

# Mapping the Doctoral Journey via Autobiographical Consciousness Locating Self and Finding Voice in the Academy

JO VICTORIA NICHOLSON-GOODMAN  
*Penn State University, Harrisburg*

## Introduction

*I am well aware that what I have to say here, which for a long time I wanted to leave at least partly in the implicit state of a practical sense of theoretical things, is rooted in the singular, and singularly limited, experiences of a particular existence, and that the events of the world, or the minor dramas of university life, can have a very profound effect on consciousnesses and unconsciousnesses. Does that imply that what I say is thereby particularized or relativized?*

– Pierre Bourdieu (2000), *Pascalian Meditations*, p. 3

**A**S I APPROACHED THE WRITING of my dissertation overview, my father fell suddenly ill and died. His death came as an abrupt awakening to loss, and also as a moment for a renewed recognition of his legacy. I traveled to Portland, Maine to help my sister pack up his studio/apartment, a smallish space on an upper floor with a wall of windows overlooking the shoreline on Peaks Island. (Lest I leave the impression that my father was a man of means, it bears mentioning that he had acquired this lodging before development had led to a surge in real estate and thus rental values.) There, his artist's eyes and ears had taken in the sights and sounds of travelers disembarking from the ferry, the dinghies, sailboats and yachts in the harbor, the fierce hum of the ferry coming and going, the slapping of waves against a rocky shore, and the cries of the gulls. Finding his way to Portland late in life, it was a place he loved, a place he had come to call home and had tried, in his artistic way, to defend from overdevelopment.

It was there that his life, lived at some distance from mine, opened before me in a way that it hadn't since I was a small child. I had been struggling, as we all must, with theoretical stance and its justification, operating in cerebral mode. In that moment, my focus shifted to a painful, yet celebratory reminiscence, contemplating the role played by both my parents in shaping my persona. The reminiscence grabbed my attention and took center stage in my struggle for

authenticity (i.e., locating self and finding voice in the academy). My gaze, therefore, turned towards autobiography as a means to come to grips with my way of seeing, my way of being-in-the-world, which I treat here as an autobiographical curriculum of theoretical stance.

I had framed my formal conceptualization of my work as a social cartography project (Paulston, 2000) (i.e., mapping discursive terrain to portray the interrelations of competing and conflicting claims surrounding some issue, concern, or direction). Before I could begin that major project, however, I felt the necessity of mapping out my own troubled conceptual terrain, the terrain of my inherent desire for erudition and a conception of its logic that appeared to be in conflict with my innate tendency towards an aesthetic sensibility. I therefore wanted to enact this inquiry aesthetically, to *write* it, as I have always done. As a result, I turned to *autobiography*—particularly to the work of Bill Pinar and Madeleine Grumet—under the mentorship of Noreen Garman, who invited me into her qualitative world and introduced me to curriculum studies. While she appreciated my use of social cartography as a tool for deciphering disputes over contested curricular terrain, she also cautioned me to remember that the mapping was simply a vehicle for curriculum theorizing.<sup>1</sup> My task, then, was, first, to envision *where* I wanted it to take me and *why* and then to design the vehicle accordingly.

Mapping my doctoral journey via autobiography thus served a dual purpose: on the one hand, I was engrossed in the autobiographical process itself as I sorted out how those who most substantially contributed to my sense of self and of the world, my parents, had variously influenced my thinking about life and learning; on the other, I was seeking a way to make sense of my relations with the field and with the academy itself (i.e., to understand the space between scholarship and self, a space where I was confronting complexities posed by my own autobiographical awareness and the idiosyncrasies of my thinking even as I wrestled with my stance as an aspiring scholar and student researcher). This paper reflects not only those efforts but also the extent to which they reflect a “complicated conversation” (Pinar, 2004).

The doctoral journey is a phenomenon that is at once both idiosyncratic—in that it is specific to and for the individual learner—and replicable—in that it is the product of a well-honed and time-honored process more or less standardized within the limits of approval customarily defined within specific disciplines. What renders it unique is not only what the individual learner seeks to attain and thus contributes as a result (which is somewhat dependent upon how the learner perceives and enacts the process) but also the nature of guidance from the mentors assisting in the undertaking of the journey—that is, the degree of autonomy offered (and thus appropriated by the learner) in the formulation and execution of the task. It should therefore be acknowledged that, in this case, the learner under study was accorded a wide berth within which to conceptualize and conduct inquiry, so that the mapping of this author’s journey reflects the view through a wide lens, a panorama of possibilities resonant with her lived experiences, and may thus present an exception rather than demonstrating a rule.

Mapping the doctoral journey via the manner in which autobiographical consciousness is understood and expressed here therefore necessarily involves a two-fold theoretical conundrum. First, both the journey and its mapping are unique and specific to the individual under study and therefore difficult to articulate in terms that might serve others well, even within related disciplines. Second, the mapping itself is a heuristic device open to the critical reading of those whose own experiences may lead them to view both the journey and the process through which it is experienced differently. Thus, the map must be accompanied by self-disclosure of some sort and yet must convey something of value to others, something that moves readers beyond the personal narrative that is its source so that it resonates with their own experiences.

Since the purpose of this study is to convey the possibilities inherent in theoretical inquiry grounded in autobiographical exploration, it is hoped that this *something* may be found by those who—however different their life-worlds may be from this author’s—seek to integrate their own lived experiences with a contribution to scholarship within their disciplinary fields and thus to locate themselves and find voice within the academy in an authentic manner. To address the conundrum of integrating multiple selves in the process of mapping this terrain while excavating it for a sense of possible relevance for others, I draw my theoretical frame from Pinar’s (2000) work on the kind of socialization occasioned by schooling as “roughly equivalent to going mad” (p. 359) and from Grumet’s (1988, 1990) work on autobiographical consciousness and a triadic view of *voice*. Finally, to orient my reader to the mapping itself, I provide a brief discussion of its intent as a kind of “cognitive art” (Paulston & Liebman, 2000, p. 14), which I have argued elsewhere is perhaps better seen simply as “artful inquiry” (Nicholson-Goodman, 2009).

