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The Laughter Behind: Curriculum of Place, the Hypermasculine Imperative, and the Critical Education of a Southern Cop

Frank Gene Jordan Jr.

THE LAUGHTER BEHIND: CURRICULUM OF PLACE, THE HYPERMASCULINE

IMPERATIVE, AND THE CRITICAL EDUCATION OF A SOUTHERN COP

by

FRANK GENE JORDAN, JR.

(Under the Direction of Sabrina Ross)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the thoughts and ideologies that actuate the daily behaviors of Southern

rural police officers as they pertain to practices consonant with social justice and equity. The

research focus is the author's own experience as a 21-year Southern rural police officer who

ultimately obtained the position of chief of police while concurrently developing a firm

commitment to ensuring social justice in his own practice and that of his subordinate police staff.

The central question asks how a White male police officer from impoverished and politically and

socially conservative ancestral roots could acquire a sincere concern for, and devotion to, social

justice, and if the experience can be replicated to affect the thoughts, practices, and behaviors of

other police officers. Methodologically and theoretically, the question is filtered through the lens

of critical autoethnography, or the analysis of personal experience through an examination of

personal stories framed by the tenets of critical social theory and encompassing some aspects of

postmodernism, poststructuralism, and psychoanalysis to identify pertinent cultural, and in the

instant case, subcultural, elements. The researcher's hypothesis is that Southern rural police

officers, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or other applicable demographic or social factors,

are inordinately motivated by the hypermasculine imperative, a pathological masculinity that not

only encourages, but virtually demands, that police officers maintain their sense of

hypermasculine identity at all costs. In the author's view, the research bears out this contention

yet he proposes that the principles of critically engaged education and pedagogy (CEEP) can

mitigate many, if not all, of the most pernicious effects of the hypermasculine imperative by

promoting the adoption of a critical thinking philosophy and the development of critical social

awareness among police officers through their promulgation in formal and informal training

venues and through the intercession of police managers who have themselves adopted a

philosophy of seeing police work as a serious commitment to social justice.

INDEX WORDS: (Dis)placement, A Man, Critical autoethnography, Critical social awareness,
Critical thinking philosophy, Critically engaged education and pedagogy (CEEP), Curriculum as
hypermasculine text, Curriculum of Southern hypermasculine place, Curriculum of Southern
place, Displaced-in-place, Hypermasculine imperative, Micro-Souths, Parallel alternative
identity (PAI), Pathological hypermasculinity, The Man

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Bachelor of Science, Troy University, 2006

Master of Science, Troy University, 2007

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2013

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Electronic Version Approved:

June 2013

DEDICATION

To my best friend and most ardent supporter, my loving wife, Diane Jordan. With her encouragement and love, I have discovered abilities that did not know I had, experienced sentiments that I had not previously felt, and learned precisely what love should be. She is the perfect complement to an imperfect me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An old saying maintains that no one gets anywhere worth going without the help of others, an idea that, based on my experience, is a simple truism. With this in mind, I take this singular opportunity to recognize those in my life who have assisted me in reaching this milestone in my life.

To my parents, Ed and Juanell Ford, who do not always understand me, yet have unerringly supported me, notwithstanding the endeavor or circumstance. I admire them for consistently doing what, sadly, most people fail in: their best. Anyone can be loving and supportive occasionally and especially during the best of times, but real parental love is manifest in supporting a child during the worst that comes. Thank you both for being there through divorce, career changes, penurious days, and chopped up furniture. I love you both, and thank you for being my biggest fans.

To my friend, colleague, and doctoral classmate, Lisa Heusel, whose irrepressible enthusiasm and unswerving encouragement alone would be sufficient for inclusion here but whom I thank more for showing me the theoretical light when I had difficulty seeing it for myself. She knew I was an inveterate, dyed-in-the-wool critical theorist when I did not know exactly what critical theory was. Thank you, Lisa, for allowing me to experience your passion for life, for your devotion to the field of education, and for helping us all remember that even the most serious scholarship has a lighter side.

To the eminent professors of Georgia Southern University in the Curriculum Studies program and all those involved in the field of curriculum studies who are devoted to seeing education through the variegated lenses of reason, tolerance, nurturance, and love. Opening minds, lowering barriers, and contributing substantively to the field of education with the aim of

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facilitating social justice is a never-ending struggle, often accomplished by enlightening one mind at a time, yet, a more noble endeavor I cannot conceive.

I also wish to acknowledge the esteemed members of my dissertation committee at Georgia Southern University who not only offered learned guidance to facilitate this research but for their compassion and gentle suasion. Dr. Robert Lake, whose support started with a phone call from a neophyte doctoral student whom he did not know but whom he immediately agreed to assist and did so admirably and patiently throughout; Dr. John A. Weaver, whose devotion to scholarship and to acting positively upon his world was immediately, and remains enduringly, inspirational to me; Dr. Reta Ugena Whitlock, whose work enlightened me and whose peerless advice continually lights my way; and to my dissertation chair, Dr. Sabrina Ross, who recognizes that helping others to become "educated" means much more than elucidation of ideas and rote presentation of knowledge, it requires genuine and sustained compassion and caring. I see power, too, Dr. Ross, and thank you for helping to give a name to what I have always sensed before me.

Perhaps no pursuit is possessed of more nobility of purpose than striving to ameliorate an unjust world, giving all of oneself to ensure that one has done something worthwhile to leave a better world than was found. Achieving justice in the world has proven a lifetime proposition for many dedicated persons throughout history, and it is these courageous, influential, and inspirational people that I wish to acknowledge here. The reader will recognize some names instantly, knowing them for their fame, infamy, or confused admixture of both. Other names will stir some inkling of recognition or none at all, possibly because their particular contributions are obscured by hate and bigotry, or simply because their chosen field of battle for social justice was insufficiently interesting to the casual reader or too intellectually recondite to achieve mainstream appreciation. Still others will be totally unrecognizable because they are

acknowledged here for their inspiration in my life only. Some names that might be expected to be seen here are not mentioned because they just were not that influential in my life, or, more significantly, having long ago learned the inestimable value of critical thinking and examining history through the lens of alternative perspectives, I have come to reassess, devalue, dismiss, or utterly condemn some historical personages that those less critically-inclined still hold in awe and undeserved esteem. Lucky for me, many years ago I explicitly adopted the Aurelian dictum and have since sought to "look things in the eye and know them for what they are." Finally, the names listed here are of people influential for endeavoring to make a better world by addressing the needs of marginalized and oppressed people from many areas, yet the reader may notice that many are people who have struggled to ensure the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) persons.

    We are currently witnessing the existential struggle by the LGBT communities of the world for nothing more than their right to exist and enjoy the same rights and privileges others in politically and socially hegemonic communities take for granted. Mystified by the treatment of LGBT individuals in the twenty-first century, an age when so many of us thought—or complacently assumed—that we would be beyond institutionalized prejudice, bigotry, and willful ignorance, I am convinced that within the next few decades we, American society, will make profuse apologies to our LGBT citizens for intentionally excluding them from the social mainstream and our other depredations against them. We will all lament the past, confused and bewildered by our inexplicably intolerant actions, and wondering how we could have permitted such absurd social conditions to persist, especially in the wake of the Civil Rights era. The only honest answer that we will be able to give is that, being group animals to the interstices of our DNA, we lacked the courage and leadership to do what was right because hewing to the group

mindset and ideology was more important than ensuring the rights of our citizens, and others suffered for it. Asking no more than that they be left in peace to experience the most primal of human urges, love and affection, without having to also suffer the pain, humiliation, indignity, and injustice of being persecuted for doing nothing more than being themselves, LGBT persons need leaders and advocates, as do all those aspiring to ensure social justice in the world, and the list of names here is intended to recognize and honor those who have fought for justice, despite the ignominy that many of them still suffer for having the audacity to have found themselves on the minority side of opinion in a world that fancies itself devoted to freedom, yet allows social exclusion and the denial of fundamental rights to continue. Only the rare individual can muster the bravery to break away from the crowd and say "This is not right!" especially when doing so means walking away from all that one knows that offers acceptance and comfort, and the names following are just a small sample of those who have managed it. In the end, we must all live with ourselves, our memories, and our actions, and if we are lucky enough to make it to an age when we can sit in a rocking chair somewhere and recall how we conducted ourselves in life, there can be little more comforting than knowing that we did our best to ensure the rights of others. The people listed here achieved that exalted status, or have it to look forward to. What remains is to see who will be added to the list in the future.

In honor of those who have influenced and inspired me for their efforts to ensure social justice and a more tolerant world, I humbly acknowledge the contributions of:

Malcolm X; Ang Lee; Mathew Shepherd; the Mahatma Mohandas Gandhi; Oscar Wilde; Marcus Aurelius; Socrates; Sabrina N. Ross; Carl Sagan; Emmett Louis Till; Robert Lake; David C. Couper; Reta Ugena Whitlock; John A. Weaver; Howard Zinn; William F. Pinar; Stephen Jay Gould; Michael W. Apple; Jean Anyon; Paulo Freire; Vito Russo;

Martin Luther King, Jr.; Sikwayi; Mrs. Sweat; Barbara Diane Jordan; Anna Julia Copper; Alice Walker; Zora Neale Hurston; James Baldwin; the Scottsboro Boys; Booker T. Washington; Tecumseh; Ťhašúŋke Witkó; Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-kekt; James Chaney; Andrew Goodman; Michael Schwerner; Medgar Evers; Ida B. Wells; John Dewey; Joe L. Kincheloe; Michel Foucault; bell hooks; Angela Davis; William C. Ayers; Stephen D. Brookfield; Axel Honneth; Mamie Till-Mobley; Ming Fang He; William H. Schubert; R. W. Connell; James W. Loewen; Barbara Jordan; John Steinbeck; Brandon Teena; and others and Others too numerous to name here.

And thank you to those who have devoted their lives to the noble pursuit of public service, especially in the police and justice professions. We are not there yet, but the sacrifices made daily by you greatly improve our odds of making a better world.

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CHAPTER I

LOOKING OUT FOR LENNY

…the congregation giggled when it might have roared…what is most troubling, then, is the laughter behind.

Reta Ugena Whitlock

Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.

Karl Marx

Justice and power must be brought together, so that whatever is just may be powerful, and whatever is powerful may be just.

Blaise Pascal

Justice denied anywhere diminishes justice everywhere.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

My patrol car glided through the night slowly, like a great white shark slicing smoothly through the water of a warm summer ocean, and, like a shark, I was looking for prey, only my senses were attuned for the human variety—my fellow citizens and the people I had sworn to protect. Other officers would fly indiscriminately around the city, speeding with impunity and ignoring rules established only for those not in the "club," and then wonder why they were not as successful at stalking as I was. While they zipped by rich opportunities to make a catch, I eased through the night, attentive to every subtlety and nuance of life transpiring in the night. Having learned early the cardinal rule of effective policing, or, at least what passed for effective policing, I was expert at stalking. The rule was: take your time, be observant, and your prey will come to you. Besides, it was all out there, all you had to do was decide what excited you most: the challenge of nabbing those who were less obvious and enjoyed better political protections and

social support on the affluent side of town, or the easy fish in the socially disenfranchised and economically impoverished areas of the city. Most of us chose the easy fishing.

As I cruised through the more promising areas of my patrol zone, I occasionally smiled to myself as I watched people disappear into the night as my cruiser came into their view. Crack dealers prepared to run at the least hint of any interest in them and their activities, prostitutes plying their wares to obtain the next hit to sooth their addiction melted into the shadows, drunks who panhandled all day to get enough money for cheap booze and did not want to be denied their next bout of drunken oblivion by being arrested for a "social offense," all quickly found what they hoped would pass for legitimate activities, and neighborhood residents simply enjoying the warm summer evening by socializing on street corners cast a casual, contemptuous glance my way before reentering their homes. Loitering was illegal, too. A city ordinance was very explicit about the impropriety and potential legal sanctions for loitering. America is, indeed, the land of liberty, but liberty must be constrained. They need not have worried, though. With the exception of the occasional dispatch from 911 or some too-exciting-to-resist opportunity, I had other fish that I wished to catch and fry. These Others were all safe.

