as compared to so much of social theoretical literature) for reaching deeper understandings about the nuances of "difference" and "identity." With such understandings, the possibilities for what could be called life-affirming and intelligent interpersonal relationships among teachers and students and their lives outside institutions are enhanced. Put another way, "repressed people tend to be stupid, and when smart, calculating only. Meditative, not just calculative,
thought is an index of intelligence" (W. Pinar, personal communication, July, 1991).

The concept of the "other" is a crucial one for understanding the construction of "a sense of place." Creation of a notion of what constitutes "them and us," the meaning derived from "difference," of who, therefore, is "other" and the subsequent exclusion of the "other" (even within one's self) are often critical elements to the "sense of place." (For example, think about the presumed mindset of one who is called "provincial," "local yokel," etc.) A challenge to teachers, curriculum designers/theorists, and other interested people is to discover ways of invoking the power of place, retaining the "treasures" (Kincheloe, 1991, pp. 145-151), while bringing about respect for and celebration of difference. Respecting difference, but not in a "liberal/pluralist" sense where difference is respected only to the extent that one is to acknowledge it, tolerate it and "work" with it in order to provide "equal opportunity" for everyone to be more alike--that is to have, say, "white middle-class values." In contrast to a tolerance defined in this way, true respect tolerates the sustained existence of difference, and indeed recognizes difference not as an indicator of pathology, but as a healthy and even inevitable condition for living.
Uncovering place in this way involves the process known to anthropologists as "making the familiar strange." This means, in the present context, rendering the strangeness of the "other," which has been problematically made "familiar" through stereotyping and/or otherwise erasing, strange again though in a new sense of that term--a sense that does not assume strangeness to be inherently frightening and hostile. The "other" is made strange in that the comforting familiarity of stereotyping is abandoned and replaced with the disturbing exhilaration that comes from exposing "dangerous remembrances" about past experiences that are contrary to "official" thought as it is so often written/spoken in conventional discourses--experiences which contribute to the present drama, often in unexpected ways.

Making the familiar strange also means, in this context, critically examining the cliches one has learned to live by--cliches which are not only expressed through language but also through routines, habits, ways of seeing. Where did they come from? What purposes have they served and do they serve? What happens when they are not taken for granted? Are my cliches the same order of reasoning as my stereotyping?

I see this approach as being useful for teacher education as, I believe, it is extremely important for
teachers to be well-acquainted and comfortable with difference, including difference within themselves. This is important in that learning necessarily involves self-awareness which necessarily involves difference-awareness. How can teachers facilitate students’ self discoveries and creations if teachers are unable to facilitate their own? Additionally, teachers and their clients (students, parents, public) stand to benefit immensely if teachers are equipped to examine their own desires—desires to teach, desires for students, desires for themselves. This acquaintance and comfort arises only after the "statues" (Hurston, 1984, p. 25) that we have built of ourselves, those aspects of self trapped in, say, Lacan’s Imaginary order, have been disturbed and re-articulated. Such a disturbance is made possible through, in part, intertextual readings of literary works and social and philosophical theory. In what may seem a paradoxical suggestion, the production of such readings are capable of disrupting the statue, yet such readings are only possible once disruption has begun. This is where autobiography, as an integral part of that intertextual adventure, becomes crucial. Through re-readings, re-writings and re-visions, the situation (of reading and writing) moves, such that what at first appears as paradox is revealed to be closer to a hermeneutical process. Clearly, adaptations of this
may be useful for teachers in a variety of classroom settings, but with the understanding that certain dangers inhere. Autobiography conceived narrowly, for example as only direct narrative confession, can be impositional and/or shattering for some students. This is why it is even more important to emphasize the notion, as Starobinski, Pagano, and as Kerby do, that autobiography can be conceived of as encompassing an almost endless variety of styles and approaches. One does not have to narrate some sort of "life story" in order to express/create/learn about ourselves honestly in writing.

In my classes, while I have not specifically asked for fictionalized autobiographies, students have been alerted to that possibility. Some have written poetry in response. One wrote a kind of poem that looped and circled around the pages, thereby expressing herself not only through word-signs but also spatially, in a kind of "topography." The primary place of fiction in my classroom has been, however, in the position of parallel readings--readings for students to respond to in their own autobiographical accounts. This has not always been done directly. Yet I have strongly sensed that those who read the literary readings (Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* [1969], and Annie Dillard's *An American* _
Childhood [1987]), were responding to them in their own writings, however indirectly.

My own writing which follows immediately, is autobiographical in an oblique way which, given the notions of subjectivity and identity that dominate this work, is for me, one preferred approach to autobiography. Student work that I include here is not so oblique. While students were made aware of multiple possibilities for approaching the task, there was little time (one half of a semester) for them to experiment and develop a comfort with unfamiliar approaches. As such I must re-emphasize the fact that inclusion of their work is not viewed by me to be anything like a thorough investigation of a "method" for actual classroom situations. As stated at the outset, my investigation in this study is primarily theoretical, and my inclusion of some examples gathered so far from classroom practices is meant only to demonstrate a beginning for a future work.

Autobiographical Samples

My Selection of a Text

Gwin Bristow's "Plantation Trilogy", including her books Deep Summer (1937), The Handsome Road (1938), and This Side of Glory (1940), were popular books among my female peers of early adolescence. The books had been
reprinted in paperback in the late 1960's-early 1970's. I absorbed them each in one to three sittings, often staying up with flashlight under the covers past two in the morning. In looking at them now (particularly The Handsome Road) I am intrigued by what about them so captured me at that age—a child not especially drawn to the study of history in school, reading historical fiction into the early mornings. I know there was a sense within me of something magical, hidden, contradictory about the state of Louisiana where I had grown up, though more particularly about southern Louisiana (where I had not grown up), and that this sense was, in part, provided me by these books.

The Handsome Road tells a story of Civil War Louisiana mostly from the perspective of a young white woman who was "poor white trash," but also, at times, from the perspective of a wealthy white plantation-owning woman. The genre appears to be similar to the romanticized historical fiction of Gone With the Wind (1936). My questions as I initially approached the re-reading of this text were around the ways race, class, and gender were constructed. Why would this text be most appealing (at least in the late 1960's-early 1970's) to young, most likely white, female readers, and to me in particular? What historical sense of place did it achieve for me? How
did I situate myself within it ideologically? How did it
support and/or shape my conceptions of race, class, and
gender formation and difference at the time?

There are some other questions of interest to me
about this book, which I cannot answer at this time, but
which I raise for rhetorical purposes. Why was the book
popular enough to go into fourteen printings up through
1973, yet never critically reviewed again after the first
few years of publication? The first paperback came out in
1949. By 1969 it was only in its fifth printing. But by
1973 it was in its fourteenth printing. The cover art and
blurbs on the 1969-73 paperbacks are clearly aimed at a
romance-reading audience. But the book reviews in the late
thirties from reputable sources are favorable and treat
the book as serious adult reading.

The Handsome Road: Romance and "Class Consciousness"
The book opens with a verse entitled "Plantation Song,"

"Nigger pick de cotton, nigger tote de load,
Nigger build de levee foh de ribber to smash,
Nigger nebber walk up de handsome road,
But I radder be a nigger dan po' white trash!"

which the poor white protagonist, Corrie May, later
overhears the slaves singing at a plantation where she has
gotten temporary work. This along with numerous other
references to slave class condescension toward poor whites sets the tone for the antagonistic way racial difference, from the perspective of the poor white protagonist, is represented through most of the text. At the same time, this situation inspires a kind of "class-consciousness" in Corrie May that enables her to resist fulfilling some of the expectations for a young person of her gender and social class. But, aside from what Corrie May regards as condescending, African-Americans in this novel display little agency, and they receive little sympathy.