### Theoretical Framework

In “Sanity, Madness, and the School,” Pinar (2000), following a quarter-century of critiques of schooling, reviews arguments that lead him to conclude that “socialization is roughly equivalent to going mad” (p. 359) in the sense that socialization may lead to “a psychic deterioration” as framed by social phenomenology (p. 360). Working from “the *lebenswelt*... the world of lived experience of persons in school, including various modalities of experience, such as thoughts, images, feelings, reveries, and so on” (p. 360), Pinar (2000) maintains that the effects of the “‘banking’ or ‘digestive’ concept of education...” involves a number of self-destructive tendencies. Several of these effects are of specific interest here, particularly those involving: “loss of self,” either through “division of self” or “estrangement of self”; “arrested development of autonomy”; a “turn from self-direction to other-direction”; “alienation from personal reality”; and “atrophy of capacity to perceive esthetically” (pp. 363-382).

Pinar (2000) observes that to get children “to desire to be like someone else, children must learn to be dissatisfied with themselves,” deriving from “the introjected nonacceptance [*sic*] by a significant other” (p. 363). This he sees as a “violent” turn in that it “represents a violation of self” where one’s sense of self and this non-acceptance reside side by side and merge, resulting in “a self turned against itself, a divided self, or... a self lost to others” (364). In his thinking, this is “dangerous,” leading to a condition where

...one’s identity is constantly in question, since it resides outside oneself. One feels ontologically insecure (Laing 1969), and such insecurity prevents and arrests man’s [*sic*] ontological vocation of becoming more human, more himself. (Freire, 1970, p. 364)

Addressing the “arrested development of autonomy,” Pinar (2000) argues that the child moves from mere compliance with the teacher’s instructions to actually developing a dependency on being instructed that becomes invisible to the extent that it is made to appear “natural” (p. 365)—as it reflects a transfer of dependency upon the parents to dependency upon the teacher. In his view,

With domination, concomitant dependence, loss of freedom, the development of autonomy is arrested. Autonomy means making one’s own rules, ...being one’s own

instructor in a sense, and making “external laws conform to the internal laws of the soul, to deny all that is and create a new world according to the laws of one’s own heart.” (p. 366)

Thus, he argues, to the extent that schooling fosters “obedience to authority,” it also “requires loss of self to the control of others” (p. 366), resulting in an arrested development of autonomy.

Further, Pinar (2000) attributes “alienation from personal reality” as deriving from the “impersonality of schooling groups” (p. 376), noting that:

Often it is only in solitude that one’s personal reality can be preserved, and its preservation is nothing less than the preservation of sanity. Kierkegaard considered solitude, as enriching inwardness, a sine qua non for individual development. In fact, he viewed the ability to be with oneself the supreme test of the individual... (p. 377)

A corollary of this alienation is “estrangement from self,” drawn from the Jungian notion of “psychic growth” as a “slow imperceptible process” that is “contingent upon the extent to which the ego is willing to listen to the messages of the self” (p. 372). “It can only be real,” Pinar maintains, “if the person is aware of the process and consciously making a connection with it”—in short, the self “must participate in” its own “development” (p. 372). He argues that “the cognitive stress of schooling tends to make children think rather than feel,” to become “master ‘thinkers,’” to cease attending to “internal messages,” and this exacerbates the loss of self through division or estrangement, and thus an alienation, from personal reality (p. 373).

Related to this estrangement is the idea that “under the influence of schooling... self-direction gives way to other-direction” so that over time the self ceases to initiate “activity,” which proceeds instead from the instruction or direction of the other (p. 373). This “shift from intrinsic to extrinsic motivation” is what Pinar calls “the muddling of motives,” derailing children and adults alike from deriving meaning and purpose from within as they habitually take direction from a source outside themselves (p. 374).

Finally, he addresses what he sees as an “atrophy of capacity to perceive esthetically”:  
 Esthetic experience... involves the shattering of the “existent” inner order, permitting a new synthesis. People who are fixed or frozen inside, whose order is inviolate, are only half alive. Nothing less than psychic rebirth into an order in flux, sensitive and alive to the fluidity outside, permits an identity capable of the sensuous and the esthetic. (p. 381)

He sees schooling as precluding esthetic experience, given that “the focus is study, development of the intellect” (p. 381), and he thus surmises that:

The cumulative effect of the schooling experience is devastating. We graduate, credentialed but crazed, erudite but fragmented shells of the human possibility.

What course of action can be recommended to correct this state? ...an intensive adherence to one’s “within” forms the basis of renewal strategies. What configurations this loyalty to one’s subjectivity must take and what such configurations mean for theorists of the process of education are not yet clear. (pp. 381-382)

Another way of seeing this may be found in Madeleine Grumet's (1988, 1990) work on autobiographical consciousness and voice. Searching for an authentic voice for women-as-teachers and lamenting the distance between feminism and phenomenology, Grumet (1988) urges that what is needed is "a mediating method that stretches between lived phenomena and an ideology of family life to help us diminish the distance between the private and public poles of our experience" (p. 65). She asserts that "the world we feel, the world we remember, is also the world we make up" (p. 65). For Grumet, the *possible* is situated in this "in-between" that we create as we engage in the process of self-construction.

Grumet (1988) turns to "autobiographical consciousness"<sup>2</sup> as a way to "open to new possibilities of expression and realization" and to "autobiographical narratives" capable of exposing "idealizations constructed to deny responsibility for the sense we make of ourselves, our work, our world" (p. 66). Because my intention here is not to "deny responsibility," but rather to affirm a creative view of it, I open those "idealizations" for inspection; the project of disclosure serves the purpose of exposure and lies at the forefront of my efforts, if only so that I might see these narratives in new light. For Grumet (1988), "the literary narrative that is autobiography resembles the social event that is curriculum" since the two may serve as the "mediating forms that gather the categorical and the accidental, the anticipated and the unexpected, the individual and the collective" (p. 67). These 'mediating forms' are connected to her (1990) conceptualization of *voice*.