I loved to work traffic. Working traffic was always exciting. You never knew what you would find and I was an adrenaline junkie, so anticipation was part of the rush. From the first suspended license arrest I made I was devoted to "keeping the streets safe" for the motoring public, and the satisfaction that I derived from demonstrating my expertise at finding scofflaws and criminals using the highways and byways to pursue their felonious activities and indulge their miscreant proclivities was pretty satisfying as well. The truth was, like most cops that I knew, we reflexively spouted the rhetoric and cant expected of us, always maintaining that it was justice and public safety that motivated us—for which we insisted on absolute respect—but what

really got us going was the thrill of the chase and the primordial joy of the capture. The "thin

blue line" was less a mark of honor than it was a convenient excuse for our excesses. Ironically,

despite my total and enthusiastic immersion into the police culture of privilege and entitlement, I

never wanted a "blue line"[1] sticker on my personal vehicle. I never could decide why.

I was a natural at working traffic. While other officers could not seem to hit an elephant

in the ass with a banjo when it came to discovering unlicensed drivers, DUI operators, and drug

couriers, I clearly had a knack for it from the start. Again, you had to fish the right waters—those

containing the poor, the disadvantaged, the unnoticed, and the minimally powerful—and know

where to look, yet there was plenty out there for the catching, especially if you understood the

psychology involved and knew the statistics. For example, you had to keep your eyes open for

those who obviously did not want to be pulled over, and they were easy to spot. Drivers rolling

in a rusted out POS (piece of shit) and holding their hands on the steering wheel at "10 and 2,"

like the driving manuals specified, were serious contenders for attention. Not making eye

contact, or stopping at a stop sign for far longer than safety or legality necessitated, meant they

had something to hide. And in the days before seat belts were mandatory, woe betide the poor

bastard driving an old rattletrap car and wearing his safety belt. Such temerity practically

demanded interdiction by a faithful public servant like me. Also valuable to know was that

minority males, particularly African American and Hispanic men, were statistically far less likely

to have a valid driver's license than their White counterparts. I would later learn the

socioeconomic reasons for these useful statistics related to our nation's history of disparate

treatment of minorities and largely the result of centuries of political, social, and economic

marginalization, but during my rookie days as a police officer on the prowl, the "whys" and

"wherefores" did not register, and likely would have failed to impress me anyway. What was

important was that a minority driver wearing a seatbelt and driving a broken down car was fair game and a promising target for satisfying my egotistic desire to outcompete my fellow cops. The driver's reason for breaking the law, whether out to socialize or going to a minimum wage job to pay rent on a disheveled little public housing apartment was irrelevant. For me, the law had to be enforced, and any enjoyment garnered from the righteous enforcement of the law was just serendipitous. Who says that you have to hate your job to be serious about it?

That night, what I really wanted was a car chase. From the first time that I attempted to stop a motorist only to have him immediately gun the accelerator and attempt desperately to flee the righteous justice that I symbolized, I was addicted. Most cops have their particular fetish when it comes to their work and mine was the vehicle pursuit, with its dizzying speeds, total disregard for traffic regulations and potential consequences, the adrenaline rush that nothing else could stimulate, it was pure hunter and prey, and I was very good at it. No one escaped from me, and they always ended up sitting in jail with a litany of charges for each and every infraction committed during their shameless disregard of public safety and common decency. An added benefit was that most of those I caught would end up pleading guilty to all the charges because it was the fastest route out of jail and they could not afford an attorney, meaning that they would owe massive fines that they could never manage to pay and leaving them perennial targets for further justice. It was a little like stocking a pond, a sort of "catch and release" plan. I got to know them well, so when I saw them again, no excuse was needed to snatch them up, just chase them down and make another collar. Fine sport, no doubt. The thrill of the car chase was so intoxicating, I remember distinctly pondering at one point early in my police career which I would choose if given the option, sex or a car chase. As a randy twenty-something, I remember being surprised that I could not decide with conviction between the two, and I was a little

befuddled by the knowledge that I would never be able to learn the answer. How do you arrange for such a comparison?

To be successful in snagging degenerate traffic violators, an officer had to learn where the bottlenecks were located. Bottlenecks (I do not know what other cops called them, even if they were aware of their existence) are thoroughfares connecting separated geographic areas that the criminal element uses. If you could identify them and keep up a constant presence, you were bound to stumble onto some fun, like shooting fish in a barrel, so a police shark like me learned early where they were and prowled them constantly with proprietary vigor. I occasionally tolerated lesser sharks in my waters—they were my friends and fellow cops, after all—and allowed them to snag the odd small fry, but the bigger fish always went to me, and a competitive presence in the fertile waters of the bottlenecks I actively discouraged. Great whites, after all, are territorial.

As I drove through one especially productive bottleneck that night, I fell in behind an old beige four-door sedan that looked vaguely familiar. The driver appeared to be a White female driving slowly through a predominantly impoverished African-American neighborhood, an unerring indicator of "up-to-no-good" behavior. A White woman driving a POS in this area likely meant one thing: crack whore. Cocaine was dynamic enough as a powder, but when it began to be produced as an opalescent little rock that could be smoked in something as nondescript as a crushed Coke can, achieving an immediate rush of anesthetic forgetfulness, an epidemic broke out, and the fishing opportunities for cops teemed. I once knew an affluent, 16-year-old White girl who had her first rock on Friday night and was prostituting herself by Sunday afternoon. She was lucky, though. Being rich and White, firmly ensconced in the local social power elite, we moved heaven and earth to ensure that we found her and returned her to her

parents. The woman in front of me was not of that ilk, however, appearing to be just another low-rent crack ho ready to do anything for a hit of rock. When she realized that she was being stalked, she gingerly eased on her seatbelt and placed her hands at the prescribed position on the steering wheel, never looking back. Bingo. The hunt was on.

After pulling up closely behind her so that my headlights lighted the interior of her vehicle and ensured that her anxiety was maximal (having a cop ride directly behind you about a car-length is an excellent way to make even the most fastidious driver do something legally actionable), I began to get the feeling that I knew her. I was always good at remembering people and identifying them by their mannerisms, tone of voice, and other characteristics, a skill that many of my peers in the police profession admired immensely; in fact, I could often identify a pedestrian from a significant distance just by the person's style of walking, so I was a little annoyed that I could not figure out who this female driver was, as I was by now certain that I knew her. After frantically pondering the matters for a few seconds, it hit me with the force of sudden recognition. It was not a woman, it was Lenny!

Lenny was a skinny, White, homosexual man who lived with his family in one of the rare White sections of a mostly African-American neighborhood. Historically, poor Southern Whites and African Americans often found themselves sharing neighborhoods and low-income housing (Sweeney, 1997), sometimes government subsidized, until the prosperity of the post-World War II era allowed many Whites to take advantage of their White privilege (McIntosh, 2004) and move from the poorer areas, an advantage not enjoyed by African Americans before the Civil Rights movement. Notwithstanding the general prosperity for the lucky White folks, who could at least take advantage of their voting power, access to higher education, and jobs denied Black people, many Whites, particularly in the South, never made it, and found themselves continuing

generation after generation to cohabitate with others who were marginalized and on the periphery of social power and acceptance. This cohabitation generally continued peacefully, with some notable exceptions such as when White residents imprudently lorded their racial advantage over their Black neighbors (at least they were White, right?), or when racial unrest reared its Hydra-head, relegating all to their respective skin colors and socially constructed races, leaving ordinarily peaceable neighbors to suffer from a type of selective diversity amnesia. At such times, those who suffered most from societal inequities turned on each other unthinkingly to express their animus against a society that kept them in thrall, never stopping to wonder why their misery persisted and was not relieved. Still, the general mood was tolerant if not tranquil, with the best coming out in people at times that could inspire hope; nevertheless, poverty, disassociation, and hopelessness meant that drugs and crime plagued such areas, making success rare if ever realized. This was the milieu that spawned Lenny, and, ironically, me.

As if his social circumstances were not enough adversity for Lenny to contend with, he was flamboyantly gay and convincingly effeminate besides. Painfully thin, almost gaunt, pallid of complexion, utterly lacking in social capital and material resources, he should have been timid and soft-spoken, character aspects that would have seemed crucial for basic survival given his circumstances. But Lenny was anything but timid or soft-spoken; in fact, Lenny was often called "sassy" by others. His family often experienced domestic strife, usually involving cognitive faculties profoundly diminished by voluminous amounts of alcohol, and regularly necessitating police intervention, so most of us knew Lenny and his family pretty well. Generally, the responding officers did not mind receiving these calls much since the outcome was typically a good row with a drunk uncle or brother of Lenny's (usually precipitated by the responding officers as much as the behavior of Lenny's family) and few things please the police sharks like

an easily catchable fish such as a drunken person of limited means. The arrest was often exciting

as the perpetrator would typically resist in his heavily intoxicated state without presenting any

real threat, unless the officer was inattentive or completely lacked the instincts needed for

working successfully as a cop, and the case was virtually always an easy win legally since the

offender almost never contested the charge or made it to trial. After sobering up, most would

plead guilty just to get out of jail, since their poverty made the posting of bail money out of reach

for most of them. They had no attorneys agitating for their freedom, no protest groups picketing

in front of the jail, just the prospect of missed time away from the bottle, the only release from

lives of want and squalor that many of them could look forward to. Their objective was freedom,

not justice.

Things were different when Lenny was present, though, especially when he was younger.

Despite his appearance, decidedly and quintessentially feminine with makeup and jewelry on a

sylphlike frame, Lenny was self-confident, and very smart. Before leaving high school early to

escape the jibes and harassment that life in a Southern high school made routine for a gay man,

Lenny paid enough attention to his studies to learn some things about judicial process and

principles of the law, at least well enough to know when someone's rights were in jeopardy.

Although he could not articulate them like those who are formally trained in the law, he was

almost eloquent in pointing out to police when they were exceeding the bounds of their authority

or failing to make reasonable decisions, and not just when his family was the focus. If Lenny was

around when cops were straying from the proper legal path, he pointed it out with forceful

expression and absolute assurance, behavior that did not endear him to the officers or the local

legal process (there is no 'criminal justice system' in the US, I would later learn, just a criminal

justice 'process,' since there is little coherent or systematic about how it works), and would

subsequently expose him to the righteous wrath of indignant cops. Still, regardless of the negative treatment he would predictably suffer when caught in vulnerable moments subsequent to "speaking truth to power," Lenny was defiantly outspoken when his sense of social justice was offended. Often the police officers involved would try to intimidate him with threats of arrest on attenuated or completely fabricated charges, but Lenny never retreated. Even when suffering the occasional arrest, Lenny would always appear in court, state his case, and, win or lose, be no less disputatious afterward. He might be poor, gay, and physically vulnerable but one thing Lenny was not when he perceived a failure of justice: afraid.