Bristow maintains a tension in the character of Corrie May between acceptance of the "status quo" for gender and class relations and angry rejection of both throughout most of the book. Challenges to interpersonal race relations occur only briefly when Corrie May is under the care of an African-American family in their home as she gives birth to an "illegitimate" son. Significantly, she names her son after the father of this family. Bristow, perhaps, condemns slavery in the overt sense, but covertly romanticizes it—leaving out any graphic depictions of abuses at the hands of whites, in fact portraying slave lives as mostly pleasant, but doing that from a distance with no reference to an interior life. On the other hand, graphic depictions of life for poor whites are plentiful. She also frequently romanticizes
It is a contradictory book in much the same manner, perhaps, as particular modern romances are contradictory in their simultaneous challenges to and affirmations of traditional femininity (Radway, 1983). As will be demonstrated in what follows, Corrie May steps outside the bounds of traditional femininity and of social class divisions on occasions, at the same time those traditions are left substantially unchallenged. Such contradictions explain to me part of my attraction to it. Growing up in a small north Louisiana town with parents who were liberal democrats and non-Christian, I felt myself to be politically and emotionally in a highly contradictory place (in many senses of the term "place") as a female adolescent. As I re-read the book (after nearly 20 years) I found myself engrossed in it all over again—like a fourteen-year-old—at the same time I clearly recognized the style of the writing to be largely predictable and cliched, much like a romance novel.

Now as I re-read an essay by Cora Kaplan, "The Thorn Birds: Fiction, Fantasy, Femininity" from her book Sea Changes: Culture and Feminism, I am struck by the
similarity of her adolescent experience in reading Gone With the Wind to my own experience with Bristow’s books.

Like many readers of this early blockbuster romance I read it in one bout, too engaged with the story to eat or to sleep. I was a fast reader, but it must have taken me two days; no skipping here for the romance takes up most of the text. My compulsion was observed for the book itself was not approved of; pro-Southern and unashamedly racist, as well as without literary merit in my parents’ eyes, it brought together a reactionary political narrative with a reactionary emotional one. I finished the book late in the night and the ending left me in despair and near hysteria (Kaplan, 1987, pp. 117-8).

While Bristow’s book was, perhaps, not as politically reactionary as Gone With the Wind in the sense that it went farther in challenging the plantation system of the Old South, and my parents did not disapprove my reading it, I did “inhale” the book, and I did react emotionally to it at age fourteen, crying at times for both Corrie May and the wealthy plantation belle, Ann Sheramy.

A mystique around the old plantation homes themselves was also evoked for me (by then I had visited some of them). These homes embodied the polar opposites of good and evil for me—good in that they were, I thought, romantic and beautiful; evil in that I knew, but probably repressed the knowledge, that people had been held there as slaves and very possibly were tortured. I must confess an awe that I still feel, but an awe felt through the undeniable awareness of what those places symbolize.
Recently, I had occasion to experience and explore these feelings in the very concrete situation of "house-sitting" one of these homes, Como Plantation, that sits next to the Mississippi River, isolated by four miles of dirt road that dead-ends at the house. Some nights were terrifying. Morrison, in Beloved, describes well what I believe I felt there:

I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place--the picture of it--stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. . . . Where I was before I came here, that place is real. It's never going away. Even if the whole farm . . . dies. The picture is still there and what's more, if you go there--you who never was there--if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you (1987, pp. 35-6).

Indeed, the "big house" at Como Plantation was a turn-of-the-century structure built then because the original house had burned to the ground. Nevertheless, it was all there--out there. As I re-read Bristow today, I cannot do other than read her through Morrison, and, of course, through my older self as well as my reconstructed adolescent self.

For Kaplan, rather than an attraction to Southern place born from personal experience, the strength of her attraction to Gone With the Wind (henceforth, GWTW) lay in
its romance and nostalgic embrace of "traditional femininity [which] could be lived in an unashamed way." It was a reaction, in part, to fifties female adolescence and, in part, a form of resistance in a household where the trappings of fifties femininity were disapproved but so was censorship. The way, in Kaplan's estimation, that book spoke to her as well as to women in general is worth repeating in full here because I believe her interpretation is relevant for The Handsome Road and for me as well.

For me personally it was a resonant and painful text, for I was engaged in a long and bitter struggle with my father in these years, for my autonomy, for his love and approval. But it spoke I think to a much wider audience of American women readers for whom the pre-Civil War South did serve as a sort of pre-capitalist site of family romance, a mythical moment of settled traditional social relations that the Civil War destroyed forever. . . . As a parable of Southern history and as a romantic narrative with incestuous overtones it is history and fantasy spoken from the position of the women. It remains so today (1987, p. 119).

Re-reading The Handsome Road as an adult has, I believe, evoked from me what Toni Morrison calls rememory—a sense of having been struck by a glimmering of recollection, of something that has happened but has been long lost to consciousness. Rememory that occurs through my reading Bristow now calls up questions for me, about me and my relations to others, after fourteen years of age—questions that have, however, in some way sprung from my
vision now of that fourteen-year-old and what happened, what was felt, in her life between then and now. In the context of my current literary and theoretical readings, no doubt Bristow's book has come to mean more and to mean other than it did. Likewise, Kaplan writes of a kind of revisionary repetition of her experience of GWTW twenty-five years later with the novel and the television mini-series The Thorn Birds. (I, too, watched the entire mini-series on television. I did not know any men who did.) It was through her adult reading of another romance that Kaplan was able to re-read her younger self reading GWTW. She writes,

Like Gone With the Wind, but with significant differences, The Thorn Birds pursues an interesting occasionally radical interrogation of sexual difference inside a reactionary set of myths about history (1987, p. 134).

Like romance novels more generally, as mentioned earlier, each of these texts invite the woman reader to explore limited reversals of traditional femininity and masculinity, all the while, ultimately at least, attempting to bring her back into the fold of traditional female roles. The heroine may resist fulfilling traditional role expectations only to be "conquered" as "Mr. Right" finally arrives (and then, perhaps, dies!). Here is a sample from The Handsome Road:

Denis came down the hall. He looked tall and splendid, and Ann called herself a fool to
hesitate before the chance of the most enviable marriage on the river. As he met her at the foot of the staircase he impulsively swept her into his arms. After a moment Ann drew back a little. She looked up at him, feeling a sensation of pleasure at the nearness of his physical beauty. Denis did not say anything. He stood with one hand on her shoulder and his other arm around her waist, smiling down at her so urgently that Ann felt herself yielding as though his ardor were a command she had no power to disobey, and as Denis drew her to him again she put her own arms around him and pressed his lips down to hers (1938, p. 53).

And I loved it. Why?! Such analysis almost frightens me. As Barbara Johnson wrote: "Literature is not only a thwarted investigator but also an incorrigible perpetrator of the problem of sexuality" (1980, p. 23). Similarly (and to repeat), for Kaplan (who is not Southern), "the deep South and its fake aristocracy, imitation feudalism (which Mitchell both deplores and celebrates) was an imaginary historic site where traditional femininity could be lived in an unashamed way" (1987, p. 118).

Jessica Benjamin's psychoanalytic theorizing in her book *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (1988) is, in my case, illuminating. According to Benjamin, for girls (as for boys) "the father becomes the image of liberation from maternal power . . . the one who recognizes and embodies desire" (p. 100). He is the first "ideal love" in households where certain traditional gender roles are maintained, that is, where the mother's agency is devalued in comparison to the
father's. He "seemingly embodies the agency and desire one lacks in oneself" (p. 100). He is "the way into the world" (p. 103). In such families, the dual desire of the child for separation and identification results in a split whereby the child "assign[s] the contradictory strivings to different parents" (p. 104). This then can result in the devaluation of the mother and the idealization of the father which, for girls, who must necessarily identify with their mothers, presents a particularly difficult dilemma in their struggles for independence. The attraction for women to romance novels is explained by Benjamin as follows:

In the most common fantasy of ideal love, the one so frequently found in mass-market romances, a woman can only unleash her desire in the hands of a man whom she imagines to be more powerful, who does not depend upon her for his strength. Such a man, who desires but does not need her, satisfies the element missing from both mother and father, the ability to survive attack and still be there. In this sense the ideal lover actually provides a dual solution, containment and excitement, the holding environment and the road to freedom—the joint features of both the ideal mother and father (p. 120).