Acknowledging that autobiography is a social (rather than a purely individual) project in the attempt to understand educative experience, she speaks of autobiographical voice as a 'chorus' (Grumet, 1990, p. 282).<sup>3</sup> She notes the difficulty of stretching "our identities across multiple discourses," arguing that "we diminish our experience and our rhetoric if we limit ourselves to only one voice" (p. 282). She offers this theory as an opening of space for renewed possibilities of expression and realization, suggesting that we employ a triad "for the voices of educational theory" (p. 282):

Let our songs have three parts, situation, narrative, and interpretation. The first, situation, acknowledges that we tell our story as a speech event that involves the social, cultural and political relations in and to which we speak. Narrative... invites all the specificity, presence and power that the symbolic and semiotic registers of our speaking can provide. And interpretation provides another voice, a reflexive and more distant one... What is essential is that all three voices usher from one speaker and that each becomes a location through which the other is heard. None is privileged. (p. 282)

I work here in that space of the in-between, speaking autobiographically (and thus idiosyncratically) and yet also as one seeking acceptance in the academy, which is composed of and by diverse others. Thus, I speak in three voices: first, as an emerging scholar engaged in discovery of self and seeking to explore and articulate my *situatedness* through autobiographical anecdote; second, as a poet using the "symbolic and semiotic registers" of my own speaking to convey the flavor of this autobiography-as-curriculum as a conduit for theoretical inquiry; and third, as both the subject of inquiry *and* as she who maps this space as though from a distance—as the one who has lived as I have lived, and yet constructs and reflects on the narrative of life and art that informs the mapping itself. I primarily work to articulate the inter-relations of these three voices as they pertain to my entry into academic life as an apprentice-scholar. However, I also perform this work as a curriculum inquiry project elaborated via social cartography

(comparative mapping)—a research genre generally used to map discursive terrain in which issues of social and educational concern related to change and/or difference are disputed (Nicholson-Goodman, 2009; Paulston, 2000)—to explore one way of seeing what it may mean to locate self and find voice within the academy.

It is important to note that the mapping is hermeneutic in nature and might best be described as “artful inquiry” (Nicholson-Goodman, 2009). Paulston and Liebman (2000) offer that “a map begins as the property of its creator,” containing “some part of that person’s knowledge and understanding of the social system” and can therefore “be characterized as what Baudrillard’s translators describe as ‘art and life’” (p. 14). The authors argue, however, that “rather than carv[ing] out a truth,” maps “portray the mapper’s perceptions of the social world, ...leaving to the reader not a truth, but a cognitive art, the artist’s scholarship resulting in a cultural portrait” (Paulston & Liebman, 2000, p. 14):

Viewed from this perspective, then, what Baudrillard (1990) calls the artistic enterprise includes the map in the sense that the map is a descriptive system consisting of a collection of knowledge objects around a “point where forms connect themselves according to an internal rule of play” (p. 27). The map reveals information about space by showing that information scaled within the boundaries of another space. (p. 14)

While the “internal rule of play” here is autobiography—conceived both as process (a “way of seeing”) and as consciousness (the “thing that is seen”)—the “boundaries of another space” are represented by the doctoral journey itself.

Therefore, in this paper, I map elements of self-construction that came into play as I pursued acceptance within the academy as an aspiring scholar. To explore my educational growth as a doctoral student, I weave together *autobiography*, expressed through anecdotal disclosure and poetic narrative, and social cartography, a research genre for mapping disputatious discursive terrain—in this case what I see as the divergence between the *logic of erudition* and *aesthetic sensibilities*, on the one hand, and the struggle between being self- or other-directed, on the other. To conduct this inquiry, I recall and revisit the “private pole” of my upbringing constructed by disparate parental views of life and learning—the “early curriculum” and the “other curriculum” poetically narrated—in contrast to the “public pole” of the doctoral journey itself. This form of artful inquiry is offered as one possible approach for others who may experience a sense of distancing from self or disorientation of self as they seek acceptance in the academy.

### **An Autobiographical Anecdote**

Every so often, I encounter myself in something that I read. From a very young age, I learned to look at the world through the windows of texts. I was obsessed, even as a small child, with their power—whether in literary, dramatic, or musical genres or those found in other fine arts—to help me transcend my own limitations, limitations imposed upon me by chance and circumstance. I think many of us have this experience of transcendence through texts when we are young. In general, however, I suspect that such experiences get cut short—alas, all too soon, usually at whatever point it is where we internalize the notion that texts are ends, not means, that their purpose is to convey knowledge rather than to augment and enhance experience.

I was blessed with parents whose imaginative gifts were bountiful; they never put an end-use to my learning or discouraged my engagement with such texts. They laid down no law about their purposes, but rather allowed me the freedom to fly from the fragile circumstances of my early life into whatever thought-world I might be visiting. Being artists, they imposed no structure on my pursuit of learning nor any boundaries on my expressive imaginings. Therefore, by the time I was engaged in the serious business of pursuing doctoral studies, the moment for reforming me had long since passed. In order to more effectively communicate how this has impacted my scholarly approach to work, it may be helpful to understand who my parents were and what they contributed to my sense of being-in-the-world.

Both were active participants in World War II. My mother, an English teenager living in London at the time of the blitzkrieg, had stories to tell of the cruelty of peoples towards one another and of her own world gone mad as fascist and totalitarian regimes emerged on the scene. She laid bare the horrors of war before us. Yet these stories always reflected the courage of the time and place of her being, her self-construction of the world from which she came, leaving indelible impressions upon my young soul. My father, a Canadian soldier who landed on the shores of Normandy, kept all but his light-hearted tales of the foibles of war from me until much later in life. Occasionally, however, he would break out of his humor-laden telling of his experiences as an artist-soldier to express his convictions about human behavior and how it goes wrong. Eschewing collective belonging, he fashioned his life instead around the autonomous pursuit of the aesthetic. Both were educated in the European manner. Their library was extensive, more highly valued than furnishings or other forms of adornment, and was always open to me. They spoke often of the literature, art, and ideas they loved and crafted a home (despite devolving circumstances) filled with music as well. I have tried to communicate in “Western Civilization from a Child’s-Eye View (The Early Curriculum)” (see Appendix) how that appeared to me as a young girl.