As I continued to follow Lenny, I was in a quandary. Not only did I prefer another type of prey that night, I liked Lenny. When treated with even a modicum of respect, he was friendly and cooperative, affecting a feminine tone that belied his ability to express himself assertively when need be. Yet even when giving others hell, especially local police, Lenny was true to himself. He did not argue in a husky male voice or revert to some stereotypical masculine persona. Lenny knew who he was and made no apologies for himself. He pursued his life in the fashion that he believed suited him and his nature and he made no bones about it. And I never thought of him as "sassy" like some other people did—a term that I deemed pointlessly condescending—I thought he was brave. I often wondered how I would have behaved in circumstances similar to his, and even in my youthful hubris and hypermasculine bravado, I had to grudgingly admit to myself that I most likely would have chosen the path of least resistance and avoided drawing attention to myself. Not Lenny. Even with all the social cards stacked formidably against him, he stood resolutely for what he believed in and in support of others, and it occurred to me early in my interactions with him that he was actually doing what I should be doing as a cop, what all cops should be doing, defending those who are most vulnerable and defenseless. Although the effect

of his example was short-lived for me then, it would return later with profound cognitive and emotional force. Here was a poor, gay, effeminate little White guy with no evident social power standing up to social institutions that he knew to be biased and ineffectual, and here was I, a 200-plus pound tough-guy cop, martial artist, weight lifter, and all around badass with a gun, a badge, and possessed of all the legitimate legal authority a single person could have, and I could not manage to muster the will to do what was ethical and just. Of course I admired him. Lenny was courageous and lived his principles, an aspect of his character that, ironically, was lost on most of us 10-foot tall and bullet-proof cops. As much as we supposedly admired such pluck, we often failed to esteem it in certain people in whom we least expected to see it displayed.

Still, there were other considerations. I had spent inordinate amounts of time, with the support of my fellow police officers, rationalizing my unprofessional behavior and establishing certain attitudes of mind intended to protect my psyche from assaults of conscious and moral dilemmas. One of those trumped up rules to police by was the law itself: *The law must be enforced*. All cops have legal discretion bestowed upon them when addressing infractions and many do use it reasonably and judiciously, but many others, like the perennially adolescent version of my youthful self, favor legal precepts as a crutch for exploiting their authority and having a good time at the expense of the public they supposedly serve. Telling ourselves that "the law must be enforced" allowed us to avoid pesky concepts like justice and commonsense, and, by claiming that we always hewed to the requirements of the law, we were able to justify arrests and other police actions as just doing our jobs. "Just doing our jobs" was the anodyne that soothed any emerging hint of conscience or guilt. Most of us did not really believe our own rhetoric, though; factually, we often used our discretion differentially, usually when it benefited us or our immediate needs, such as when we were too lazy to make an arrest after a long night on

duty or had a friend or influential person detained. Nonetheless, at that time, the need to enforce the law rigorously was one of my justifications of choice, so Lenny's fate that night was decided in a millisecond. Besides, Lenny knew me and had never given me any trouble, so the arrest should not have been problematic. A little paperwork, a few phone calls to help him get a bond signed at the station, and Lenny would be back on the street to pursue his sad, unfulfilling life. But it had been a while since I had last seen Lenny, and the person that I stopped that night was not the same that I had encountered before.

The first indication of something amiss was apparent when I activated my emergency lights to signal Lenny to pull over. I had arrested him on traffic charges before and he had always yielded immediately, but that night, he hesitated. Before that night, I would never have believed that Lenny would flee from police and certainly not in a vehicle, yet here he was exhibiting the telltale signs of a suspect about to shag ass. I could not believe it. No sooner than I started considering the implications, however, Lenny pulled to the side of the road and sat motionless. A little peeved, I skipped the amenities and moved straight to business. When I spoke to him, Lenny, recognizing me, immediately relaxed and his atypically anxious expression became hopeful, even a little flirtatious, not unusual for him. I greeted him a little testily and asked the perfunctory questions, such as "Why are you driving when you know you have a suspended driver's license?" and offered the same threadbare and patronizing platitudes like "You know better!" In response, he supplied some manufactured rationale for his actions, a game we both knew and expected. I directed him to exit the car, and he did so without complaint, but when I told him that I would have to arrest him, his demeanor changed markedly from friendly to abject fear and desperation. That's when I noticed the physical changes in him. In past years, when Lenny dressed in feminine attire, with makeup, bejeweled in womanly accoutrements, it took a

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well trained or familiar eye to recognize that he was a man. Slender, demure, and capable of expert feminine mannerisms, Lenny was a convincing woman. Yet the person in front of me that night had changed drastically. The makeup and other appurtenances of the wily pseudo-femme fatale were there, but the face was now haggard, worn, with sadness and misuse etched into his features. The self-confidence that had brightened his eyes, the attitude that other police officers had cavalierly and derogatorily described as "sassy," and I had called brave, was gone. What I saw that night was a frightened little man who might have done anything to avoid arrest. Adjusting my approach to use a more tactically sound posture, I immediately placed Lenny under arrest and handcuffed him—that's when the begging started. I had never seen Lenny when he was anything but self-assured, so hearing him beg me to release him was more than a little disconcerting. Such a change could have excited contempt in me but I knew Lenny and I knew that the person I had just arrested had been profoundly altered in some significant psychological sense. The Lenny I knew would ordinarily have been cooperative when treated with respect and vocally defiant with anyone whom he determined was violating his rights. This guy was meek, inoffensive, and would have done anything to get away. What happened?

After I explained to Lenny that I was legally obligated to arrest him for the offense of driving with a suspended driver's license, he stopped entreating me for his release and only asked that he be allowed to remove his makeup and jewelry before arriving at the jail. My plan to take him to my police department and process him had changed when I realized how unpredictably he was behaving, an eminently rational decision that would ultimately affect us both in profound ways. The decision was meant to be practical, though, not punitive in any way. I knew full well the potentially tragic outcomes that were possible when dealing with desperate suspects, particularly if illicit drugs or alcoholic beverages were involved. I genuinely meant to

avoid any violence that might lead to having to subdue Lenny or possibly lead to potentially deadly circumstances. Given what I learned that night, I have often wondered if Lenny might not have been considering suicide by cop as a way out of his miserable life. I did not know and hoped not, yet I had an eerie feeling. Being insatiably curious and genuinely concerned for Lenny's welfare, I had to ask him what had changed, what had eroded the self-possession that I had admired so much and left him reduced to being a frightened and timid person incapable of accepting what had become almost routine in his life, another arrest and incarceration. Of course, I asked in more genial terms than I conceptualized. He remained quiet for a few seconds, then, tears welled up in his eyes and began to course down his face in rivulets of mascara, and he explained the change. As he sobbed and spoke, I actually detected a measure of the old Lenny. He cried, and the tears were copious, covering his face with dark paint, but he never uttered an audible expression of the dejection and misery that he clearly felt, the only manifestation of his despair being the copious tears that cascaded down his impassive face. I perceived a subdued dignity in his demeanor. The tears appeared to be reflexive, spontaneous, but his tone of voice was measured and serious, with no more begging or attempts to negotiate. He struggled valiantly to maintain some semblance of self-respect as he recounted the previous couple of years since I had last seen him, and I guess since he could not repress the tears, he did the one thing he could, speak slowly and deliberately, thus allowing himself some control over a situation and a life that were, to him, completely uncontrollable.

Lenny confirmed that, among other travails, he had become a crack addict. Having previously had no interest whatsoever in drugs or alcohol, he now depended upon both to make it through what had become a desperate, hardscrabble existence. His family had finally decided that being gay was an intolerable stain upon their honor and sense of decorum, both very

important to most Southerners (Cash, 1941), and had unceremoniously ejected him from his home and the only dependable means of support that he had ever had. He said that he had worked hard to make a living and support himself, but with no education and no means, doing so successfully had proved impossible. Even the menial jobs that others took for granted were usually unavailable to him. No one ever said that it was because he was gay or because of his effeminate appearance, but, mysteriously, he was rarely selected for employment, and when he was, he felt so excluded and ostracized, and was treated so contemptibly, depression over his circumstances would cause him to quit or some minor, or imagined, offense would result in his termination. He said that he had even tried dressing and acting straight when job hunting in hopes that no one would suspect his sexual orientation. He admitted, however, that he was not very good at acting straight. His physical attributes and mannerisms perfected over a lifetime rendered him suspect from the start. Finally, he had turned to prostitution just to survive and a crack habit had followed. He said that the addiction had become so strong that he thought of little else and often thought of suicide as a way of coping. But the worst, according to Lenny, was what he was experiencing that night, the shame, degradation, and abuse that awaited him in jail. He said that the brutality of other inmates toward him was bad enough, but the contempt and revulsion displayed by the jail staff had become unbearable. In the past, when subjected to such abuse, he had bravely protested and challenged the jailers who belittled and demeaned him. Now, afraid, with no support, and with a crack addiction predominating in his thoughts, he just could not effectively defend himself any longer. I remember thinking that if the humiliation suffered at the hands of jail staff was so extreme that forcible sodomitic rape paled in comparison, it must be excruciating, indeed, and maybe Lenny was exaggerating for effect. Yet, I knew he was sincere and telling the truth, not only because I knew Lenny and his guileless

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manner of interacting but because I knew the jailers that he was talking about and their ways. I

knew he was speaking the truth because I knew them to be just like me and my cronies—playing

the game and using people as pawns. All that I could muster in the way of reassurance was the

promise that I would pull the jailers aside and ask them to let him clean up before entering the

jail population, a promise for which Lenny thanked me profusely, and a promise that I half-

heartedly and ineffectually kept.

On arriving at the jail, Lenny and I were buzzed in and I led him quickly but as

unobtrusively as possible to the Booking Room. I immediately pulled the jailer aside and tried to

explain the situation and what I wanted him to do to help out, but before I could manage it,

another jailer walked up and, pointing to Lenny, asked loudly, "Whose female is this?" I then

motioned him over and whispered that Lenny was a man, and before I could say more, he burst

out with an uproarious laugh, exclaiming, "*That's* a man?!" As he and the other jailer guffawed

stupidly and insensitively, I looked at Lenny, who was again crying silently. As I tried to catch

his eye to express some type of regret and apology, the first jailer composed himself and assured

me that they would "take care of her." I was angry and thought about telling him to go fuck

himself and popping him in the mouth, but the legal implications, the attendant ostracism that I

would face from my peers for having defended a gay guy over another "law enforcement

professional," as well as a lifetime of adverse consequences resultant of letting my fists take

charge where reason and maturity should hold sway, all conspired to restrain my violent impulse.

It was the first time that I had felt the temptation to protect a citizen against the unprofessional

conduct of another officer, jailer or otherwise, but it would not be the last. That night, though, I

felt embarrassed and ashamed to be a cop for the first time. What had been a dream profession

immediately started to feel like a burdensome job. As they led Lenny off to a jail cell, I tried

again to make eye contact with him and somehow convey my regret for not doing enough, for not doing enough to safeguard his basic right to humane treatment while in the custody of society's most powerful, coercive institution, but he never looked back. The cell door slammed shut, and I left the building without another word.