As I mentioned previously, re-reading Bristow induces for me "rememory" (that sudden and startling but vague remembrance of forgotten events or thoughts) and, in the context of what Benjamin writes, that rememory takes me to early relationships to my father and to boys. While a full reconstruction of my earlier reading self through
Bristow's book is necessarily lacking, the re-reading of such a previously read novel provokes memories of long-forgotten events, perhaps even remembering myself remembering, much like the smell of my grandmother's house does. I do remember feeling driven to please my father, to value school as he did, to be a "good girl."

Second grade: I was a new student in Cypress Springs Elementary School. The boy who was class clown did not care that other boys were terrified of and eschewed girls—he "loved" them. I was new, so I was his next target. He sent a note during class to me, surreptitiously, a love letter. I remember thrill and mortification. He was outrageous freedom for me. He said anything at all to the teacher, and still, usually, charmed her. I, on the other hand, was outrageously confined (shy, tentative) by "goodness." I would not acknowledge him. I corrected his spelling and sent the note back. I was my father's daughter.

Rememory: Good girl gone bad. My older sister sneaked out of the house one night to meet her boyfriend. Her empty room was discovered, I was awakened and questioned, pleaded with never to do the same, to which I responded, "I would never do that." The very next night: (romance and pain) sneaking out at night together (my sister and I) we were betrayed by the dog who led our father to the place
of our liaison with our boyfriends. (God damn this small
town!) Pounding on the door he yelled, "Give me what’s
mine!" (My father’s daughter.) I remember laughing through
fear. A year or so after this event my older sister would
follow this guy to Mississippi only to return home after a
few weeks with a bruised face. My boyfriend broke my heart
by sleeping with other girls and with emotional distance.
I broke up exclaiming, "I never, ever want to see you
again!" (Twenty years later we are still friends.) Coming
to understand this ownership idea has been difficult for
me almost to the present. (Do I belong to my father? Do I
belong to my partners? Do my partners belong to me? What
about friends? Students? What is owed and what is due?)

Like GWTW, The Handsome Road ends with the heroine
(Corrie May) and the other primary female character (Ann)
"tragically" without husbands or lovers. But unlike
Scarlet in GWTW, this is not a punishment for "bad
behavior"--at least not as explicitly. Still, both women
do end up in the presumably much needed care of men--their
sons.

Legends and place.

Rich descriptions of the natural beauty of south
Louisiana in terms of foliage, sunsets, water, smells
(which, even in 1938 let alone 1859-65, must have been
phenomenal compared to Louisiana today) are sprinkled throughout the book. Any mention of the sensuality of natural place—especially, for some reason, in terms of smell—has always captivated my imagination. Interestingly, these descriptions are primarily found in conjunction with scenes of the plantation "big house." For example, Bristow writes of gardenias in the breeze and vetivert sachet's for Ann's clothes--two of my favorite scents to this day. It could be argued that this is a strategy for impressing upon the reader the starkness and injustice of the black and poor white situation by way of pointing out the discrepancies between the two physical environments. As I recall, for me at fourteen, such a strategy only served to romanticize the plantation homes to the extent that I found myself hoping they and their inhabitants could go on forever unscathed. I even imagined myself eventually owning one of those homes and becoming a writer--probably of romantic historical fiction. In what follows, I read the text as I see it now.

At the heart of The Handsome Road lies Corrie May's determination to both survive and to get beyond living for the mere survival that marks her social class in this poor white antebellum community just north of New Orleans. Outside town, along the river road, is the stark contrast of the wealthy plantation homes--homes that house
"Southern Gentlemen" who were raised to exploit land and people—especially black people, poor people and women—and to do so with the utmost "courtesy" and "reserve."

"You’ll read the Latin poets, especially Catullus," [the young ‘gentleman’s’ cynical aunt] went on, "and you’ll be fond of Byron, and you’ll treat every lady as if she were in danger of breaking in two, and say the Army of North Virginia was the greatest bunch of fighting men God Almighty ever let get together on this earth." "I never saw it," said Denis [Ann’s son]; rather wistfully. "My dear child, do you think that matters? That’s the ultimate test of your type Denis—living by legends you don’t know anything about" (1938, p.262).

Living by legends. Legends of the "Southern Lady," the plantation myths, of bitterness and blame for southern defeat (those "damned Yankee Carpetbaggers") survived for me in forms that I could neither recognize nor face at fourteen, but which leapt from the pages for me as I re-read and remembered reading. Yet, given the incongruence of my parents’ and my own political views with the local and southern majority, I surely considered myself immune, rational, compassionate. I marvel at the strength of history, "real" history rather than mere legend, of hegemony, of place, and, simultaneously, I marvel at the possibility for and incidence of resistance.

Here is that mythical "Southern Lady," "Southern Belle," that "steel magnolia":

Ann could see herself merging from girlhood into the great lady of the plantation legend. She
could do it, not everybody could. A great lady was music and moonshine, but she was also hard as steel. She was too frail to put on her own shoes and stockings but she bore ten children quietly; she had never an idea in her lovely head but she could make a hundred not necessarily congenial guests coalesce into a pleasant unit; she must always be sent upstairs to rest before the ordeal of getting dressed for a ball but she could dance till sunrise once she got there; she turned faint at the sight of blood from a cut finger but she could ride to hounds and be in at the kill (pp.90-1).

Bristow assures us that, for Ann, this was the natural order. Ann’s position could be read through Benjamin’s psychoanalytic theory of domination (1988). Such a reaction to difference as exhibited by wealthy white planters can be justified by them only as they see their separation from the "others" as complete. This, however, calls up a contradiction for them in that they require recognition from those others--recognition of their existence as masters, superiors--which creates a dependency that exposes as illusion their absolute separation. Cruelty functions as an attempt to assert and reinforce separation, independence, dominance, and has the effect of reifying those ideas. Indeed, when it comes to social class--"old money," "cultural capital," "poor white trash"--Bristow seems to recognize the illusions of naturalness to social class relations (excluding where such relations involve race) and employs strategies to point this out.
Corrie May is confused at how the wealthy resolve their exploitative cruelty toward the poor with their ethic of tenderness and gentility at home.

For all her glimpses of rich people at Ardeith, she had never made it clear in her mind how they could be so ineffably cruel and at the same time so very kind. There was a woman in Rattletrap Square [Corrie May's neighborhood] whose husband had been killed in a fall from a scaffolding, and she had been turned into the street with four children because she could not pay her rent to the St. Clairs, and yet the very next day Mr. Bertram St. Clair came to dinner at Ardeith with his mother, and he was so attentive to the old lady that he might have been held up as a model of devotion. It was all very puzzling (p. 111).

Many other examples of this phenomenon are scattered throughout the book making clear the notion that the wealthy assumed their station in life above poor and black to be, perhaps, divinely ordained--natural--and thus justifying a double (or even triple) standard of ethics. Legends survive through double-binds, through contradiction repressed, through the "illiterate imagination" (Harris, 1989), in short, through a kind of stupidity.

Ann (Corrie May's employer at the time) and Corrie May each think the other is stupid, and somewhere they are both right, of course. Ann falls for Corrie May's "low profile" around the plantation when she is working for Ann.

She's a funny little thing, Ann thought with irrelevant amusement. So quiet; she doesn't seem
to notice very much. Very likely she's a bit stupid. I suppose she's had a hard life, but then she's used to it. People like that don't expect much in the world (1938, p. 90).

Then when Ann asked Corrie May to teach her how to knit in order to support the "war effort,"

Corrie May set about giving her a lesson. In about thirty minutes she was so exasperated she had difficulty keeping her temper. She had never in all her born days seen anybody so stupid as Ann. Those dainty white fingers of hers seemed utterly unable to perform any task at all, even one so simple as throwing thread over a needle. . . . And what was worse, she didn't seem to know how to give her attention to what she was doing. In the middle of an explanation she looked out of the window and said how pretty the moon was as it came up (pp. 108-9).

Both Corrie May and Ann are unable to recognize forms of intelligence in one another— they both assume a natural stupidity in the other. This is exposed by Bristow as she repeatedly points out the differing perceptions.

Corrie May gets involved with a carpetbagger after the war, and she discusses with him why, even though these people, the deposed master class, are now poorer than he is, they still carry themselves with superiority. She explains to him in her way the notions of cultural capital and the belief by the wealthy in manifest destiny—what she later calls "that magnificent confidence of birth" (p. 285).