Different in nature as day and night were my parents, so that my life was lived on the shifting sands of the effects. Always on the move, always looking for the new adventure, my father (a follower of Kerouac) delighted in change, delighted in a life lived “on the road.” My mother, on the other hand, was the keeper of the home fires, of stability and order, but like most women of her time, produced this order out of the chaos of my father’s maneuvering through a muddled world, following his path until she finally saw the need to carve out her own. Always moving, I was a child alone in my fanciful imaginings (despite the presence of siblings); yet I never felt lonely, since I was surrounded by the voices of the great and the noble, the texts that formed the life-blood of my world. My worldscape, though marred by our down-spiraling circumstances, was thus rich in conversation, in imagination, and in aesthetic expression of self.

Often landing in a new school, in a new neighborhood, having come from a different nation (albeit English-speaking), I saw myself as “other.” Our family was like a cocoon where I could explore my own purpose through a wide range of windows on the world, but there was never any sense of belonging to or in a place. When I was ten, we moved to New York City, and there I found a place whose personality drew me to it—constantly presenting new vistas, fresh energy, and ceaseless motion. There everything seemed alive, and there were worlds within worlds to explore. We seemed always to be starting over, moving from one address to another, but I had found a space to call home. The city captured my spirit, but it had done so as an ideal, in an abstract sense. The transient nature of my life became one with the transient nature of my being, and it was in the constancy of change that I found my place in the world and came to understand that world as always contingent, never certain. It was this enduring sense of the relation between

self and world that I brought to bear on my efforts towards scholarship in a doctoral program, and the struggles that I consequently encountered are mapped here as a means of inquiring into the relationship between scholarly erudition as an aim of higher education, on the one hand, and the aesthetic sensibilities deriving from my upbringing as they registered in my perception, on the other.

Scholarship, as a construct, requires demonstration of competence, based on the approval of others, as noted. In my youth, the approval of others beyond the home realm held little sway and often failed to even register in my consciousness. The reasons for this were grounded in my upbringing: while my mother emphasized individuality—even to the point of eccentricity—as a positive element in one’s character with its own rewards, my father styled himself a bohemian, was enamored of the Beat generation, and rejected constraints on his freedom, living according to his own elusive standards. Thus, they both supported independence of thought and being but from different perspectives and for different purposes.

Achieving excellence was a domain to which my mother constantly exhorted us. As an apprentice-scholar, I often felt the tension between the exhortations of my mother towards striving for erudition and its privilege, to be frank, on the one hand, and my father’s absolute commitment to autonomy and his freedom-loving *joie de vivre*, whatever the cost, on the other. I aboded this tension as I sorted through my own motivations and expectations, which involved perceptions of what it meant to strive for erudition and a place in the academy even as I pursued aesthetic discovery and expression of self (authenticity). As I developed as a scholar-to-be, I mapped these relations relative to my experiencing of graduate work. What I hope to demonstrate here is a kind of scholarship that contributes something both aesthetic and insightful for others who labor in knowledge work.

### Mapping Self and Scholarship: Introduction

I have attempted to address the question, “*Why map autobiographical consciousness as curricular inquiry into theoretical stance?*” What’s left, then, is to introduce my reader to the mapping process as a form of artful inquiry—that is, mapping via an *image*. Here, I present and decode for my reader a map of my growth as a graduate student working towards a Ph.D. in social and comparative analysis of education (see Appendix). I hope to thus bring inquiry into theoretical stance and autobiography together in not-too-tedious a manner.

You will notice that the figure itself is an egg shape, suggesting a waiting period before emergence (hatching). This is an “idiosyncratic mapping” (Paulston, 1993) of my Ph.D. experience employing the “ludic,” which is understood as a condition where “seriousness is replaced by parody and irony” (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 15).<sup>4</sup> Thus the mapping relies on a small measure of “ludic” play reflecting postmodern sensibilities. Usher and Edwards (1994) note:

...the importance of and the possibilities offered by the ludic in disrupting the exercise of power, whatever its intent. In a sense, therefore, we feel that being ludic should be taken ‘seriously’ as itself a resistant stance and that the exclusion of the ludic can only serve to mask power more effectively. (pp. 223-224)



## Decoding the Map

I first thought about scholarship itself in terms of my perception of erudition as something one might reach for, but that ultimately had to be granted (i.e., to be accorded through the approval of others). Consequently, I decided that my role as a *self-directed learner* was incongruent with my role as a *student researcher*. I therefore chose to dichotomize my educational growth in the figure to distinguish between my perception of my “real” self and the role I learned to play as a student researcher in awe of the “ivory towers” of academia. I use the term dichotomy, however, in its “astronomical sense,” as “an eclipse of one aspect of the orb while the other is in view (thus avoiding the logical, and problematic, notion of a distinct separation or opposition)” (Nicholson-Goodman, 1996, p. 116). Dichotomizing self in this representation is related to separating the *ideal* of erudition from my more natural inclination to aesthetic sensibility. Before “hatching,” however, I would have to find a way to bring the two together. The “orb” is the doctoral experience taken as a whole (see Appendix).

The first dimension in the figure serves to conceptually organize this dichotomy: an *axiological continuum of expression* indicates a difference in what is valued. I positioned the “Logic of Erudition” at one end of this continuum, and “Aesthetic Sensibility” at the opposite end, because the two appeared to be antithetical to each other within the academic surround in my early studies. The notion of aesthetic self-expression as integral to scholarship was not apparent in my early course work and appeared to be regarded as solipsistic or narcissistic. (This was somewhat mitigated as I ventured into qualitative inquiry and curriculum studies, but I came to these fields of inquiry late in my coursework, not early on.) What had appeared to matter instead was a form of intellectual rigor that ignored both self-knowledge and imaginative expression of self. Ultimately, it was disciplined scholarship that mattered rather than the manner in which that scholarship might be expressed or integrated with persona. I became increasingly aware of this lack of attendance to aesthetics, not only in our work but also in our classrooms, hallways, study areas, and in the university as a whole. Aesthetics seemed to have no place whatsoever, and I came to assume that this was by design and was meant to encourage a tight focus on *work* and on the university as a *workplace*.