As I went back on patrol that night, any thoughts of "fishing" had left me completely. I did not know it at the time, and would not have had the education or words to adequately articulate it, but a profound, ineffable change was occurring in my thinking. As I drove slowly around, I began to consciously acknowledge the thoughts that I was having and to develop a nascent recognition for what they implied. I felt genuinely sorry for Lenny, for what he was experiencing even as I rode around on my little journey of self-exploration, and I consoled myself with self-affirmations meant to reassure my pained conscience that I was not such a bad guy. I was a good cop, the best. Nobody put more asses in jail than me, I was the first to leap into the fray, and never backed down from a challenge or left another cop hanging. I did all that was expected of a "good" cop and I did it better than most. So, why the guilty feelings? Claiming some epiphanic conversion would be disingenuous at best and an outright lie at worst, since I do not believe in epiphanies, only pivotal and climacteric experiences, yet a spark had been ignited in my thinking that would set ablaze unconscious and semi-conscious musings that had been collecting in my mind for several years since I had become a cop. I rode around until the end of my shift pondering what had occurred and endeavoring to process the welter of feelings that I had about my arrest of Lenny and how he had been treated. The jailers had behaved no differently than I had seen them do many times before. Hell, I made more arrests than anyone in my police department so I knew better than most what to expect at the lockup. Truth be told, I had tacitly condoned their behavior and had never thought anything more about it or even

accepted that anything untoward had occurred. Why now? Why was I experiencing such acute pangs of conscience and compunctious feelings? And over a gay guy of all people? I had nothing against homosexuals; in fact, I had always admired anyone who persevered in marginal circumstances such as prisons, deserted islands, natural catastrophes, and those who were forced to live on the fringes of society, and who was more marginalized than homosexuals in the U. S.? As I pondered these emotionally tumultuous thoughts, I began to think of experiences from childhood that had engendered similar feelings. I recalled the profoundly mentally challenged boy that I knew who was picked on and ridiculed simply because he made an easy target for adolescent abuse. At 7 years old, I had tried to defend him from being pushed into a water hole only to become the focus of threatened abuse from my peers. My little brother, with a heart as big as the universe, but recklessly, unthinkingly adventurous, and utterly suggestible, was often led into foolish acts by others, and when I had tried to protect him, I was often upbraided by my peers and older kids and even my brother himself, who would impolitely remind me to mind my own business. And the effeminate boys and masculine-leaning girls, whom we were always sure were gay, even before we had the least idea what gay or homosexual was. As long as they were not flagrant or ostentatious in their deviance, we were tolerant, even protective (to a certain degree, sassy effeminate boys and plucky masculine girls were kind of cute in their anomalous attitudes), refusing to allow vitriol or abuse to be directed their way—unless we were the authors of the abuse, of course. Riding and mulling these long-forgotten memories, I realized that the little boy who had been naturally protective of the vulnerable had somehow drank the Kool-Aid of cruelty and internalized George Meredith's injunction that we lived either to be "sword or block" and that some people mattered and some did not. I was familiar with Freud tangentially, but it would be years before I would come to understand what a "Freudian perspective" was or

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the potential revelatory aspects of psychoanalysis itself. What I realized with the force of epiphany that night, however, was that somehow along the road of my young life, I had lost a cherished and valiant aspect of my own nature, and my compassion for Lenny and his predicament was emblematic of that loss, making my failure regarding his interests all the more poignant and shameful.

As the evening slipped away and Lenny dealt with what I have no idea, I finally came to the realization that I was not a good cop. I was not even close. I let my guard down long enough to accept that it was not about numbers of arrest, drug seizures, proving my manhood to the world, or successfully chasing suspects. It was about being a public servant, safeguarding the people I worked for, the citizens, and ensuring the rights of Others—or at least it should be. The rhetoric that I had spouted about being a defender of others returned to me cognitively with the force of a divine shout and I recognized that the respect that I had arrogated for myself and my fellow cops was undeserved, insubstantial, and probably even non-existent. Real respect and acknowledgement for being a good cop had to be something else, something nobler, and it had to be obtained in some other way. Running around using my jurisdiction as my personal playground could not be the right way to police and feel proud of my work, and I suddenly wanted that more than anything else, certainly more than logging another arrest or subduing another suspect. I remembered a story that one of my patrol partners had told me of his having a religious epiphany while patrolling a city street, and I realized that I had experienced something similar if not as complete. His was religious, mine was ethical and moral, and while his was immediate and life-altering, mine would take years to bring to fruition and effect substantive change in my life. It would ultimately take years of education, soul-searching, laborious self-instruction, estrangement from my social milieu and supposed friends, and the establishment of a

firm commitment to the goal of being a better cop than I had been, and would take a fundamental

shift in my personal thinking. The most significant realization of that fateful night was more

immediate, however. I realized that I had failed, and failing was abhorrent to my incorrigibly

competitive nature. I had failed to protect someone I had sworn to serve. I had failed because of

overweening pride, immaturity, uncritical thinking, and unreasoned beliefs. I had failed because I

had allowed myself to be a sheep while fancying myself a great white shark, a predator that

controlled his environment and led the way rather than docilely accepting the status quo or

received beliefs. I was a metaphorical shark, but not one worthy of praise or adulation, just one

that you wanted to make sure your teenager or poor relation did not encounter some time in a

dark, secluded place. I had failed to achieve the one thing that I had always wanted the most, to

be a police officer worthy of respect. All along I should have been looking out for Others,

looking out for the dispossessed and those deemed socially inconsequential. I should have

heeded the classic creed of the LAPD adopted by so many cops around the world that stipulates

that I was "to protect and serve." In the immediate case, though, I had failed a real person in need

of my help. I had failed to defend someone vulnerable and helpless. I had failed to look out for

Lenny….

The Baleful Banality of Power

I see power everywhere. That succinct but revelatory statement uttered by one of my

professors in the Curriculum Studies program at Georgia Southern University (personal

communication, June 1, 2010, S. Ross), and derived directly from theory (Apple, 1995; Foucault,

1977; Freire, 1970), was sufficient to encapsulate the thematic thread of my intellectual life. All

of my questions about human interaction, my own existence, the cultures that I have been

exposed to, and the one in which I was reared, ultimately centered on one, simple, yet profound

idea: power is everywhere. Power relations determine who gets what, who goes where, how each

of person sees life—their own and Others—and living, and what they eventually are able to

experience during their brief sojourn on this relatively small rock of a planet called Earth. Living

in the U.S., people are assured that the world is their oyster, that they can pull themselves up by

their bootstraps (or, contemporarily, those on our Nikes), and that the common man—and

sometimes the common woman—can become anything, do anything, and, in all cases, have it all.

Yet, the evidence of experience and the confirmation of even casual observation

demonstrates clearly that the oyster will cost plenty, if it is obtainable it at all. The dispossessed

may not have boots or Nike to pull on, and, man or woman, cannot have it all if they emerge

from humble beginnings because they will likely start from such a disadvantaged and

disenfranchised socioeconomic position that struggling to overcome those obstacles will

probably occupy the greater part of their lives, if they can muster the will to struggle at all after

realizing that the deck is insuperably stacked against them. And even if they manage to generate

the personal fortitude necessary to contend with a society hostile to their needs and desires, one

that attempts to beguile them with promises of equality, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,

there are landmines in the social and economic world that will almost certainly waylay them at

some point.

The disempowered will encounter a society that promotes egalitarianism, yet utilizes

tendentious decision-making as a weapon against them. They will suffer from impoverished

circumstances that fail to provide the basics for successfully negotiating a culture suffering from

affluenza (de Graaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2005) and devoted to the acquisition of "stuff" as the

exemplar of success, a society so preoccupied by personal gratification that it has been called the

McDonaldization of society (Ritzer, 1993) and the "culture of narcissism" (Lasch, 1979), and

one that, even if they are successful in clawing their way to the level of socially denominated success, will continue to use every instrument of oppression to devalue their accomplishments, take what they have acquired, and return them to the status of the Other (Lévinas, 1972; Säid, 1979). Using artifice and guile, employing the imprimatur of social consensus as filtered through the workings of politics and the law that are actually arrayed against them and their interests, they will spend a lifetime being reminded whence they came. And worst of all, even if allowed a measure of success, they will be required to surrender all pretentions to an intellectual life that includes the one birthright of every person, the right to think and act critically. Those relegated to the status of the politically and socially disentitled will have to toe the ideological line even to have their application to the club considered, and woe betide the individual who expects to express the innovative, insightful, or critical thought. Power is, indeed, everywhere, and it is a White, male, Christian, hydra-headed monster driving a Lexus with cell phones strapped to its many heads as it brokers new deals to gain additional wealth to the disadvantage of those less powerful and that of Others like them. And to ensure that they never get into this exclusive club of affluence and privilege—or to regulate their behavior should they get past security—there are various social institutions possessed of the legitimate power of a biased society and intended to watch them, and of all of those presumably objective institutions dedicated to their welfare, possibly none, with the exception of the concept of law itself, will affect their lives more than that of the police (Anderson & Quinney, 1999; Arrigo, Alvi, Perry, & DeKeseredy, 2006; Dragiewicz & DeKeseredy, 2012; Milovanovic , 2002; Welch, 2009). Imbued with legally-defined, coercive force and operating from an institutionalized machismo that drives its every action, members of the police will monitor what the disadvantaged are doing, making sure that they do not stray from acceptable limits and boundaries, and if they do….

Still, those least powerful in society may solace themselves with the realization that they are in a club of their own, made up of the perennially lied to, the historically marginalized, and the politically and socially excluded who have endured centuries, perhaps millennia, of oppression and subjugation; however, the news is not all bad. If they study history, philosophy, and other scholarly pursuits, or if they are able students of armchair sociology and observant of their social surroundings, they may just come to the eminent conclusion reached by Foucault (1977) and recognize that power truly is everywhere, including within their hands, and that it may be potentiated by their thoughts, activism, and action (Freire, 1970). If it seems logical to them that power resides in them and those like them and sharing their circumstances, they might take heart that a different world may be within conceptual and actual reach; in fact, they do possess power, *the* power, a power that governments cannot suppress (Zinn, 2007), and they can use the power that they possess to speak truth to those other powers that threaten their safety or inhibit the free expression of their lives. They could even use the power to assist those like themselves and liberate those unlike themselves[2] (Freire, 1970). How they determine best to use the power will be up to them. To acquire more goods, status, and possessions that signify their affluence, or to work actively to mitigate the social inequities and disproportionate distribution of social advantage, ultimately leaving the world as they found it, or perhaps even worse? Or, after coming to understand themselves in relation to their place and their circumstances, they might elect to leave the world a little better for the generations that follow them. Such are the weighty choices that people face as they traverse life. Life is, indeed, about choices, and sometimes the choices made are made by those who wield institutional power like a weapon. Such power must be examined, analyzed, thoughtfully considered, and, in many cases, vigilantly constrained if it is to remain a mechanism of civilized living.

Research Interests: The Pernicious & Productive Pervasiveness of Power

The opening précis on power is not meant as a homiletic excursus, a moral exercise, or solely for the reader's edification. Power—real, raw, hegemonic, and evident in all human interactions—is the basis for all critical theoretical investigations worthy of the name (Agger, 2006; How, 2003; Levinson, Gross, Lick, & Hanks, 2011; McCarthy, 1991). Simply denominating a research study as driven by critical theory does not make it so and does not automatically reveal anything about the individuals, groups, or social institutions that wield power daily or their effects on others, and Others, lives. For any research project genuinely employing the searching scrutiny that constitutes a critical theoretical lens, the researcher must unpack the bases of power (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994), personal and institutional, and lay them out for minute inspection. Merely acknowledging power as some type of specimen for the idly curious to remark is worse than social inaction, it is to tacitly support whichever side that differential power oppresses. In any critical social theory research project, such as this one, to fail to speak truth to power is an abdication of social responsibility in addition to being a violation of the second Aurelian law: to look things in the eye and know them for what they are[3]. Other researchers take a more measured position when assessing their projects, describing their critical social theorizing and research as a "social and rhetorical activity" (Dressman, 2008; Levinson, 2011) or a type of "engaged social criticism" (Wexler, 2009). Consistent with the insights derived from the "postmodern turn" (Lyotard, 1984), many postmodern critical theorists, critical postmodern theorists, and post-postmodern theorists have adopted the rejection of grand narratives and binarism disdained by others who suspect everything positivist (Crotty, 2006), while not acceding to the perceived excesses of a postmodern theory that some see as having dissipated into insubstantiality (Eagleton, 1996). Pursuing their own theoretical approaches and

research methodologies, and utilizing counterstories and counternarratives (Giroux, 1997), the thematic commonalty that pervades all legitimately critical research is the need to "read the word and the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987) and act upon what they find (Freire, 1970). In the same tradition, the avowedly critical social theoretical study presented here is as much a manifesto as it is a scholarly endeavor, a statement of my social commitment to look institutional power in the eyes, proclaim its essence, and levy a challenge to its continued preeminence.