Corrie May hesitated, but she remembered that everybody was equal now and she could say what she pleased, so she continued, "Mr. Gilday, you ain't really going to get at them people till
you hit them in the place where they keep a little private contract with their private God that they’re better than other folks. They got education and manners and I ain’t saying them things ain’t fine to have, I wish I had some, but them Larnes and Sheramys and their sort, they honestly think the reason they’re like that and you and me ain’t is that the Lord God made them out of a different kind of dust from us. It ain’t never been in the back side of their mind that if you and me had been started off like them the day we were born we’d be elegant as them now” (p. 183).

Ann, struggling to pay Corrie May’s carpetbagger the taxes on her plantation after the war, is humiliated by the man and Corrie May when she is short ten dollars out of one hundred ninety eight owed. Their snide and haughty behavior toward her is bewildering. "Why do they hate me?" she asks. This historical and interpersonal naivete, is not unlike my own experience of racial relations in Ruston, Louisiana. Certain that I was not racist, I could not understand why I sensed hostility from African-American people or why I felt guilt about that. Nor could I understand why I felt shame, a sort of vague personal responsibility, in the face of African-American deference toward me, as in the case when a woman of color who was baby-sitting my sisters and I offered to us a biblical justification for the subordination of dark-skinned people. Did she believe this, really? It seemed so. Or was she saying this only for our benefit? Did I want to believe her? Did she read my desire and play to it? And,
if so, was her intent kindness or cruelty? I told her that I did not believe it. Did she believe me?

Corrie May wakes up abruptly to some of the material realities and the social construction of social class differences before the Civil War. She watches her thirty-five year old mother who looks twenty years older and registers that picture alongside her image of Ann Sheramy who would still look "exquisite" in twenty years, and then recalls her subconscious-turned-conscious hearing of her father's front porch neighborhood rantings.

Then, all of a sudden, she heard some of the words Pa had been shooting off as she came down the alley. She had hardly heard them then, she had only felt mad that Pa talked all the time instead of doing a job of work. But they must have gone into her ears and stuck in her head, for now she heard them. In the whole South, seven million white people owning all the slaves. So--if you counted out the slaveowners' families--six million white people who owned no slaves. Six million white people who owned nothing at all. She was not so stupid as not to know that those who owned slaves owned everything else. The first sign of a man's rise in the world was his buying himself a nigger. "Jesus," said Corrie May aloud (p. 11).

Examples of Corrie May's awarenesses of social class privilege and difference are numerous throughout the book, even including a passage where she notices how much easier it is for a rich couple to make amends after an argument than for a poor couple (because the rich can get away from each other, buy each other consolation gifts, and not have to perform hard labor while angry). Still, race is ever
pitted against class in this novel, with the persistent insistence even that slave women were better off than poor white women.

The mulatto girl Bertha, Napoleon’s wife, who expected a baby about the same time as Ann, was appointed for the honor of wet-nursing the heir; she was moved from the quarters to a room in the big house and coddled with as many luxuries as the mistress. Corrie may thought if it were herself she would have felt like a milch-cow being petted for the parish fair, but Bertha, a smart young woman of elegant speech and manners, put on a multitude of airs... She thought of the slave-women at Ardeith, carefully tended during their pregnancies because a little Negro was worth a hundred dollars the day it was born (pp. 80-1).

Even though it was mentioned that Bertha was mulatto, the reader is apparently not supposed to wonder what this means (if she is a naive fourteen-year-old). Or, if she knows what it means, what the conditions were under which it came about. While Bristow graphically depicts the mob beating of Corrie May for publicly expressing her sentiments about the poor white man being conscripted to fight the rich white man’s war (who was not required to fight) in order to insure their respective economic statuses—that is, poor white man "worse off than the slave"—she never mentions the beatings, murders, and rapes suffered by black slaves who did not have the option to just quit their jobs. (This is not to say that it was, in perhaps most cases, not much of an option for poor
whites, just that there was no such option for slaves, and no legal protection.)

Although Bristow states at the outset that she is writing this from the perspective of the poor whites because most other literature on the antebellum South is either from the perspective of rich white or slave black, I find these kinds of omissions and distortions notable given the presence, albeit somewhat muted presence, of challenges to the social order in terms of social class. It is difficult to imagine why the black story remains so marginal, in spite of available information on the subject, unless Bristow is so absolutely "other" to black people (a reasonable speculation for 1938 in Louisiana) that they are almost non-existent for her—Ralph Ellison's "invisible" people. Indeed, although Bristow expressed awareness of her privileging of the poor white story over others, a story of the wealthy white emerges through Corrie May's relations to them. The same cannot be said for her relations to African-American people in the novel. Whether or not Bristow employed a conscious strategy for racial representation, her manner of representation demonstrates a very real distance—an exoticising—of black from white that permeated (and permeates) white consciousness.
Clearly the amount and accuracy of primary sources about black slaves was (and is) sorely lacking compared to the multitudes of diaries, journals, newspaper accounts of whites from the same period. According to Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, many of the slave narratives in existence were dictated to white interviewers who either had difficulty with "dialect" or simply censored what they heard, or both (1988, p.33). Thus the slave narratives that possibly were available to Bristow may have presented a skewed image of the lives of slaves. Also, she was writing from the perspective of women, and to find primary sources from black women is apparently even more difficult than from black men. Fox-Genovese says: "Few slave women wrote journals, diaries, and letters. As a group, they did not enjoy even the precarious access to the world of published writings enjoyed by white women and former slave men" (p.33). Still, it is doubtful that there was much, if any, more material available by or about poor white women. The character of Corrie May was technically illiterate. Indeed, the New Orleans woman who inspired Bristow to create this character and this book could not write her own name. (Bristow worked as a journalist for the Times Picayune in New Orleans where she discovered the model for her novel in the obituaries [Bristow, 1941].)
After-Words, After-Thoughts: Autobiography and Cultural Studies

In re-reading I can begin to reconstruct an adolescent girl who read this (twenty-two years ago) through locating some of her ignorance—as Shoshana Felman writes, the sites of her "resistance to knowledge" (1987, p. 80). I was not prepared, as a southern teen-aged girl, to relinquish a belief in the romance of the South. Though this novel provided some sense of the inequities and contradictions, it did so without seriously challenging the ahistoricism of Southern romance. Given the mythic characterization of white Southern women as "steel magnolias" which, like myth generally, bears some relation to real people, points of departure from myth and from cliche were few for my adolescent reading as I remember it. Notions of race were as enshrouded in a shimmery vagueness in my re-reading of the book as they are for my memories of specific relations to race at fourteen. I sense that race was a kind of undercurrent that beckoned my attention at the same time it was foreboding. It was exoticised, in much the manner it seems to be for Bristow.

I do not presume to be setting forth some direct cause and effect between my adolescent reading of this novel and what or who I became or was. The value of this re-reading and re-writing for me was more in its
suggestion of the possibility of reconstructing a place (historically, psychologically, geographically) through which I might examine my present relations to others, to myself, to "place"—relations that have a direct bearing on my teaching and notions of knowledge. It has raised for me issues around desire, guilt, privilege, and domination—issues that never cease to concern me in the classroom, in my relations to my students. Indeed, the whole of this study is one outgrowth of my re-reading as I initially re-read Bristow before I embarked upon this project. As Morrison and Ellison demonstrate, the process Morrison has called rememory is difficult and even painful, but necessary for avoiding existential death. To be existentially dead—caught in the fictional register of identity formation?—is to be in no position to learn/teach. It is to be stupid.

In doing work such as this one is "doing" a form of cultural studies. One is also employing a fundamental approach to cultural studies more generally and, in this case, ultimately applying it to problems of pedagogy in teacher education. As Richard Johnson writes in "What is Cultural Studies Anyway?,"

the problems [for approaches which focus on "lived culture"] is how to grasp the more concrete and private moments of cultural circulation. . . . Of course, students of culture have access to private forms through their own experiences and social worlds. This is
a continuous resource, the more so if it is consciously specified and if its relativity is recognised. Indeed, a cultural self-criticism of this kind is the indispensable condition for avoiding the more grossly ideological forms of cultural study (1986-7, p. 69).