A second dimension that conceptually organized my experiences as an apprentice-scholar was a continuum representing an *epistemology of cognitive reference*, the question of *who* was directing my seeing or knowing. It is therefore portrayed in the figure with “Self” positioned at one end of the continuum and “Other(s)” at the opposite end. As noted, I have always been intensely self-directed, but this tendency did not necessarily bode well for my success as a student researcher. Therefore, I considered carefully what it meant for me as a self-learner to move to being directed and informed by the disciplined inquiry of others and to discipline my own inquiry in those terms without discarding my sense of self in the process. I concluded that while I could retain the autonomy to develop my own sense of *self-knowledge competency* as a scholar-to-be (at the “Logic of Erudition” end of the continuum) and my own *self-problematization* as a creator of scholarly work (at the “Aesthetic Sensibility” end of the continuum), something entirely different was called for when I thought about my role as student researcher.

What was called for was a disciplined attendance to the discursive activity of others, that is, to *critical knowledge competency*, which I therefore positioned at the Logic of Erudition end of the *axiological continuum of expression* and on the “Other(s)” end of the *epistemology of cognitive reference* continuum. Further, developing the ability to provide *theoretical*

*problematizations* was also called for, and I came to see that that ability might be stretched with aesthetic sensibilities in mind, but these were still essentially dependent upon “Others”—established scholars and their work. In order to achieve authenticity, I would need to locate those “Others” who might assist me in integrating aesthetic sensibility into scholarly inquiry, to locate self and find voice within their community of scholarship.

As I began to ponder the juxtaposition of these dichotomies, I realized that I was developing the ability to integrate multiple ways of seeing and of being-in-the-world as my work matured. First, as a *self-learner* exercising self-knowledge competency, I was capable of self-critique and could trust myself to grow as an apprentice-scholar so that I felt less removed from the work *and* from the community of scholars. Reaching towards mastery, I still gauged the worth of my accomplishments, however, on the basis of a Logic of Erudition dependent upon the approval of scholarly others. On the other hand, as I reached towards the self-determining aesthetic sensibility that had been nurtured in me, I had to problematize self in order to find the acceptable limits of this manner of excursion, and this I did by trial and error, as an *experiential learner* laboring to wed the worlds of memory and imagination within me to the doctoral undertaking.

As I considered my growth as a *student researcher* dependent on “Others,” not only for knowledge and understanding, but also for shaping the direction of inquiry, I fully recognized that without critical knowledge competency, there could *be* no scholarship. To satisfy the logic of erudition, I had to learn to “do” research as well as to critique it—and to critique not only the research itself, but also my critiques of it (in a reflexive loop that may appear to be redundant, but is necessary in academic practice in many fields). My initial excursions into student research, then, were directed by the external world, but it was qualitative research that made space for me to bring that world of work (the “public pole”) together with the world(s) within me (the “private pole”).

The ability to develop an idea, critique, theme, etc., that is meaningful and useful to others is at the heart of scholarship in my field. This is enriched, from a qualitative point of view, by the ability to problematize theorization in terms of self-positioning and thus allowed me space for developing my aesthetic sensibility in a way that other approaches to research might not have. The opportunity to hone scholarly abilities so that they reflected an aesthetic edge was only opened to me as I began to work within qualitative inquiry, and I like to think that the experiences I had in this field empowered me to develop into a *qualitative explorer*, applying aesthetic sensibilities in a critically conscious way to the problematization of theory itself.

What I found from mapping the dimensions of my life-world as a graduate student was that there were four roles involved: the apprentice-scholar as *self-learner*, writing as though distanced from control of the work by others and from the community of scholars in general but not from herself; the apprentice-scholar as *experiential learner*, finding and embracing both the capabilities and the limitations of self within the world of knowledge work; the *qualitative explorer*, acknowledging and problematizing theory while working in the space of aesthetic sensibilities as an authentic element of self; and the apprentice-scholar as *student researcher*, approaching successful attainment through critical knowledge competency under the logic of erudition.

The quest represented by the doctoral journey, then, was to maintain an authentic and yet reasonable sense of self in which all roles were integrated into a newly conceived “whole” while waiting to “hatch” as an emergent scholar. Part of what this study should demonstrate, then, is the integration of these roles into this new wholeness in a manner that responds both to Pinar’s (2000) concerns over loss of self, on the one hand, and Grumet’s (1990) advocacy of

autobiographical consciousness and of its realization and expression via a triadic voice, on the other. The former pertains to locating self, the latter to finding voice, performed here in three voices that are ultimately one: autobiographical consciousness explored and expressed through situational anecdote and poetic narrative and a figural interpretation of the development of a coherent vision of personal struggle and educational growth.

### Conclusion: A Nod to Post-formal Cognition and Contingency

While the mapping may be taken to reflect a “structuralist faith in symbols and cartographic relationships” as a way to create conceptual order out of what may be seen and encountered as contingency, my thinking has been well-served as well by Kincheloe’s (1993) “post-positivist energy.”<sup>5</sup> Anticipating “new ways of seeing and knowing,” Kincheloe (1993) speaks about “post-formal thinkers,” those who “are not uncomfortable with the ambiguous, contingent nature of knowledge,” and those who “are tolerant of contradiction and value the attempt to integrate divergent phenomena into new, revealing syntheses” (p. 12). He makes a claim that “post-formalism can be viewed as a form of cognition which suits an uncertain postmodern world” (p. 13) and heralds post-formalist thinkers as “pioneers of the mind attempting to expand the cognitive envelope, to escape the limitations of Cartesian-Newtonian modernity and venture into the realm of the postmodern” (pp. 12-13).