This study is overtly and decidedly an educational and curricular project intended to examine the relations of power in Southern rural policing, most particularly as they influence the treatment of those who are socially, politically, and economically disempowered by institutional means, and how the hypermasculine culture of Southern policing is determinative and sustaining of that disempowerment. The stark and ineludible reality is that, people who are poor and from a minority social or ethnic community, and lack the political and social capital to assert themselves will suffer disproportionately from the negative influences of the power of police, the judiciary, and the prison-industrial complex (Asch, 1971; Bitner, 1970; Couper, 2012). They will be more often stopped by police, investigated by police, arrested by police, assaulted by police, and killed by police (Correll, Park, Judd, Wittenbrink, Sadler, & Keesee, 2007; Haggerty & Ericson, 2001; Kappeler, Sluder, & Alpert, 2009; Morrison, 2010). They will be more frequently convicted and suffer harsher legal penalties, they will make parole and receive probation less often than similarly situated Whites, their parole or probation will usually be longer, and they will be consigned terminally to death row far more frequently than their paler and better socially connected counterparts (Foucault, 1975/1995; Gramsci, 1975; Pinar, 2001; Shelden & Hallett, 2006). And, most insidiously and perniciously, they will live to see generations of their peers and loved ones languish in carceral conditions that will kill them, drive them insane, or leave them so

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broken emotionally and physically that release from their confines will be pointless and even dangerous to others (Reiman, 1979/2004; Shelden, 2001). Prison teaches how to be a better criminal, not how to mitigate criminal tendencies (Shelden, 2001).

And, most often, it will start with a chance encounter with those representing the Thin Blue Line, an encounter that will be decided largely upon the dictates of the existing police culture (Crank, 2004; National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, 1931; Riksheim & Chermak, 1993). Thus the crux of my study: How, as a career police officer who ultimately ascended to the rank of Chief of Police, the pinnacle of organizational police authority, did I develop a fervent commitment to using my position as a platform for seeking social justice and equity in the policing process, especially in light of the social, economic, political, and historical precursors that formed my personal ideological and philosophical thoughts, precursors that were pronouncedly conservative? And can my experience serve as an inspiration for encouraging others in the policing profession to broaden their outlook, strive for continual enlightenment, view their authority and power as vested within them for the noble purpose of defending the most vulnerable, even against their own hegemonic societal processes and institutions? How does "place," the geographical and psychological location of the individual, bear upon these questions (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991)? Can the outcome that I have experienced be employed usefully to promote educational processes that will produce similar results among other police officers? And finally, how does masculinity, specifically "hypermasculinity," play into this social equation? My hypothesis is that of all the factors that act upon the mind and socialization of the Southern, rural police officer—race, wealth, gender, social status, religion—it is the hypermasculine imperative and its concomitant need for exaggerated respect and confirmation of manly identity, the compulsion to use the police

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profession as a venue for proving masculinity through reckless and injudicious acts, that is most determinative, and it is this same factor that contributes most to the untoward outcomes experienced by the most vulnerable in society, the very people that police are meant to protect.

One of the first attributes of curriculum studies and qualitative scholarship with which I became familiar was the idea that research is often most successful when it engenders more questions that invigorate and potentiate inquiry rather than seeking infallible truths and impregnable facts (Au, 2011; Schubert, 2010; Taylor, 1979). Often, presenting new or more provocative questions is more valuable than "answers" or "facts," especially when one adopts the perspective of postmodern and other contemporary epistemologies and accept that reality, truth, and, even life, are often idiosyncratic conceptualizations that must be qualitatively analyzed at the level of the individual (Apple, 2010; Westbury, 2007). Personal perception is the only true judge of such phenomena, yet they must also be mediated through the perceptions of the applicable societal milieu. Consequently, in this study, I will ask how I became a liberal, progressive career police officer who values social justice, equity, and tolerance in a social and occupational environment that typically produces individuals who generally become progressively more intolerant, hidebound, and inegalitarian. And I will also attempt to determine how this could have occurred in a White man from the Deep South and with every reason, cultural and social, to end up adhering to the status quo of chauvinism, racism, sexism, and ethnocentrism. What path led me to this, what now seems, logical and commonsense stance when so many others have failed to discover it, or, having found it, rejected it so nonchalantly? What influences, tangible or intangible, contributed to this realization? Who was influential? What material resources were germane? I will proffer the hypothesis that, though the influences were manifold and varied, all adding something substantive to this heady mix that resulted in the

person that I am still in the process of becoming, I will attempt to show that a few significant people, a few provocative and enduring ideas, and a few processes of personal development were largely determinative. I will examine the sources from which the most compelling ideas that influenced me were derived, and I will posit the good hegemonic influence of the philosophy of critical thinking as the primary catalyst, and critical theory and the field of curriculum studies as those constituents that have positioned me to optimistically aspire to genuine social progressivism. On entering the curriculum studies program at Georgia Southern University, I truly considered myself liberal and open-minded, a true "critical thinker" and objective intellectual, only to realize that all I had accomplished was to prepare myself to start real scholarship and an examination of my life and experiences. My first doctoral-level lesson was intellectual humility. Just like the new martial arts black belt who is startled to learn that she is only now ready to start learning, I quickly found that I was only ready to begin to study. Finally, I will consider the most pressing question of all: is my personal outcome replicable? On the ambitious premise that it is, indeed, reproducible, I will postulate a potential method of preparing others for the optimization of their life experience, regardless of social position, and I will assert that one never arrives at a static position of social clarity but must constantly strive to better oneself. Critical consciousness and social awareness are not permanent states achieved and maintained; they are continual processes of becoming. As Greene (1998) has proposed so eloquently, I am not yet.

The purpose of this study is to examine the phenomenon of Southern hypermasculinity and its inordinate influence upon my life and career as a police officer. Specifically, I will plumb the intricacies of the "hypermasculine imperative" that work upon the psyches of Southern men to a preponderant degree (Plath & Lussana, 2009; Wood, 2011), and I will focus my review on

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the effects that it has on Southern White men in the police profession, using my own experience as my frame of reference. My interest in this area stems from my curiosity concerning the course of my life and career. Having been reared in southern and middle Georgia, arguably areas of the world infamous—if not notorious—for social and political conservatism that works against the principles of social justice (Bullock & Rozell, 2009; Key, 1949; Woodard, 2006), especially relating to the needs of African Americans, women, homosexuals, immigrants, religious minorities, and marginalized people of virtually every type, I wonder daily how I arrived at a social, political, moral, and ethical stance that impels me to work toward the establishment of equitable social circumstances. In terms of sheer weight of experiences, my logical expectation is that I should have been as hidebound, illiberal, xenophobic, and intolerant as I have found the majority of my peers to be; yet, I have progressively worked toward consciously and concertedly adopting a personal philosophy that seeks to equalize my social and political milieu to the extent possible. I believe absolutely that my personal outcome could not be merely incidental, particularly in light of what is known about the intransigence of personal ideologies and opinions that adhere strongly to the tribal mentality (Berreby, 2005; Rozenblit, 2008). My intention with this research is to examine my experiences to determine the formative episodes that may have contributed to my current view of my social world, and learn if they can be replicated by others motivated to revise the way they interact with life in order to attain what the Declaration of Independence has long professed—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all.

Personal Justification: I am a White Man

In his classic work, *Tortilla Flat,* novelist John Steinbeck observed, "It is a fact verified and recorded in many histories that soul capable of the greatest good is also capable of the greatest evil. Who is there more impious than backsliding priest? Who more carnal than a recent

virgin? This, however, may be a matter of appearance" (1935/1997, p. 19). His point was that

people all have good and bad residing within, and which is adduced for the viewing world is a

matter of perspective, position, and, perhaps, one's individualized reality. Yet, it also harkens to

the belief that once set upon a course of action or a mode of belief, the proselyte proceeds with

the ardor of the convinced, with a passion for converting and an unquenchable desire, if not

unadulterated obsession, to bring knowledge newly learned to the consciousness of others.

Having once been benighted but subsequently enlightened, the neophyte advocate for a cause

will need to have newfound understanding confirmed by others to make it palpable, and will

often crusade with the formidable power of conviction, making all efforts worthwhile in the

pursuit of Truth. Few obstacles will dissuade the faithful and no challenge will be accepted as

insuperable for the devoted. Only the conversion of other hapless souls will suffice. Writer

Henry Miller was supposed to have quipped that the true nature of the perverse lay in "the lust to

convert," casting a dubious shadow of authenticity on new evangelical fervor, and leaving us to

wonder where reality lays. Taking a realistic approach, I suspect my own motives must be

somewhere in the gray area between, though it is my sincere hope that I may surmount the taint

of mere appearance to achieve something socially useful with my scholarly work, this work most

of all.

 I am White. Those three words and the reality that they represent have been sufficient in

my life to allow me opportunities and advantages that Others who cannot make that assertion

have not enjoyed (Dunbar, 1997; Kincheloe, Steinberg, Rodriguez, & Chennault, 1998; Lipsitz,

1998; Maher & Tetreault, 1997; McIntosh, 2004; Painter, 2011). In addition to the pragmatic

reality of my White privilege is the imagined perquisites that Whiteness also conveys. Kincheloe

(1991) incisively emphasizes the feeling among many poor Whites that some advantage obtains

simply by being White, writing that "using Freud's notion of narcissism, Fromm develops a theory of social narcissism to explain the tendency of some suppressed classes to be loyal to their social superiors and their rulers" (p. 130), a point that explains to a significant degree the failure of some poor Southern Whites to collaborate with their similarly economically oppressed fellows. His ideas would find confirmation in the work of the renowned social activist, Paulo Freire (1970) and would add to the activist ferment of the 1960s, 1970s, and beyond and be confirmed by McIntosh (2004) with regard to White perceptions and realities of racial privilege.

I am also male. Couple the biological reality of my gender with the socially constructed reality of my race and you know at least one thing about me—I am socially hegemonic (Brizendine, 2011; King, 2005; Peterson & Wrangham, 1997; Weeks, 2012). My status as a White male confers upon me privileges of power (Connell, 2005; Jackson, 1990), power the existence of which is disputed by some (Farrell, 2001; Goldberg, 1977; Sommers, 2001). Goldberg (1977), declaring that "most men live in harness" (p. 11), does not repudiate the hegemony or power position of men but does point out the vagarious, socially stunting aspects of maleness, writing that

> Our culture is saturated with successful male zombies, businessmen zombies, golf zombies, sports car zombies, etc.… They have confused their social masks for their essence and they are destroying themselves while fulfilling the traditional definitions of masculine-appropriate behavior. p. 13

According to Goldberg, men have been shackled by societally prescribed and proscribed behaviors and conduct that leaves them alienated and estranged from fulfilling lives, and until they adopt the same sense of outrage at their emotional and social stasis that is generative of unfulfilling existences, they will continue to suffer from emotional desolation, ennui indicative

of existential confusion, and even truncated longevity ascribable to the poor health their fast-paced, stressful lives produce. Whether one accepts the validity of male privilege or not, or irrespective of the terms one couches male power in, the incontrovertible reality is that Others—African-American men and women, Hispanic men, LGBT persons—will never possess such power and privilege that is the preserve of White males in Western cultures, even should the paradigm be inversely upended tomorrow, nor would I imagine that they would wish to since such unrestrained authority contributes disproportionately to constrained lives. With such an unequal distribution of power, someone always suffers, and always will.

To further press my point, as a White male, I am the paradigmatic model for all that occurs in the social world of the United States and other Western nations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) since, historically, White males, possessing the seats of power, have preordained what is considered acceptable, important, and worthy of acknowledgement. I am the philosophical frame from which the positivist tradition was built and continues to persist. Religion, politics, economics, education, military services, and myriad other social institutions and concerns all derive immediately and predictably from the guide that my White maleness provides, and, this will likely remain the reality at least in my lifetime (Easton, 1966; Freeman, 2002; Mohawk, 1999). Everything that Others do, feel, strive for, emulate, perceive, hope for, desire, theorize, will proceed from White maleness since White maleness predominates so unrelentingly in American culture (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Shelden & Hallett, 2006). The histories of generations past were predicated on the framework that I represent and generations yet to be born will contend with its undeniable realities. Virtually everything contained within the Western ethos that constitutes civilization and progress was launched from

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the edifice of male Whiteness (Hacking, 1986; Roth, 1992), and, unless Western society effects a monumental transition to a more just and equitable state, all will continue to be as it has been.