Yet the work of autobiography, as with (and along with) literary reading, is necessarily intertextual and inter-subjective.

In arguing the need for a "theory of subjectivity" (p. 63) for cultural studies that takes seriously "the notion of a discursive self-production of subjects, especially in the form of histories and memories" (p. 69), Johnson is also stressing the significance of "readers in texts; readers in society" (p. 65). Moving between readers in texts and readers in societies involves, for Johnson, an intertextual and an interdiscursive competence.

In disciplinary terms we move from a ground usually covered by literary approaches to one more familiar to historical or sociological competences, but the common new element here is the ability to handle a mass of co-existing determinations, operating at many different levels. . . . In everyday life, textual materials are complex, multiple, overlapping, co-existent, juxta-posed, in a word, "inter-textual." If we use a more agile category like discourse, indicating elements that cut across different texts, we can say that all readings are also "inter-discursive" (pp. 66-67).

Autobiography as cultural studies--roughly, studies of means and ends of self-representation--operates by raising and dynamically responding to the following
question: To what extent does a person's constructions of self through narratives about her or his life and reading of texts (especially, here, literary texts) produce new relations and orientations to "culture," and to what extent do these constructions re-produce certain relations and orientations within culture(s)? The self as problematic, inter-subjective and perpetual process and project invites us to learn and to nurture a "cross-cultural imagination" or "literacy of the imagination" (Harris, 1989).

**Student Autobiographies**

The course I taught in which the following autobiographical work was done involved theoretical readings loosely centered around sociology and history or education for the first half of the semester. After some whole-class lecture and discussion each class period, students worked together in small groups of five to six where they were to deal with issues raised in the readings and discussions, often arguing with one another, getting to know one another a bit more intimately that the larger group (about 35 students) allowed. The last portion of each class involved whole-class discussions again in which spokespersons from each group would share their group's ideas with the rest of the class. Occasionally, class
would begin with, instead of my lecture, presentations on readings by students individually to the entire class on the readings, and in which the student brought in at least one relevant outside reading. During group time I circulated among groups, not always making it to each group each time, where I listened, offered suggestions, and participated in discussions. For the second half of the semester we began reading literary autobiographical writings by Maya Angelou and Annie Dillard. Along with these readings students were to do brief interactive (with the texts) autobiographical writings over three general themes that they selected, in part, from a list of possible themes. At this time group work involved sharing their concerns and ideas about the readings and writings, receiving critique from their group members if they so chose. Finally, students were required to share one (in part or in whole) of their writings (their choice) with the entire class. Clearly, such an assignment was frightening for many students at first. I attempted to relieve their sense of vulnerability in a number of ways: first, autobiography was broadly defined to include a number of possible forms such as poetry and autobiographical fiction; second, there were ground rules for the class regarding confidentiality and judgmentalism; third, I began by sharing some of my own work and
third, I began by sharing some of my own work and periodically did so throughout.

In this class students did receive grades for their autobiographical work. That work was judged, however, primarily on whether or not assignments were done and "attended to"—that is, I asked the question "Does she or he seem engaged with it?" Something as simple as length of writing can begin to tell me of at least one sort of engagement. But that is clearly insufficient. Was the tone of the writing glib? Did they rely on cliches? Even if they did rely on cliches, sometimes that was not an indication of insincerity or non-engagement so much as inexperience and repression. For this reason and others I was glad that I had waited, as planned, until mid-term to begin this work, a time after which I knew my students better than at the beginning, and had gained a sense of certain kinds of "limitations." Indeed, it seemed that many apparent limitations were overcome—students went "beyond themselves"—with the autobiographical work. Beyond this it is not easy to articulate specific criteria for judging, but I can say that I found very few students who did not get taken in by the project, sometimes in spite of themselves. I say "in spite of themselves" because there was resistance to the idea at first. I know this from signals given in class, but also, more
concretely, from voluntary, anonymous written evaluations given to me at the end of the semester. Still, the greatest difficulty I have found so far is in finding ways to discourage students from producing something like "Muzak" versions of their lives. Though some of them did succumb to this in at least some of their writings, clearly, many of them avoided it.

Love and the pedagogical imperative.

Trish (a pseudonym) wrote about her reading self. She loves to read and learned to love it from, she believes, one high school teacher in particular. She writes:

I don’t remember much about Mr. Thibodaux before the day I fell head over heels in love with him. He was my eleventh grade English teacher. Incredibly calm and peaceful, he was the epitome of patience. Rumor had it that he had once been a monk. This offered a possible explanation for the endearing way he folded his hands in front of his waist as if they were in the sleeve of an imaginary habit.

English had always been my favorite subject and I was doing quite well in his class. He made the literature seem lively and interesting and his rapid fire discussions went over well. One day he asked me to stay after class. He said that he had liked my
report on The Catcher in the Rye and asked if I would be interested in doing some extra reading. Until that time I had only read what was assigned in school. In fact, I remember thinking that he was offering me extra credit. But what he offered was a stack of his own books that he’d had when he was my age. I didn’t think I would be interested in all this extra "work." But, always anxious to please the teacher, I took them.

A strange thing happened as I delved into Harper Lee and Mark Twain, I constantly thought about Mr. Thibodaux. What did he think about the story and the characters? Had he laughed and cried at the same places I had? I hungrily read everything he suggested in preparation for the "big moment." That was once a week when after class he would fold his hands, tilt his head, and ask, "Well, what have you been reading?" I had developed a huge crush on him and this was the only time he spoke to me on any kind of personal level. Needless to say, I lived for this moment and was always sure to be well prepared for the ensuing discussion.

Trish then writes of returning to her high school after four years--four years of "reading like a madman"--to visit Mr. Thibodaux. She was shocked at the profound
difference in her earlier impression of his physical appearance and what she saw now. The prior obsession, she now realized, was based in a kind of transference love (though she did not call it that) that her high school self was unable to disentangle from feelings of romantic love. Indeed, as discussed earlier, such love cannot be viewed as in clear distinction.

In private conversation Trish told me that she still falls in love with good teachers though not with the same illusions. She was concerned about this and asked me if I understood— if I did the same thing. She was particularly distressed over the fact that this most often occurred for her with her male professors. Reminding her that probably most of her professors are male I did offer the suggestion that she give this some thought by writing about it in the context of her current readings for the class.

Indeed, in her next writing she asked herself the question, "Why are most of the teachers I loved male?" She writes:

I don't think that most of the teachers I've "loved" have to do with that kind of crush/romantic love as in the case of Mr. Thibodaux. I think that in my feelings for the good teachers there is a determinable amount of respect. But in trying to find
examples of really good female teachers I can only come up with two . . .

She then initiates an exploration of her different expectations for male and female teachers with a quote from Annie Dillard's *An American Childhood*: "They [boys] had been learning self-control. We [girls] had failed to develop any selves worth controlling" (1987, p. 91). Trish writes:

> What a scary, scary passage. Does it really start that young? How many things must be undone to expose this conditioning that is begun so early? Is it possible? I know that this feeling exists in me and I reject it to the point of meanness. This is not a good solution! So what can be done about something that is so prevalent in our society?

Trish's "meanness" is, she discovers, in that her female teachers must work much harder than her male ones to win her respect. Female teachers that she had liked as an elementary and high school student had been likable because they were "sweet," but all too often this sweetness was manifested in low expectations for students, particularly girl students. Trish, it seems, resented this as she grew older and discovered her own mind. That resentment resulted in pre-judgment for female teachers, and a kind of subconscious requirement that they work
harder now, for atonement. Trish is deeply disturbed at
her own complicity in patriarchy implicit in this
attitude.

I am not suggesting that Trish necessarily came to
some deep psychoanalytic understanding of notions of
desire and transference, nor that this is necessary.
However, I do think it possible that she has been set on a
trajectory of discovery of sorts with her new way of
reading both texts and herself. My own interpretation of
her writing and our conversations is that Trish has
encountered a "surprise of otherness" in her recognition,
through reading and writing, of some of the cultural
foundations of her reactions to male and female teachers,
as well as the possibilities for departures from cultural
"scripts." She has encountered the significance of
otherness not only in her reconstructed perceptions of Mr.
Thibidaux and her female teachers, but also within
herself.