As I look back, it seems to me that the life of the mind that was nurtured by my parents (albeit not consciously, but rather as a result of their differences) bears some similarity to Kincheloe’s (1993) post-formal cognition, this pioneering of “expanded cognitive terrain.” While their nurturing at times played out with negative consequences in my life, occasionally leading to disorientation and even alienation, it was nevertheless in an odd way a part of my personal cultural capital, and for this I am grateful to them both. It also appears to me that this manner of thinking—which is extended here beyond thinking to seeing, feeling, and being—may be one way to cope with the positivist educational direction in which we, as a nation, appear to be moving. Consequently, my approach to this work is framed, in part, by a post-formal understanding of the circumstances which many academics are involuntarily experiencing today as knowledge workers.

Arguing that “a central tenet of a critical pedagogy that values a post-formal cognitive orientation is the notion of etymology—an awareness of the genesis of knowledge, of self-production” (p. 14), Kincheloe (1993) addresses “the enlargement of our moral imaginations” (p. 15), an enlargement that “forces us to confront the concept of mind” (p. 16). Here we are reminded that “Dewey conceived mind as the variety of ways that we consciously engage the events that confront us” and, therefore, that “mind is a verb” (p. 16). For Kincheloe,

This means that it is never self-contained, separate from the world, but contingent, ever interacting with situations and other minds. Mind is never complete, for it never stops assimilating, restructuring itself as a result of its contact with new stimulation (Greene, 1987, p. 10). Thus, our moral imagination emphasizes relationships and meaning, not mastery or simple “being.” (p. 16)

The question this raises for me is one of *context*—the question of *which* situations, *which* “other minds,” *which* kinds of “stimulation”—and it occurs to me that the contextual situating of

mind as verb must be all-important if we are to expect moral imagination to grow, and that mapping its terrain, however idiosyncratic, may be helpful even to those whose life experiences differ from this author's. It is the stimulations themselves that I have addressed here, working with the intimate cultural surround of home as I stretched toward "belonging" within the academic surround I encountered as an aspiring scholar while playing with figuration as a means of sense-making.

Calling for reform that is based "on a reconceptualized function of reason and a search for meaning in the relationship between self and world" (p. 16), Kincheloe (1993) asserts that "schools should help students develop wisdom—i.e., the cognitive ability and the contextual grounding to make intelligent choices and commitments in the way they shape their lives" (pp. 16-17). This is an act which he sees as political since it involves "what Henry Giroux (1993) often refers to as the development of civic courage," "the ability to see beyond the overt propaganda and the covert control of imagery" (p. 17). "The search for meaning in the relationship between self and world" is, in my estimation, not only political, but also spiritual (in a holistic sense) as well. Therefore, if civic courage is the key, then it requires not only "seeing and grappling," not only "cognitive ability and contextual grounding," but also the deep exploration of the spaces in between, the spaces that are created between our innermost being and those that surround (and sometimes seek to suffocate) that being. I tried to capture this notion in a personal way in "Poppa's World: An Ode to the Bittersweet Fruits of Freedom (The Other Curriculum)" (see Appendix). I sometimes use poetry to "get at" the narratives that lie within me and hide from me, the truer reasons for my own systems of meaning. In grappling with context, these truer reasons must be brought to the surface if I am to do my work the way that I perceive it should be done, from a perspective of critical self-consciousness that is at the same time self-affirming.

Scholarly work does not, and cannot, stand as though on some distant shore of inquiry where none have ventured before. The academy is a disputatious community, and scholarship is built on contributions from the past (i.e., even where ruptures emerge, they emerge as *breaks* from something already proposed or established) as well as being engaged in a sorting out of what is being said in the present. All scholarship thus must bear the critique of that community, especially within one's own academic discipline. The mapping undertaken here is embedded in theoretical inquiry into autobiographical consciousness and process as a subset of curriculum theorizing, a text in its own right (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2002). In this space, the urgency of recognizing how/where one is "situated" within a terrain, acknowledging dissensus and disorientation as primary features (Marshall, Sears, & Schubert, 2000), and giving rise, for instance, to "dis/positions and lines of flight" (Reynolds & Webber, 2004) thus necessitates a manner of re-orientation that is, above all, authentic.

Art, on the other hand, while it bears some of the same markings if it is to achieve recognition and reward, ultimately relies on the vision of its creator, who may or may not build on what has gone before and may or may not consider, contain, or communicate critique of the field and of the *oeuvre*. In short, however mindful the artist may be of prior and current conventions of expression, s/he may elect to diverge from these or may elect to take or create detours around them or even to devise exits previously unimagined. The notion of mapping as it is used here, then—as artful inquiry that is nevertheless mindful of scholarship—is meant to serve as a means for making sense not only of one's positioning within a specific disciplinary surround, but also in relation to one's own sense of self and of being-in-the-world and of the reasons for that positioning. An artist may elect to draw from others in the execution of a work or

may elect to singularize the offering on its own merits. Great art has often been acknowledged as great, *because* it has taken off in a new direction, seen life and art with new vision, exited the conventional scene, etc. What I have mapped here is a representation of the struggle between perceived ways of seeing—and working through—my educational growth as a doctoral student as a way to realize and express my relations to a field of study requiring a disciplined form of inquiry as these relations relate to a strong sense of self that is, for better or worse, self-affirming and self-preserving.