As a White male who has participated in the hegemonic practices of a society that dictates to and institutionally directs the lives of those not privileged to be in the circle of the socially influential and economically affluent, I find myself mired in ambivalence. Like most Americans, I wish to enjoy the benefits of advanced technology, economic prosperity, social and physical security, and all the appurtenances that accrue to the modern Western state. Still, I am daily disturbed by the realization that Others are not included in the privileges, advantages, and wealth that Americans appear to assume as a birthright (Beinart, 2010). Having been reared to compete vigorously, sometimes viciously, in the cutthroat game of winners and losers called social advancement, I understand the impulse to have more and ignore the reality that Others will have less, but I do not, and cannot, passively accept such a state without objection. Just as the antiquity of an abuse is no excuse for its continuance, so the appreciation of the provenance of an urge or an understanding of its existence does not connote propriety or agreement. As I have often remarked, the difference between human beings and every other sentient life-form on this planet is one's ability to utilize the approximately 3 lb. mass of semi-gelatinous neural tissue that called a "brain" for more than a place to hang one's hands-free cell phones. People can assess, appreciate, analyze, and act upon their circumstances to improve them, and, having witnessed for 21 years the inherent inequities of a criminal justice process that works to the detriment of the neediest, rather than their betterment, I pursue this research with the devout hope that it will do something positive to meliorate the social world. Having been part of an inequitable, biased social institution and having witnessed its effects, I now offer my insight to remediate it to some appreciable degree.

My ardent hope is that the predominance of White male influence and power will change, and soon. The insalubriously destructive mentality of zero-sum competition (Seidler, 1994), the inequity of socially significant issues decided by the mere possession or lack of certain genitalia, and the unreasoning use of coercive force to decide matters of existential consequence to all peoples (Frosh, 1992) is a fact of contemporary life that causes me mounting and irrepressible fear and anxiety concerning the possibility of humans continuing existence as a species on this planet. I am convinced that the injurious, deleterious, and potentially life-extinguishing circumstances in which people find themselves as human beings (Friedman, 2005; Kirsch, 2007) is overwhelmingly the consequence of having allowed the unthinking continuance of one gender and one race to persist as the most powerful force acting upon civilizations and societies (Easterly, 2007; Painter, 2011; Rosenkranz, 2012; Zinn, 1980/2003). Had people long ago accepted that such conditions were tending toward the intellectually and existentially incestuous, they might have devised ways of intermitting their own excesses and alleviating or ameliorating the conditions that now threaten to end their relatively short experiment as a biological entity, they might have ensured that all of their conspecifics were afforded the opportunity to experience genuine self-expression capable of sustaining a harmonious existence for all beings, and, crucially, they might have established a state of grace here on Earth, where future generations without end might have enjoyed the best, and avoided the worst, of what humanity represents. Instead, humans may be contemplating their doom (Harman, 2008). Many scholars, philosophers, scientists, and other thoughtful people have surmised that human excesses have positioned people precariously on the verge of their own species-level demise (Kunstler, 2005), a plausible reality that causes me profound concern on a daily basis. Have humans truly reached a point where even their best efforts will be for naught, the existential end of the road for

humanity? I hope not. And it is because I hope not that I pursue this research and attempt to offer alternatives that may contribute to a brighter sociality based on social justice and equity.

Context of Study: My Curriculum of Southern Place

The vignette that opened this study will undoubtedly be read by and interpreted by different readers in different ways. Some may find in its description of a young cop on the prowl an indictment of the criminal justice profession itself, particularly the policing branch, and ask probing questions such as, why is such authority vested in single persons allowed to persist unchecked, with no effective monitors and little accountability? Other readers will likely take issue with the anecdotal nature of the story and place blame for any impropriety squarely on my shoulders as an undutiful public servant who had an obligation and carried a sacred trust but failed to honor them. A fair assessment, and unquestionably correct as far as personal responsibility is the focus. Still others will decry what they perceive as the disparagement of an entire noble profession and fulminate against the temptation to draw excessively and unnecessarily broad conclusions based solely on one cop's account. Unquestionably, the need to remain vigilant for bias, prejudice, and the tendentious, retrospective view of someone who has left policing and now wants to cleanse a guilty conscience and indulge in revisionist autobiographical inquiry for scholarly purposes is to be diligently guarded against. Yet, the potential worth of the autobiographical endeavor is plain.

> To recognize that one cannot escape oneself, and that one must confront one's own past
> in order to hope to grasp the present and influence the future, one engages in
> autobiographical work. To so work means to be in movement, and to become
> progressively conscious of movement, its relation to other, to the historical moment.
> Pinar, 1994, p. 57

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Again, without doubt, these perceptions are not without merit, even if they are insufficient for explaining the totality of aspects that the story subsumes. All of these perspectives may warrant serious consideration, yet no single one can adequately explain the realities involved, leaving only the explanation that I convey as the official version of my intent. But just as any text that presumes to offer elucidation of any subject, whether written, spoken, or experienced must speak to the individual "reader" in its own way and allow for individual conclusions to be drawn (Pinar et al., 1995), this assessment of my police career stands ready for inspection on such ground. All that I may offer is my intent as it is known to me, itself subject to scrutiny and prone to error, which is exactly the purpose of such autobiographical methods as *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) and critical autoethnographical inquiries that others have pursued (de F. Afonso & Taylor, 2009; Quicke, 2008; Rhee, 2002; Sharma, 2009) and that I propose here. These methods take what is presented as remembrances, episodic and anecdotal, and subject them to the gimlet eye of scholarly review, allowing conclusions idiosyncratically developed to inform human understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Patton, 2002; Pelias, 2003). In the end, each mind analyzing and interpreting the data will make specific determinations that will have relevance for itself, and no single assessment or interpretation will have any greater validity than any other. For my purposes in this research, all that I can propose is an attempt at shared understanding toward illuminating the practices and attitudes of a monolithic institutional power—the police.

My purpose with the opening vignette was to dispel the common notion of what the average non-police officer citizen might have of what police officers are like (Couper, 2012) and thus render the police officer on the beat as human, susceptible to the same foibles and missteps that characterize all of people's lives rather than the apotheosized knight in shiny blue armor conveyed by police dramas and stylized images (Dirikx, Van den Bulck, & Parmentier, 2012;

Kappeler, 2006). I hoped to show that there is a continual game afoot on the streets that most often transpires in the darkness of night and the even more opaque areas of impoverishment and social marginalization, and, though the outcomes of these activities seldom arise to the attention of the average citizen, they can do so with dramatic effect[4] (Hill, 2002). My authorial plan was to present to the reader the stark reality of daily policing that affects the lives of cops and the multiple publics that they presumably serve (Crank, 2004; Welch, 2009), emphasizing the humanity of both and underscoring the potential for devising a police profession sincerely committed to public service. By using my own experience and offering it for meticulous review, I have endeavored to establish credibility for my research project, seeking to show that I will present the worst that I have been in the hope that reviewers of this study will accept that other data offered will be worth consideration, or, failing that, at least have provoked thinking about policing as a social institution that should concern all citizens on some level of awareness (Van Maanen, 2009). My intention was to prove that what appears afterward is a valid and valuable approach to research, the result of which, of course, must be judged by each person who peruses these pages. To execute my research project, however, I must examine the concept, emotion, and reality of place.

Everyone is from somewhere, and that "somewhere" is influential on the course of individual lives—often hegemonically influential—and affects them even if they no longer live in it, lived there only briefly, or, perhaps, never actually lived there at all (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991). Adding to the complexity of place in people's lives, the modern penchant for mobility in pursuit of the capitalist ideal of acquiring more, displaying more, and seeking more constantly, there may be multiple places that bear directly, or indirectly, upon life experience. The concept of "place" may describe not only geographical locations, but can encompass identity,

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positionality, and culture (Casemore, 2008; Whitlock, 2007), and has tremendous implications

for the collective human future. According to MacKethan (1980), the future will be predicated on

the bases of love and community that place makes possible, each individual place aggregated

into a communal place. Whitlock (2007) concisely establishes the criticality of place in the lives

and educations of us all, writing that,

> if place is a context of the development of a sense of self and sense of being in the world,
>
> what social and cultural contexts contribute to the sense one has of this context, place? I
>
> like to think of this circle/cycle of self, place, society, and culture as a *curriculum of*
>
> *place* [emphasis added]. p. 2

Her assessment provides the frame for this study and its chief purpose: to demonstrate the

hegemonic influence that place, in all its aspects—physical, geographical, cultural, and

psychological—has on the course, and direction, of people's lives. Place stays with people

wherever they go and continues to influence, if not predominate, in their actions and thoughts,

making knowledge of the curriculum of place possibly the most important focus of research for

curriculum studies and other disciplines that seek to understand human social interactions. To

achieve my research goals, I must examine the particularities of place, specifically the

particularities of place that act upon the formation of the Southern rural cop's identity. How is

curriculum of place unique to the experience of the cop from the rural South? What factors

influence Southern rural masculine development and perceptions of effective, functional societal

institutions? And how do these considerations work in the formation of the curriculum of

Southern rural masculinity?

My experience of place, and my personal curriculum of Southern place, encompasses

multiple locations geographically—Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Virginia, South Carolina—and

includes Southern micro-cultures within Southern states and regions. Indeed, there are many "Souths" and having been to one single region in what constitutes the southern U.S. confers no more comprehensive a view of Southernness than visiting one region of China does. Unquestionably, commonalities exist among Southern social, political, economic, religious, and other aspects of Southern life, yet really knowing "the" South would be the endeavor of several lifetimes, and would doubtless still leave the inquirer with only a superficial knowledge of what the diverse cultural structures of Southern life really mean to any one person, group, or community. Still, notwithstanding the legion of idiosyncratic configurations of Southern micro-cultures, any examination of the U.S. South must proceed from a thorough basic understanding of general perceptions of what many consider "Southern." Failing to do so would leave the researcher with a detrimental lack of understanding about how Southerners view themselves since so much of Southern self- and community-concept is predicated on myth, tradition, literature, and other cultural dimensions (Kincheloe, 1991), a fact that constitutes another advantage of studies such as this one as they offer Southerners themselves the opportunity for introspection and self-study that may eventuate in an expanding of social and personal consciousness. Confirming the integral nature of social mythology to the development of Southern identity, Kincheloe (1991) simultaneously offers a medium for correcting the invidious effects of Southern myth, writing of Southerners that

> The only way to maintain our identity is via myth invocation and imitation—a process that Southerners have mastered over the decades, especially through their literature…the act of demystification is an act of social psychoanalysis as it uncovers the existence of social distortion, its genesis, its nature, and its effects. p. 128

Southerners are often accused of living by the myth, the idealized concept of self, group, and imagined history, a fact that, supposedly, distorts their lives and allows for continued social ignorance. Accurate or not, there are methods for mitigating the worst of regional fabulism, if it exists, specifically by encouraging Southerners of all persuasions to engage in healthy introspection.