Transformations and difference (past and present).
At the end of the semester Donna (pseudonym) writes:

I've tried and tried to title this writing, but
I just can't find one that is suitable. So, I'll just
jump straight into what I want to say. This is a
combination of me, Donna, trying to explain both to
myself, and to you, my teacher, what this class has taught me about "otherness," and how it has changed my vision of myself as a teacher.

I have always been a very prejudiced person, although that is something I never would have admitted, perhaps even to myself, before this course. My prejudices, although they include racial ones, are certainly not exclusive to them. I have grown up with the belief that I was better than "others." "Others," in my life, were people who looked different, acted different, wore the wrong kind of clothes, drove the wrong car, held the wrong job, had a poor ACT score, a bad perm, a strange accent. The list is almost endless. I would certainly never have voiced my opinion; that would be tacky, cruel. No one that knows me would ever accuse me of being unkind, stuck-up, or even prejudiced. But in my mind, these feelings lived.

When I made the decision to teach, I began to see the potential conflict between my desire to be a good teacher, and the intolerance I felt. In this day and age, such biases are easy to justify, but I wasn’t fooling myself. This wasn’t right, and it wasn’t the person I wanted to be. How could I be a good teacher, change students’ lives, be someone they
respected and hold on to these beliefs. I couldn’t.

The early readings in this course began to give me something concrete to think about. These things made sense! As a teacher, it was important for me to alienate no one, to show no favoritism or bias. All of these children deserve the best education I could give them, and I knew that "hiding" my biases would not work.

Maya Angelou’s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* spoke more directly to my heart. This was a wonderful, brilliant child. A child with questions and feelings very much like I would have, had I been in her situation. But society has not treated me like it treated her, like it treats so many children. That was the only real difference between me and Maya. I read Maya Angelou’s book twice; I couldn’t get enough of it the first time. I began to look at the people around me differently. Why did I have so little patience with others? Wasn’t that why I wanted to teach, to bring something to someone who did not have it before? How could I expect everyone to be like me? They could easily ask the same of me!

I also have had to face up to why this class was so difficult for me to engage in throughout the semester. This was trying ground for me to cover, new
ground. These were questions I had not yet resolved for myself, and I was hesitant to deal with these things in a large group of people. However, this class has gone a long way toward helping me to answer my questions about myself. I have begun to resolve the inner struggles that my desire to teach has generated. I'm glad that I have chosen a future and a profession that is making me into a better person, a person that I can respect.

Note: This is the last essay that I actually wrote. Although it deals with a topic for the first week, in my mind and heart, it ties together what this semester has meant to me.

This writing brings to the fore a number of questions. Was Donna writing just what she thought I wanted to hear? Of course, I have no way of answering this definitively, but given the intensity of her writing, to answer it in the affirmative seems an act of distrust. She was a very quiet student, as her writing might indicate, and I had no idea until this time that she felt as she did about the class. Her grades had all been high as well--there was no need to attempt to please me on that account.

More importantly for me is the question of how or if this differs, in result or in apparent goal, from those "human relations" approaches to, and models for,
multicultural education that I have criticized and wished to go beyond. Certainly, it seems clear that Donna has experienced a change in attitude toward cultural differences—the primary stated goal of human relations multicultural education. But I want to make the argument that her change has been toward the very idea of difference, and that this constitutes, for Donna, a new way of reading—of reading, similar to Trish, for the surprise of otherness.

This can be discussed by looking at a few key sentences in her writing. Some of her statements are problematic in the context of this project. For example she writes, "But society has not treated me like it treated her, like it treats so many children. That was the only real difference between me and Maya." This urge to collapse very real differences between herself and Angelou may be a necessary step in her construction of herself, much like Pinar advises with his thermostatic notion of an "architecture of the self." We build it according to what needs attending for the moment. Plans can always be changed later. Donna’s sense of herself as utterly separate from "others" may need addressing before concerns about "fusion." That she will stop with this construction is in no way implied by her particular reading.
Then, in the same paragraph, she writes: "How could I expect everyone to be like me? They could easily ask the same of me!" Is this merely a "human relations" gesture? I think it probably encompasses that but I do not think it is merely that. Through certain literary works it is possible for students to learn a new way to read . . . a new assemblage is constructed. That is more than mere change in attitude as it is typically framed in the goals of "human relations" multicultural curricula--curricula which sought to generate harmony across difference without ever interrogating the historical and cultural sources of genuine conflict. Finally, I am talking about "human relations." But not about the sort of human relations that ignores larger contexts of the social, the cultural, the historical, and the political. My students, in these examples, I believe, are discovering the ways in which culture is made at both macro and micro levels. They discover the fallacy of viewing tradition as a monocultural commodity rather than a dynamic transformation produced by encounters between and among cultures. We are produced not only by what we "do to" others, but also by their responses to that and vice versa. To read "tradition" as "common culture" pure and simple becomes absurd from this perspective.
It is not my intention to set these examples up as some sort of "proof" that ideas in this writing have been tested and found to "work." I believe that, in fact, these examples are contradictory enough to point to the need for further study (in terms of possible uses) in the context of teacher education classrooms. For these same reasons, although I have many more examples of student autobiographical writing, I will not include more writings here. To do so would only serve to dominate the chapter with embryonic "data," and to undermine my purpose in writing it.

**Conclusion**

The self-reflective writing that has been done in and for my classroom and by myself, as well as the type of student and teacher work I am suggesting in this study through theoretical explorations calls for a reconceptualization of multicultural teacher education and curriculum. This reconceptualization involves attending to the historical and current development of cultural studies as well as to the politics of identity. Literary and autobiographical studies glimpsed through a cultural studies lens are interdisciplinary and intertextual. The approaches I envision and have attempted to describe operate through awareness of what Geertz has called
"blurred genres" (1983)--another phrase for studies being approached within and through other disciplines, and particularly through "textual" approaches. Students reading and writing about literature in conversation with self through awareness of social and cultural theory as well as the philosophical and psychological underpinnings of such theory are learning to read difference and otherness at a depth not typically available to students of multicultural teacher education. This is, indeed, a tall order. I am not suggesting that the job could be completed in this class from which I have drawn examples. To the contrary, it is just a beginning. Such a "liberal" intellectual approach requires not a course or two on multicultural education and self-reflective reading and writing, but an entire curriculum of study in which educational studies are envisioned as inherently multicultural, personal and, in significant senses, as a "liberal arts discipline" (Beyer, Feinberg, Whitson, and Pagano, 1991). The particular way in which Beyer, et al. frame their conception of educational studies as liberal art is indeed interdisciplinary and one which echoes many of the concerns of cultural studies.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

You are born at the same time with a lot of other people, all mixed up with them, like trying to, having to, move your arms and legs with strings only the same strings are hitched to all the other arms and legs and the others all trying and they dont know why either except that the strings are all in one another's way like five or six people all trying to make a rug on the same loom only each one wants to weave his own pattern into the rug (Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, 1936, p. 127).

This passage seems an apt description of the way problems get served up in daily living, and those that I have attempted to explicate in this writing are no exception. One might feel that such an image is echoed in poststructuralist theorizing whereby nothing is ever certain, stable, unified, or closed, but always in some sort of turbulent process. Particular and engaging literature presents itself to us somewhere inbetween daily life and theory. Yet at the same time, "theory is here often the straight man whose precarious rectitude and hidden visibility, passion, and pathos are precisely what literature has somehow already foreseen" (Johnson, B., 1980, p. xii).

If literature is comedian to theory's straight man, then poststructuralist theory must surely be a kind of literature to other kinds of theory. Through poststructuralist theory we have been taught the ways in
which deconstruction can avoid some of the constraints of dialectical thinking, and how it is possible to let go of some of the certainty we have sometimes so desperately, so obsessively, and at times so oppressively clawed after. Poststructuralist theorizing seem to be looking into (or listening into?) creating an environment in which living can be sufficiently playful, loving, adventurous, and so on. But this theorizing sometimes appears to want to skip over the step of obliterating overt physically/materially manifested oppressions—to pretend that they have already been taken care of, and that we can move on now. At worst these theories are oblivious to their own conservatism, caught in denial and repression, presenting no serious challenge to whatever is.