### Notes

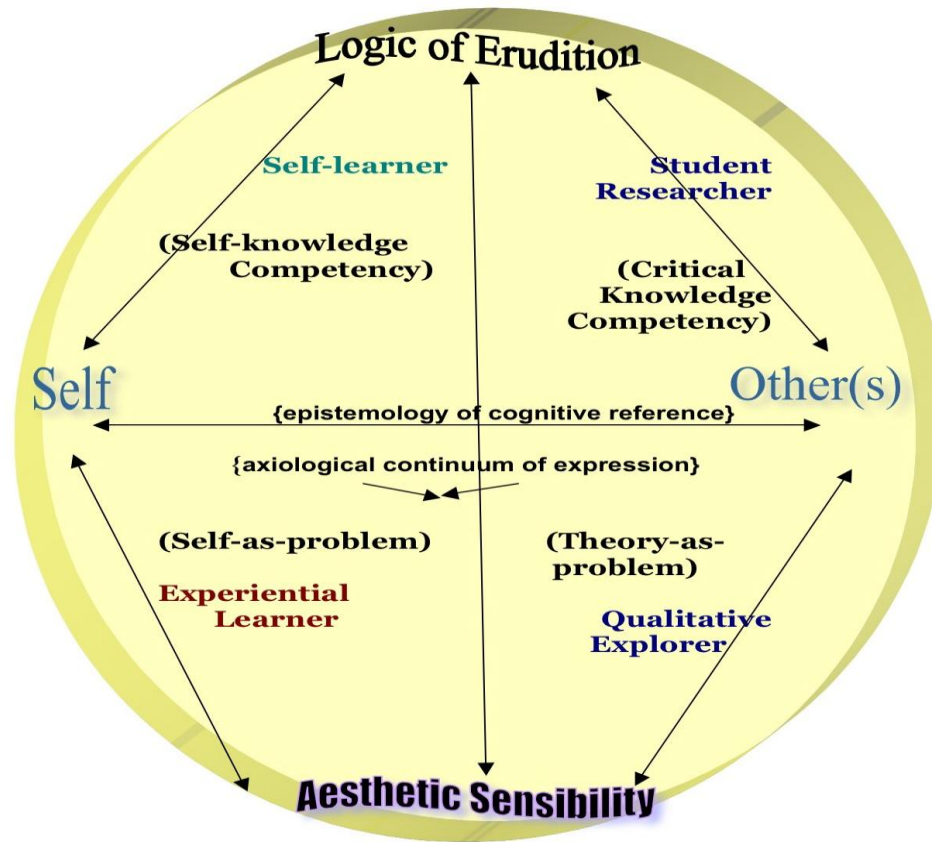
1. Personal communication, March, 2002.
2. Grumet cites Earle's work, *Autobiographical Consciousness* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972), and Altieri's work, "Ecce Homo: Narcissism, Power, Pathos, and the Status of Autobiographical Representation," *Boundary II* 9, no. 3 and 4 (Spring 1981): 394, to make this argument.
3. See also Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman (2002), *Understanding Curriculum*, 523.
4. Usher and Edwards acknowledge the "divergence between those who argue for a 'pure' and serious postmodernism of resistance and those who would revel in the ludic and ignore resistance," but the authors maintain that "resistant and ludic postmodernism are two sides of the same coin, that each depends for its effects on the other" (15-16). They "argue for the ludic as a form of resistance and for resistance needing to always deploy the ludic the better to do its work" (16).
5. I thank a very astute and thoughtful reviewer for this insight and others, and for recognizing an apparent contradiction that I had not observed on my own.

### References

- Bourdieu, P. (2000). *Pascalian Meditations* (Trans. R. Nice). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Grumet, M. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching*. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Grumet, M. (1990). Voice: The search for a feminist rhetoric for educational studies. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 20(3), 277-282.
- Kincheloe, J. (1993). Introduction: The questions we ask, the stories we tell about education. In Kincheloe, J. L., & Steinberg, S. R. (Eds.), *Thirteen Questions: Reframing education's conversation*, 1-19. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Marshall, J. D., Sears, J. T., and Schubert, W. H. (2000). *Turning points in curriculum: A contemporary American memoir*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Nicholson-Goodman, J. (2000). A ludic approach to mapping environmental education discourse. In R. G. Paulston (Ed.), *Social Cartography: Mapping ways of seeing social and educational change* (pp. 307-326). New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc.
- Nicholson-Goodman, J. (2009). *Autobiography of a democratic nation at risk: The currere of culture and citizenship in the post-9/11 American wilderness*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Nicholson-Goodman, J., & Paulston, R. G. (1996). Mapping/remapping discourses in educational policy studies. In R. G. Paulston, M. Liebman, & J. Nicholson-Goodman (Eds.), *Mapping multiple perspectives: Research reports of the University of Pittsburgh Social Cartography Project, 1993-1996* (pp. 95-130). Pittsburgh, PA: Department of Administrative and Policy Studies, University of Pittsburgh.

- Paulston, R. G. (Ed.). (2000). *Social cartography: Mapping ways of seeing social and educational change*. (Garland reference library of social science, 1024; Reference books in international education, 36.) New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
- Paulston, R. G., & Liebman, M. (2000). Social cartography: A new metaphor/tool for comparative studies. In R. G. Paulston (Ed.), *Social Cartography: Mapping ways of seeing social and educational change* (pp. 7-28). New York: Garland Publishing.
- Pinar, W. (Ed.) (2000). *Curriculum studies: The reconceptualization*. Troy, NY: Educator's International Press, Inc.
- Pinar, W. F. (2004). *What is curriculum theory?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Pinar, W. F., Reynolds, W. M., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. M. (2002). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Reynolds, W. M., & Webber, J. A. (Eds.). (2004). *Expanding curriculum theory: Dis/positions and lines of flight*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Usher, R., & Edwards, R. (1994), *Postmodernism and education*. London: Routledge.

Appendix



### **Western Civilization from a Child's-Eye View (The 'Early Curriculum')**

My parents raised me to free thought and creativity: my mother, English and eccentric, challenger to excellence, my standard-bearer and the rock of my foundation; my father, self-styled bohemian: crazy, cool, and clearly Canadian; heart of my heart and balm to my soul. This poem and the next constitute the stories of their worlds and their telling of them.