As one contemplates place and its incalculable influence on people's lives (Falk, 2004), it is only logical that one would examine how the concept bears upon education, formal and informal, another preponderant factor that guides people inexorably to whatever they ultimately become. As these ideas have become of more salient concern across a number of disciplines, scholars have started to take an interest in what is often called the "curriculum of place." Curriculum of place underscores the profound influence of geography and the cultural milieu on the processes that contribute to people's development and how they live their lives. Building on this conceptualization, I maintain that people must actually accept that what is really being discussed is "curricula of place" since the basic thesis may profitably be stratified at limitless sublevels as increasingly more attributes of the individual experience of life are included. For example, a person may be influenced by the literal place in which they are born or reared, by the various subcultures encountered, by the groups to which they belong, and even to the professions that they pursue, or by their own history. Crews (1978) exemplifies the idea that history can act on one's sense of place when he writes of his own childhood that, "My first memory is of a time ten years before I was born, and the memory takes place where I have never been and involves my daddy whom I never knew" (p. 3), confirming that even that which precedes one temporally can serve to preponderantly influence one's life. The confluence of these factors can act synergistically to produce the person people confront in the mirror each day, and will doubtless

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remain the most consequential factor they deal with when contemplating themselves and what they make of their lives.

For some, any single factor that bears upon the personal curriculum of place may be identified as the most predominant element that has influenced their lives, possibly so important that they fail to appreciate place as an appreciable part of their development altogether; nevertheless, most people, at least intuitively, have an understanding that place, and its attendant attributes, is significant to these outcomes. Few of people emerge from their particular place without wearing triumphs, scars, or stigmata (Whitlock, 2007), manifestations (physical, psychological, or cultural) that bear upon their interactions with their social worlds and contribute to the formation of their identities (Appiah, 1994; Apple, 1999; Dimitriadis, 2001; Hall, 1990). Given this realization, the current study is intended to examine the "curriculum of Southern place" (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991) and emphasizes one specific aspect of that broad and varied phenomenon, hypermasculinity among Southern police officers. Few things act on the psyche of human males like their sense of masculinity, and perhaps nowhere is this more pronounced than in that inscrutable region called the American South (Friend, 2004; Ngrassia, 2010). In analyzing masculinity in Southern culture, I will concentrate largely on hypermasculinity, or the extreme version of male self-concept that contributes to detrimental outcomes for many males (Cash, 1941), and I will pathologize the concept by denominating it the "hypermasculine imperative," an impulse observed among some males that is so strong that to it can be attributed some of the most aggressive and intolerant behavior ascertainable in the history of human civilizations (Goldberg, 1977; Howard, 2001; Kimmel, 2011). And in this particular construction, I will employ it as a basis for examining the behavior of Southern police officers of my experience, including my own behavior. The intention is to determine why most

police officers, regardless of rank and experience, ultimately become progressively—or retrogressively, depending upon one's theoretical perspective—more conservative and illiberal (Brehm & Gates, 1993), economically, socially, morally, and politically, a perplexing paradox in a profession that would imply the acquisition of decision-making and analysis skills that imbue its practitioners with an enhanced objectivity (Barker, 1999).

The context of this study, geographically, is the Souths of my experience but, more specifically, the Southern micro-cultures of my experience, and, socially, my position as a Southern White male derived from poor stock in the deep south of Georgia and my participation in the subculture of Southern policing. Also, the conceptual context of this study occurs in my experience as a Southerner advantaged in many respects—White, male—and marginalized in others—reared in impoverished circumstances and limited by economic and social status—but most important by my isolation as a person of liberal social persuasion inextricably ensconced in a region that virtually demands conformity to the socially, politically, and religiously conservative status quo. Having long recognized that I have felt out of place with regard to interactions with my peers, family, and other significant members of my culture, I have recently begun to conceptualize the survival tactics I needed to persist in such isolation as necessitating a parallel alternative identity (PAI), a term meant to emphasize the pressure that I have felt in my life to exhibit one social persona while privately entertaining disparate, often radical, views. Unlike living in the interstices of sociality, or the "in-between spaces" (Aoki, 2005; He & Phillion, 2001; Soja, 1996) some have posited, my terminology is meant to underscore my complete participation in the mainstream culture of Southern policing and hypermasculinity while simultaneously being cognitively and emotionally assailed by the relentless reason pressing me to change my views, a form of cognitive dissonance with profound implications for

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someone functioning in one of the most awesome social institutions of power, policing, and doing so from the privileged position of a Southern White male. The term encapsulates the idea that I have maintained two complete identities in pursuing my Southern life and that they have been drawn upon at various times for various reasons, but have remained interminably at variance. This study offers the opportunity to understand these battling identities so that I may begin the process of faithfully adhering to the central me that is within.

In pursuing this study, I will ask the consequential question, why did I, a White Southern male from an impoverished rural background, and endowed with all the accouterments of White male Southern conservatism, social, political, et al., ultimately become a progressive, ultraliberal chief of police aspiring to the establishment of equity and social justice in a field that does not generally support such ideas (at least not sincerely or openly)? Most police chief executives espouse the tenets of social justice, equity under the supervision of law, even-handed application of legal precepts and judicious exercise of legitimate police discretion (Baker & Hyde, 2011; Couper, 2012; Engel, 2009; Isenberg, 2009; Sanderson, 1977), yet, if the evidence of public dissatisfaction with police (Hinds, 2009) and the incidence of police misconduct (Barker, 2011; Goldsmith, 2005; Heffernan & Kleinig, 2000) are acceptable and probative indicators, very few manage to live their own self-avowed and supposedly cherished principles. Again, if the canons of social justice are so firmly inculcated into the ethical constructs employed by police leaders, and the belief that all deserve the equal protection of law, why so many deviations from written policies and legal standards (Cohen, 1986; Dicker, 1998)? While no single study and no individual researcher can hope to answer these questions with finality or without qualification, this study will seek to provide illumination, with the aim of encouraging, even challenging, members of the police profession to honor their oaths and offer their protection to all.

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Methodologically, I will parse the pertinent details of my own life experience, focusing primarily on my 21-year career as a Southern police officer, through a critical autoethnographical process, hoping to invade the nooks and cracks that conceal data pertinent to understanding, just as water seeps into the interstices of life. Since the reconceptualization of curriculum (Macdonald, 1975; Pinar, 1978) and the search for research methods sufficient for surveying the previously unexamined troves of knowledge formerly deemed unsuited for scholarly attention, the phenomena of life experience as mined through the methods of personal narrative, autobiography, and autoethnography have emerged as methodological approaches to social science research full of promise (Denzin, Lincoln, & Rolling, 2006; Jones, 2008; Patton, 2002), especially when seeking to give voice to the heretofore unacknowledged and marginalized perspectives of minorities and the otherwise dispossessed, disenchanted, and disenfranchised. Narrative methods not only allow these groups to assert their right to their own voice, they often give vent to a mighty roar of indignation and insistence of parity, particularly when speaking truth to power, an act that is more than simple cathartic purging. In Saïd's (1999) view

> Speaking truth to power is no Panglossian idealism: it is carefully weighing the alternatives, picking the right one, and then intelligently representing it where it can do the most good and cause the right change. p. 102

In my own life, knowledge has seeped into the recesses of my intellectual development, guided there by people and ideas that have many times seemed inconsequential or even went consciously unnoticed; however, significantly, the most important often registered in my understanding, at least at levels sufficient to press into the cracks of my thinking and reemerge after metamorphosing my thoughts and actuating my social, and critical (Gramsci, 1972), consciousness. Roget, of thesaurus fame, once noted that "words often return to us, like ghosts

from the vasty deep," and so do presumably long-forgotten life lessons, assuming one is willing to mine the deeper recesses of individual experience and allow light to filter into long-suppressed thoughts.

Finally, I will propose another type of "seep" intended to provide educators, mentors, parents, and others who find themselves compelled or conscripted to initiate, facilitate, or augment the learning of others. By combining the more progressive elements of the critical thinking philosophy (as opposed to the technicist approach of "drills and skills" intended to inculcate critical thinking as a tool kit for consciously accessing when needed) (American Philosophical Association, 1990; Freire & Faundez, 1989) and critical social theory, and applying them to the project of formal education, I believe that teachers and other educators can prepare their charges for that learning experience that is the most important of all: life (Barbules & Beck, 1999). While the process of formal education is critical to the effective and efficient learning of most people in contemporary society, it is my firm conviction that the most thorough and rewarding education is that which comes from a self-prescribed course of instruction motivated by a visceral love of learning and infatuation with satisfying one's insatiable curiosity. Humans are born curious, but educational institutions often have the disheartening effect of stultifying minds, constituting a type of intellectual genocide and leaving one to contend with a "dead curriculum" (Ball, 1994), a condition that is lifelong unless the love of learning and the gratification of innate curiosity is resurrected through purposeful processes. Love for learning and insatiable curiosity can be reanimated with intellectual nurturance and the reestablishment of habit (Brookfield, 2005); still, logic suggests that the proper course is to nourish and cultivate love of learning from the start rather than allow it to wither and die in the first place.

To this end, I offer the concept of critically engaged education and pedagogy (CEEP), an approach to learning that instantiates the fundamental tenets of critical thinking and critical social theory while eschewing the passive approach to educating for social justice and equality that I perceive implied by the language of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and multicultural education. In its simplest conceptualization, culturally responsive pedagogy, or CRP, describes those techniques that prove effective in the culturally diverse classroom (Irvine, 2010), in order to ensure the success of all students (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2006). Termed "culturally relevant teaching" by Ladson-Billings in 1994, the philosophy is also known as "culturally appropriate" and "culturally responsive" (Au & Jordan, 1981), "culturally congruent" (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), "culturally compatible" (Jordan, 1985), and even "culturally inclusive" pedagogy (Quaye & Harper, 2007, p. 32). Regardless of nomenclature, all encompass a variety of characteristics intended to improve the educational experience of all students, but specifically designed to enhance the experience of minority learners. Although Hanley and Noblit (2009) recognize CRP as a set of concepts that include the descriptors culturally relevant, culturally congruent, and culturally appropriate, and having minor distinctions, they also claim that each of these terms describes a pedagogy that addresses curricular, instructional, disciplinary, classroom, and motivational attributes all considered in light of applicable cultural characteristics. Ladson-Billings (1994) described culturally responsive pedagogy as including instruction that empowers learners on a verity of levels, e.g. socially, intellectually, emotionally, by using cultural references. Ford and Kea (2009) may have described it best when they proposed that culturally responsive teachers, being student-centered, remove the obstacles to leaning to ensure students' success by appreciating their varied backgrounds. This revised approach I propose does not disparage or nullify CRP or multicultural

education concepts but rather potentiates them by emphasizing the active participation of teachers and students through engagement and praxis, methods recognized as valid in the work of Freire (1970) and other modern scholars of critical education and pedagogy (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Giroux, 1983; McLaren & Giarelli, 1995), and one that portends better outcomes for students and the establishment of true democracy (Allman, 1999). Expansive and inclusive, CEEP can be tailored by educators to their contextual circumstances and framed in the most serviceable way for the desired results. Hopefully, students who have been encouraged to pursue a life devoted to individual scholarship that takes account of the influences of their personal curriculum of place will find that knowledge relevant to their lives flows into the crevices of their minds and remerges later as a wellspring of tolerance and understanding. Just as the philosophy of critical thinking, rather than the acquisition and maintenance of individual techniques, is more potentially productive of mature thought and reasoned belief, CEEP is philosophical and theoretical as well, allowing the pedagogue and student to enter into the educative dialogue posited by Freire (1970) and often deemed most productive of genuine education and learning. By introducing the student, regardless of age or experience, to the fundamental precepts of critical thinking—examining multiple sources, assessing bias, entertaining multiple viewpoints (Brookfield, 2012)—while avoiding the reduction of knowledge to positivist processes that actually confound learning (Cotter & Tally, 2009; Ennis, 1962, 1996), the teacher may act as a guide while the student follows those lines of inquiry most satisfying, all the while presenting ideas related to social justice and equity for the student's consideration.