Structuralist materialist theorizing, on the other hand, holds another set of potential traps and contradictions. The primacy of the material that supports human need—its availability, control, and movement—is a fundamental presupposition of materialist theories. As such these theories are logically first and foremost social class-based theories. What this has meant historically is that class concerns have been privileged over others such as race and gender, "because, we are told, it [class] is more fundamental than any other interests or forms of social power" (Young, 1990, p. 4).
As I have labored to explain, any discourse which polarizes, posing the one as good and the other as evil, or one as primary and the other as merely secondary, is suspect in terms of its own capacity for violence and totalization. Although I make efforts to avoid this, my discourse is no exception. Most differences, however, are matters of degree and not matters of distinction. The very difficulty of avoiding such polarization can be appreciated, and degrees of failure forgiven, once we glimpse the dazzling complexity of human (and other) existence and relationships. Hence, I must say, materialism as an informing system cannot be ignored in this circuit. Indeed, contradictions among "the ruling class" over issues of culture in the present configuration are material (structural) as well as psychosocial or discursive. For example, with well known demographic trends toward a "majority minority," manifestations of a fear of falling from the center (fears of, primarily, white male academics) are often operating in direct opposition to corporate movements in their visions of future marketing and employment needs. In this respect it could be that "capitalism, out of self-interest, [will] facilitate our entrance into a new stage of race relations" (Martinez, 1991, p. 130). However, it is difficult to predict what shape this "stage" may take
given the still strongly entrenched underlying ideological construction of white supremacy.

This is where educational institutions might be able to provide critical intervention. However, the sort of intervention I envision—one which seriously interrogates the politics of identity and culture—is difficult to impossible if the discourse of white supremacy is allowed to remain invisible and extra-topical in academic debates. This discourse plays itself out in many particular ways and forms: popular culture and media, policies of the state, institutional practices, academic theories, and so on. All of these discursive forms contribute to the psychosocial climate that produces subjectivities and notions of identity. Such a discursive field also takes particular shapes and textures according to the particular cultural ecologies in which it is functioning. Educational interventions that do not take such particularities into account amount to a kind of intellectual tourism (Roman, cited in McCarthy 1988b)—tourism that is unable to challenge dominant ideologies of white supremacy and patriarchy.

Intellectual tourism results when scholars refuse to figure particular cultural forms, subjectivities, and agencies into their theoretical formulations and, rather, to subsume all of these under singular, totalizing social
theories such as with liberal and radical theories of social class, as well as conservative and neo-conservative theories of cultural deprivation (McCarthy, 1988b). Within such a paradigm "third world" subjects become objects as do marginalized groups in the "first world." Likewise, one can learn to read like a tourist (as do students within such systems)—a learned illiteracy—reading oneself into everything, one-way translation that reads others only through the lenses of a singularly conceptualized, dominant culture, reading that literally precedes itself in exotic fantasizing. I mean by "precedes itself" that it is pre-figured; (re)interpretation is unnecessary. It is the type of reading Mariah and her husband did of Lucy (in Kincaid's *Lucy*) whereby Lucy's pedagogical attitude was interpreted as her way of expressing to them what a "hard life" she (and "her people") had had.

My own efforts here and in my classroom are to expose that "will to ignore" that leads to critical illiteracy so that a new condition of reading is possible. This is reading that discloses to the reader her or his own desire to ignore, to repress, to seek "bottom line" closure everywhere. Once again, it is reading that "encounters and propagates the surprise of otherness" (Johnson, B., 1987, p. 15). Reading for the surprise of otherness, like identity formation across Taubman's three registers, is
always reading via someone/something else. This someone else is not only, in part, other than the reader, it is also, in part, other than the author. It is translation without a master.

Like the impossibility of escaping the metaphysics of presence, this goal or outcome, is unrealizable in any absolute sense. The process of working toward this is what is significant. However, process does not imply method. As Johnson explains, "No methodology can be relied on to generate surprise. On the contrary, it is usually surprise that engenders methodology" (p. 15). This "literacy of the imagination" (Harris, 1989) is a literacy that does not answer to the notion of an "excellence" (in education) that exists above and apart from notions of "equity." It is, I believe, a move toward the same literacy that Whitson refers to when he writes, "the point is that literacy requires the dialogue that bigotry prevents, so that the bigot is and must be a bad reader" (1988, p. 294). One cannot "see" (or hear) the familiar until it is made strange. Western culture is best understood in the context of studies of other cultures, including the ways in which these cultures encounter and transform one another. And this reading of the world necessarily takes place in the context of reading the self.
"Listening to the non-synchronous voices from the periphery," (McCarthy, 1988b, p. 17) Faulkner's gaze might become Ellison's (musical) hearing. Theoretical voices from the periphery are still grossly under-represented, even in the literature of cultural studies. Even when theory written by the marginalized has been included it has been highly derivative of Anglo or European theory. For example, no one would guess from Stuart Hall's earlier work that he is an African-Caribbean immigrant to England. More often, voices from the periphery that generate "otic" theories--theories of listening--are literary voices. The gazing "ocular" "abstractions of western sociology . . . that negate the specific histories of third world people" (p. 18) and other marginalized groups demand a response that only a "literature of resistance" (p. 18) can provide. McCarthy offers an eloquent plea:

I argue for a genuine, interdisciplinary encounter between third world and New World literature and popular cultural forms and Old World derived sociology of education as the basis of an alternative radical discourse that would render audible the heterogeneous voices of oppressed raced, classed, and gendered third world subjects (p. 18).

The power of such literature becomes most evident when measured next to the stridency and shrillness of conservative attacks against it--attacks intended to
conserve what is thought to be western cultural tradition as embodied in canonical literature. When cultural studies scholars insist to traditionalists ("canonizers") that they do not wish to eliminate canonical works, traditionalist arguments proceed through a different tack. What was the a-historical becomes the anti-historical.

Literature becomes canonized presumably because it is great as proven, in part, by "the test of time." It is great and enduring, so the argument often goes, because it contains universal truths—verities. But "universal truths" or values are hard to pin down because the contexts in which these texts are read is ever-shifting. To assert the existence of universal truths is to assert a kind of final interpretation—an a-historical stance. Currently, in critiques of multiculturalism, traditionalists are frequently going further than just to say the "great works" should always be taught. Now they are more insistent about the way they should be taught. Particular readings of canonical texts that take into consideration social/historical contexts that may include uncovering racism or sexism for example, are under attack for "reducing literature to 'ideology'" (Berube, 1991, p. 37). Complaints about "ideological" readings of texts are often really complaints about historical readings. It is in this sense that what was the a-historical becomes now
the anti-historical. So who, Berube asks, is being reductive?

In these debates attacks against "political correctness" are often veiled attacks against cultural studies as well as exhibitions of profound insecurities over national identity. "Multiculturalists," cultural studies scholars, the so-called politically correct, do need to pay attention to these expressions of fear and desire. The Left academics, some of whom are scholars of the politics of culture, who are accused of this intolerance, have been steadily losing advocates because of a failure to acknowledge particular problems of identity—perhaps especially those problems of the autobiographical register (in spite of the fact the ostensible arguments are over national identity). People who might wish to be social activists but feel demoralized, in need of emotional support at a time when there are few social rewards for activism, have been accused of being self-indulgent. Consequently, support groups with names like "adult children" or "recovering addicts" are getting the commitments from people who might otherwise be peace or civil rights activists, for example (Herman, 1991, pp. 42-46). "No one, of course, should have to make the impossible choice between personal and social change" (p. 46).
The problems with this move to embrace psychological health to the exclusion of commitment to social health are obvious. Once again, identity is "lived" as if it operates out of a single register, only this way it is the autobiographical rather than the communal. The fallacy of such a uni-dimensional approach to identity is evident, for example, in the ways in which some psychological practitioners have historically supported politically repressive goals through such moves as offering "incontrovertible evidence of homosexual psychopathology, and design[ing] propaganda to efficiently destroy radical organizations" (p. 46). Clearly, when identity problems are relinquished to such practitioners the social and political problems are multiplied. As Herman suggests, progressive change is predicated on rejection of "the dualism between internal and external transformation" (p. 46). A politics of culture and identity approached through literature can perhaps provide a reparation.