#### **In a child's voice**

What cultural bliss lay in our humble hearth—  
Shakespeare's trysts, Goldsmith's foibles, the spirited play of Dickensian ploys,  
The savoir faire of Camus and Voltaire and the tales of du Maupassant danced in my head—  
These were the treats I consumed before bed  
Milkwood townfolk on Spring moonless nights, a-bob on the sea-lilt of the Welsh poet's words,  
Old Ironsides, ne'er torn down, the wandering Evangeline, and, of course, Hiawatha—  
These haunted me, as would a sad, sweet melody

Our ever-wondrous Thurber and his princess Saralinda,  
The cold-eyed Duke, the Golux, Time slain and frozen in its place—  
And the messy Dr. Johnson, whom Boswell admired regardless,  
Gave me hope for all those, like me, who were lacking social grace  
Now these were my companions,  
These the shores I wandered,  
In my childish head,  
From my childhood bed

And there was music—ah, wonderful music—how our home was filled with Voice,  
For the music of Puccini was my guardian of choice  
Chopin's etudes filled our evenings with a somber sort of air  
That was wistful, yet intriguing, giving pause for thoughts quite rare  
Then the waltzes and mazurkas broke the spell of meditation  
And we'd freely enter into space they'd made for conversation  
Coming back to life as family from that private, lone duration

For my mother put quite clearly so much hope in education  
That she left us wanting little in the way of erudition  
Both as challenger and listener, her capacities were daunting,  
And she drew us to her values by the simple means of flaunting  
All the best these things could offer, all the treasures of good living,  
All the fineries of high culture— it was wisdom she was giving  
For the classics and the opera and Segovia, et al,  
Weren't intended for instruction—they were there to make us feel  
All the wonder and the brightness of her English way of life  
And to leave us with a legacy to last throughout our lives

Mealtime, however, was for listening and learning...  
Spinoza and Leibniz graced our table  
Rousseau and Kant occasionally dined

Only later would we meet the Heavyweights  
Too young to know them well, I clearly understood  
These were members of our Clan  
These were Voices in our making  
They were there for Conversation  
They were there for Erudition

English Justice, the Throne and Social Democracy  
The Commonwealth, of course, with its Islands of Difference  
Emancipation, the Quakers, and Social Evolution  
Church History, too—but mainly the Inquisition!  
(Beyond my years perhaps, but not beyond my Intuition)  
Liberté, égalité, fraternité; the Terror of the Bastille  
And the guillotine, too (not to mention Robespierre)  
[Did Madeline, in her two by two's, know of Monsieur Robespierre?]  
Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, Locke, Hume and Mill,  
The Espoused Freedoms of the Ten Amendments  
The Monarchs, Popes, Assorted Tyrants  
And War after War between Good and Evil

The Bolsheviks, Nazis, and the Fascist Nations  
Mob thinking (?) and Mob Brutality—  
The Nightmare Camps and Fear of the Masses  
Filled me with Dread and went with me to bed  
[A loner forever I swore I would be]  
There were tales, too, of other Terrors—  
Like the Spanish Conquistadors—  
But Cervantes' windmills saved the Day

(Not much talk of War from my father's table-place  
Just cartooned tales of an Artist-Veteran's Days—  
For the sake of our peace he would don rosied lenses)  
But the War was brought home from the Shores of the Isle  
As the Glory of Courage burned bright on Mum's Face  
And the Memory of Enemies played on her Senses

Gifts of books were dear to me—  
The Mad Hatter and poet Milne most especially  
A Brit uncle, though unknown in my Youth,  
Sent tales of faeries, Kings and Knights  
And of ballet Greats, though mostly Russian,  
Who filled my heart with dreams of Grace  
And, of course, Nobility (at least, nobility of heart)  
Tomes of Greeks from on High – God and Human combined!—  
(Illustrated by the hands of friends)  
Offered food for my fanciful imaginings



And the quiet pondering of Life

**Poppa's World: An Ode to the Bittersweet Fruits of Freedom  
(The 'Other Curriculum')**

My father's world was a world of contradiction. The price he paid for freedom was a life lived often without even the smallest of comforts, but it was the life he chose. His legacy to us was not without some pain, but the enormity of his commitment to his art was evidenced by his willingness to sacrifice all and live for art alone. His death brought this legacy home as I realized, having grown distant, both how much he had given up and what he had gained in the process.

*Subtle as a wisp of wind*

*Gentle as the lapping wave*

*Was my father's artist-soul*

*Strong-willed quietude*

*Flowed through his veins*

*But so did joie de vivre*

*Art in all things,*

*In all things, Art—*

*That was his Way*

*Knowledge and Learning*

*He esteemed highly*

*But Beauty reigned Supreme*

*Free-flowing, free-falling*

*Lover of freedom and wandering ways*

*The Road called him,*

*The Road won him—*

*Follower of Kerouac in his heart*

*Later he would find Home*

*Be free to be me*

*I learned at his knee*

*But the end surprised him*

*I walked away as had he*

*Down the damnable Road*

*Later I would invent Home*

*But when he was with us,*

*Greatness was everything—*

*Great Art, Great Jazz,*

*Great fun—we had some*

*A veritable party when he walked through the Door*

*He would blow that horn for all cool cats and  
chicks*

*Dorsey, Basie, Goodman and Garland,  
Ellington, Ella, Sinatra and Sarah—  
And Billie, without whom it could never be Day—  
These were the moods and the rhythms,  
The tones of his Life-world,  
His heartbeat, his energy, the Light of his way*

*With Poppa at the piano,  
Mack the Knife was back in town,  
And Little Girl Blue  
Would see the Light  
When that Tender Blue Boy  
Came into sight*

*When he played guitar,  
The mellow sounds of jazz  
Clung so close to our insides  
That we grew old and wise  
And Mack the Knife  
Was always back in town*

*The aroma of grass mats and oils,  
Turpentine and pipe tobacco  
Signaled Poppa's presence  
On a Saturday morning  
And my world would come alive in a new way  
The week was tossed aside, to be revisited on  
Monday*

*So much subtler was my father  
Than my depth of understanding  
That the little one within me  
Found him ever fascinating  
By his side I was impervious to the price of deprivation  
And knew Life was somewhere waiting, far beyond my small  
misgivings*