The anxiety over "eternal truths" in canonical literature could be read as a search for a kind of consolation. Italo Calvino wrote in The Uses of Literature of the fallacy of seeing literature merely as an assortment of eternal human sentiments, as the truth of a human language that politics tends to overlook. . . . Behind this way of thinking is the notion of a set of established values that literature is responsible for preserving, the classical and immobile idea of
literature as the depository of a given truth. If it agrees to take on this role, literature confines itself to a function of consolation, preservation, and regression (cited in Goodman, 1991, p. 124).

Calvino offers an alternative way to view literature. It becomes most useful when it gives a voice to whatever is without a voice, when it gives a name to what as yet has no name, especially to what the language of politics excludes or attempts to exclude (p. 124).

Voices from the periphery, to be heard, require a cultural studies of listening, an "otic" theory. For me, good literature is written work which engages readers by appealing to similarities at the same time it provides glimpses at and avenues of escape into difference, marginality, otherness. To do this literature itself has to listen. Literature, then, often begins in the mundane but takes a "line of flight," in Deleuze's sense of that phrase, out of the mundane. It is a frontier of sorts (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987, pp. 36-51).

Autobiography and Identity

But what about the "ocular" character of autobiography whereby a "specular structure" presents itself the moment a writer "declares himself the subject of his own understanding" (de Man cited in Smith, 1988, p. 103)? Specular is as self-reflection—reflection that can
be trapped in infinite regress, a hall of mirrors. How is this reconciled to the call for theorizing that undermines "the gaze?" Self gazing upon self gives way to listening as soon as that self recognizes its own division, its relational necessity, its very definition in dynamic relationality, and its (non-neurotic) instability. It is difficult to see something that always moves away, but movement is essential for creating sound, for hearing. With autobiography that asserts itself only in relation (in relation to margins), particular, regional and repressed histories can be recovered as they are with literature of the margins.

The self that is not in mastery of itself (or of anyone) recognizes its own division. That division is, in part, about race. As Deleuze and Guattari remind us,

there is no race but inferior, minoritarian, there is no dominant race, a race is not defined by its purity but rather by the impurity conferred upon it by a system of domination. Bastard and mixed blood are the true names of race (1990, p. 12).

Susie Phipps has heard this story. Recall what Paul Smith writes about paranoia: "the 'subject' thus endows the external world with what it takes to be its own worst tendencies and qualities" (1988, p. 95). The "subject" projects its own pessimistic inner concoctions onto the world it "sees." Theories of the visual are analogous to the paranoid--a kind of "metaparanoia" (p. 97). As in
Faulkner's Rosa and Ellison's Brotherhood, and as Halpin points out (1990), those ocular theories (theorists) presume to see all but believe that they themselves cannot be seen and indeed work to cover over their own visibility. Within this "metaparanoia," "The division of the 'subject' (the division it makes and the division it is) is thus hidden for the purposes of a mastery" (p. 97, italics added).

That instability that is "self," that is not neurotic, not divided against itself, can be "seen" through a new "vision" of a non-visual approach to theorizing. Literature and autobiography are crucial to that project. Because the exhilaration and significance of reading/writing and writing/reading literature lie somewhere between the tentative naming of oneself and plunging into difference, I encourage students and teachers to think about directing their writing toward such "discoveries" (inventions?).

The stories we create about ourselves are, in part, what determines our perceptions of ourselves and, as such, influence what we become to ourselves and others. The self is constructed by the writing, but not as a static, final self. Rather, it becomes a self-in-motion, reading and writing in such a way as to recognize the fictional, communal, and autobiographical registers of identity as
interpenetrating and deconstructing one another. Yet, the larger questions for this study have become: What is a better way to come to "know" difference, both cultural and individual? How can we work to understand both cultural and individual difference both intra- and inter-subjectively?

Many argue that the best way to understand cultural difference is through immersion. But even were this to be a possible, practical, approach for (multicultural) teacher education, it still requires of the participant a suspension of resistance to difference that living within a different culture does not necessarily insure. Certain literary works can provide a kind of "practical" immersion, while autobiographical work done alongside literary readings can serve as a medium for suspending resistance to difference by placing the self positively within that difference, as in the case, for example, of my student, Donna. At the same time, readings from the cultural studies traditions can provide the tools for deepening such an approach, for thinking through social, cultural and literary theories as they inform inter-textual readings of literary works of different times and cultures, and thereby remind us of the truly multi-cultural encounters that create and sustain us.
Final Remarks

It is clear that British Cultural Studies holds no monopoly on those ideas that inspired and sustained it, such as the ideas of studies that challenge disciplinary boundaries and that dare to work from the academic margins in order to avoid appropriation by the dominant political order(s). Many disciplines of the traditional liberal arts and social sciences are increasingly viewing themselves as actors through such scholarly approaches—for example, in anthropology Geertz proclaims the necessary acknowledgment of "blurred genres" (1983); in philosophy, post-structuralists proclaim the primacy of literary texts as philosophical texts (e.g., Guattari, 1990); literature, philosophy and autobiography are bound together for the purpose of psychotherapy (White & Epston, 1990); and these same elements are employed in the service of historiography (Portelli, 1991). Nevertheless, "cultural studies" as a movement that provided much of the early labor for these others must be acknowledged and their struggles remembered lest the difficulties be unnecessarily repeated. Its history and labors have as yet informed the work of multicultural education scholars only marginally. It is as though we have believed that our teacher education students cannot be troubled with such a heavy intellectual burden. Such a belief is not justified
by my own experiences through approaches described in this study—approaches that have now been shared with both undergraduate and graduate students of education.

However, a difficulty remains for me with the autobiographical work over which there must never be complacency. The fact that many students may respond to autobiographical assignments with such an intensity as to indicate that they want, indeed are hungry, to tell their tales does not absolve me of the responsibility of questioning my rights to ask for them and my ways of asking for them. People often want what is not in their best interests, as is so often exemplified by economically deprived parents of children attending economically deprived schools who insist that they want for their children lock-step, rote and "discipline." The question of whether or not to proceed this way comes back to me always as an uneasy one at best. With Grumet I feel that:

if my work permits the teachers I work with to examine their own work with a seeing that is more inclusive, that surveys an ever widening surround, that is a search I would gladly join. But if my work certifies me as an agent of the state to peer into what is hidden from public view, if it is my look that discovers and appraises, then I might as well approach the classroom with bloodhound as well as briefcase, and they ought to demand to see my warrant before they let me in (1991, p. 71).

Finally, I cannot justify what I do beyond what I see (or think I see), and have attempted to describe and explain
here, as a growth of love. And I write this word (love) in hopes that it will not be read as a regressively sentimental idea, full of sweetness and harmony, but rather in the context of the ways it has been written and thought in earlier chapters.

Finally, it is love that brings together literature, marginality, and curriculum. As Daignault pointed out (1989) to me (and as I later found for myself with excursions through English language etymological dictionaries), the Latin infinitive for religion, religere, means to re-read and to care. (Negligere is its Latin opposite and means negligence). Curare, different but similar in sound and spelling to currere, also means to care. Cultus (culture) means care; worship. And love is related in my own text to both care and to religion (in the sense of spirituality) as well as desire. "Leave is the offspring of yet another Indo-European root, leubh- 'to care, to desire; to love'" (Partridge, 1982, p. 189).

And this leaves us with crisis, Greek krisis (a separating, decision, discrimination); Latin discrimen (interval, intervening space, turning point, difference, risk). The risk of loving--caring, deciding, discriminating, and finally leaving (in any number of senses)--is common to the educational enterprise and to literature. And it is living in the midst of this risk
(crisis) that marks the margins in all its layers. I leave you with this.
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VITA

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