Challenges & Significance: Prideful Talkin'

The challenges associated with this study are as numerous as they are potentially intractable. As the most visible manifestation of White male privilege and institutional power

(Andreescu & Vito, 2010; Cohen, 1986; Mark, 1976) in the U. S., the police profession is

constitutionally insular (Bartol, 1982; Couper, 2012; Kitaeff, 2011), unswervingly suspicious of

the motivations of others and Others (Bitner, 1970; Gerber, 2001; Gilmour, 2008), hypervigilant

to potential threats (real and perceived), critical of anything that smacks of derogation or affront

(Hennessey, 1998; Kappeler, Sluder, & Alpert, 1994; National Advisory Commission on

Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, 1973), and protected by organizationally structured

reticence (Bryn, 2011; Caless, 2011; Isenberg, 2009), making the infiltration of police work for

the purpose of unearthing useful data only achievable by an insider with a scholarly bent and

completely unconcerned about future ostracism and disassociation from the field. Having opened

the door that casts a penetrative, scrutinizing light upon Southern rural policing, I expect nothing

less than exclusion from friends, current and former, and to have that door of inquiry forever

after closed to me. Even confirming previous events or facts related to this study by third person

perspective or by examining documentation will likely be impossible, leaving analysis of my

personal experience the most promising and fruitful avenue available to me. Although much

documentation is available by law and other existing legal means, such methods would prove

little and enlighten the research issues broached here much less, making them as unnecessary as

they would be unavailing, and reaffirming the critical autoethnographic approach that I propose

as the most potentially useful in elucidating the world of Southern White male hypermasculinity

in police work. Since studies of this type have, perhaps, never been more critical (Kunstler &

Ratner, 2004; Loftus, 2012; Noble & Alpert, 2009), conducting this potentially stigmatizing

process is imperative.

Further problematizing this research is the often impenetrable nature of Southern culture

(Cash, 1941; Cobb, 1999, 2005; Foster, 1987; Zinn, 1964). Immoderately impressed with the

inscrutability of Soviet thinking, Churchill[5] must not have had the opportunity to observe or

study the many and sundry cultures of the Southern U.S. (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; Nesbett &

Cohen, 1996) which can consternate the most august and capable scholars (O'Brien, 2011;

Watson & Griffin, 2008). Southerners, consistently noted for their fabled hospitality, tend toward

cloistering themselves behind nearly impermeable walls of privacy, both personal and cultural

(Crews, 1995; Reed, 1983; Watson, 2007), making the assessment of any one of their cultural

expressions difficult at best, if not completely impossible for anything more than a cursory

analysis. Examination of the much-heralded Southern hospitality alone makes an interesting

point of departure for examining the Southern tendency to make civility and phatic interaction a

passive-aggressive maneuver (personal communication, September 2012, J. Weaver). The famed

Southern affinity for politely ignoring likely sensitive personal and familial matters has prompted

Hauerwas (2010, p. 180) to call Southern civility "one of the most calculated forms of cruelty"

and that Southerners have "turned passive-aggressive behavior into an art form." Noting that in

the South "courtesy forbids direct speech," moreover, Hauerwas says, isolated from other

virtues, "courtesy can become an extraordinarily subtle form of manipulation favoring those in

power," assertions that find ample support in the literature on Southern manners and mores

(Evans, 2006; Gray, 2002; Silber, 1993; Szczesiul, 2007) and have grave implications when

factoring in xenophobia and racism (Hamilton, 2005; Huang, 2011, November 20). Possibly

expressing the case most aptly, Roberts (2006) conjectures that

> In the popular imagination, 'southern hospitality' signifies both graciousness and
>
> excess…. The South of benign myth is a sort of Eden, where people are as warm as the
>
> weather and good manners paper over poverty, ignorance, and racism.…hospitality in the
>
> South is also genuine; indeed, it can be a social imperative.… To some extent, the

South's self-generated legend of hospitality was developed to counter the negative

images of mistreated slaves, lynchings, and later Bull Connor's thugs beating civil rights

demonstrators with truncheons.… The once class-specific high-end 'southern hospitality'

has been democratized, its snobbery inverted. pp. 234-236

Ross (2013) accurately identifies such behavior as a racially and socially motivated power play,

which she calls the "politics of politeness" (p. 145), intended to re-inscribe class and race

differences. When the added insularity of police officers generally (Sklansky, 2007), and

Southern rural cops specifically (Sobol, 2010), is accounted for, the redoubtable challenge

associated with studying the subculture of Southern rural policing assumes an insuperable

prominence. Still, the potential knowledge gained makes the effort worthwhile, and my first

person perspective potentially elucidative.

Challenges associated with the theoretical perspective employed here are also daunting.

While my contention is firm that critical social theory is the appropriate theoretical stance for

this study, critical theory generally, and critical social theory particularly, have been critiqued

adversely for a number of presumed failings (Bronner, 2011; Wiggerhaus, 1994). First, though it

is my belief that anyone who has liberated themselves from the thrall of hegemonic positivism

and seeks the remediation of inequitable social conditions is, de facto, a critical social theorist, I

do not intend to overextend the point by maintaining that all critics of social conditions are

critical social theorists in the sense that they are proponents of the Institute for Social Research,

or Frankfurt School, of critical theory. Notwithstanding the multiplicitous diversity that now

represents offshoots of the original Frankfurt School (Couzens & McCarthy, 1994; Parker,

2012), and the profound influence that critical theory has undeniably had on contemporary

thinking about social conditions, theory, and activism (Best & Kellner, 1991; Brookfield, 2005b;

Geuss, 1981; Hoy & McCarthy, 1994), the original theorists, though they suffered from a pessimism that still lingers because of Marx's failed historicity (Agger, 2006; Jay, 1984; Kellner, 1989; Marcuse, 1958), and discerned critical theoretical applications in most aspects of sociality, still held, and now maintain, the conviction that substantive social remediation is achieved through major structural changes to society, most prominently in the political sphere (Agger, 2006; Horkheimer, 1937; Wiggerhaus, 1994), a view not necessarily espoused by others who are equally invested in social change and see critical social theory as an encompassing theoretical project of social remediation that subsumes all societal factors that bear upon the pursuit of social justice (Agger, 2006; Bronner, 2004; Corning, 2011), the position taken here.

Another factor that makes employing critical social theory potentially problematic in this context is the incorporation of perspectives from other theoretical traditions such as postmodernism. One of the frequent—and seemingly irremediable—criticisms of postmodernism is the contention that it is so inclusive of multiple and varied perspectives that it evanesces into insubstantiality (Callinicos, 1991; McGowan, 1991; Rosenau, 1992), a critique that often plagues theoretical and epistemological approaches that smack of eclecticism (Stinson, 2009). Yet, although many contemporary thinkers view the current theoretical ferment as having entered a post-postmodernist phase (personal communication, September 2012, J. Weaver), a stance embraced as eminently valid in this research, such a view does not invalidate postmodernist concepts or challenge the utility of an incorporative theoretical and epistemological research approach. The fallacy of epistemological linearity, in which one theoretical paradigm neatly and sequentially supplants another as the collective larder of human knowledge is augmented, simply does not hold scholarly water, and represents an unjustified adherence to the positivist tradition that has been thoroughly discredited as the ruling research paradigm in social science research

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Patton, 2002; Schwandt, 2007). The reality is that critical theory generally, and critical social theory especially (Agger, 2006), has benefited from the seeding of its corpus by interlarding the precepts of the original Frankfurt School theorists and their progeny with insights derived from postmodernism, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, and many other theoretically edifying schools of thought (Calhoun, 1995; Stahl, El Beltagi, & McBride, 2005; Tierney, & Rhoads, 1993), and this study in particular is perfectly suited for such an approach.

My chosen method of gathering data for analysis is critical autoethnography, a research approach vexing enough for its own complexity and the outright condemnation with which some scholars assail it (Atkinson, 1997; Denzin, 2003; Malterud, 2001), yet even more so given the dearth of critical autoethnographic studies that may serve to elucidate an admittedly, at times, abstruse, though evocative, process (Bochner, 2001; Carspecken & Apple, 1992; Meloy, 2002). While ethnography itself, including the "critical" variety known as critical ethnography, has an established pedigree and continues to gain in credibility, critical autoethnography, along with its parent method, autoethnography, struggles to ensconce itself firmly in the pantheon of accepted qualitative methodologies (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Kincheloe, 2001). Accused of being "soft" research and not productive of valid data or useful results because it is little more than omphaloskepsis[6] or arrant navel-gazing, and is easily conducted (Atkinson, 1997; Delamont, 2007; Mykhalovskiy, 1996), the great irony of this emerging social inquiry method is that it may well be more difficult than most other research approaches. Generating data by examining what is no longer examinable and mining the past for revealing insights may seem like a facile and shamelessly self-indulgent endeavor, but must be attempted to be appreciated for its complexity and potentially fruitful results. Unquestionably, data uncovered and conclusions derived are not

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amenable to generalizability in the way that, or to the extent that, more positivist experimental

methods may be (Clough, 2000) but the diversity of details and the richness of description is

indisputable (Ellis, 2004; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008). Notwithstanding the many challenges

associated with my subject matter or the methodological processes attendant to examining it, this

research comes at a critical time in human history, a time when the world is globalizing and

moving inexorably toward a collective community on many levels (Eitzen & Zinn, 2011;

Friedman, 1999), a community that will mandate new ways of interacting and prosecuting the

search for shared meaning (Steger, 2009). Never before have so many people attempted to

cohabit on the planet drawing from what are inarguably finite and contested resources (Craig,

Vaughan, & Skinner, 2010; Hiscock, 2012), some as elemental as water (Solomon, 2011),

necessitating unheard of levels of cooperation and understanding if the species is to persist

viably. And in the course of arriving at shared understanding and global cooperation, ensuring

social equity and justice will assume a degree of paramount importance, making the need for

well-trained, socially conscious, and ethically motivated police more critical than any other time

in history (Eterno & Das, 2010; Palmer, Berlin, & Das, 2012).

A final difficulty associated with this research involved knowing where to limit the

critical gaze. Scrutinizing Southern phenomena necessarily means addressing matters of race,

gender, sexuality, and class, among other social aspects, and this study does broach these

attributes of Southernness at least tangentially as they relate to the development of the Southern

male police officer's attitudes and cognitions, yet, a thorough examination of these specific

phenomena risked overreaching and rendering the study diffuse; consequently, exacting study of

these aspects of Southern hypermasculinity has been left for future researchers who are ardently

encouraged to pursue them and may gain inspiration for research themes from the conclusions

presented in Chapter VI. Related to subjects of research focus is the use of language employed in this study. Hypermasculine language suffuses this dissertation as that is the language familiar to Southern rural police officers, making its use critical for their understanding, which is the primary group who needs to develop appreciation for what the hypermasculine imperative means for them and their professional practice. Correcting hypermasculine behaviors and thinking requires that men understand the deleterious nature of hypermasculinity, and reaching the population means using language that sufficiently retains their attention long enough to ensure understanding, yet, no use of language manifest here is intended to promote or sustain pathological masculinity or marginalize feminist or other perspectives. We must write for our audiences, and doing so in this study required using established hypermasculine tropes and metaphors intermingled with academic parlance to meet that goal.

Studies such as mine will, I hope, not only demonstrate the feasibility of establishing a rapprochement between police and the citizenry, but may actually serve as a conduit for spreading the principles of equitable treatment for all people, as well as safeguarding worldwide democracy, the only political system currently known that can successfully achieve and sustain societies predicated on the principles of social justice (Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; Bowles & Gintis, 1986; Brookfield, 1987; Freire, 1998; Shapiro, 1996). By employing a critical autoethnographic approach to examining my experience of police work, I am confident that my contribution to the cause of social justice will be substantive if not substantial. To paraphrase La Fontaine's[7] famous lament, though I may not be successful, I hope that the attempt will itself be commendable, if for no reason other than its encouragement to future researchers in this area, and the possibility that some cop, somewhere, at some time, will read these pages and develop sufficient appreciation of the awesome responsibility that devolves upon those who elect to

commit themselves to a life of public service. And if a single person ever reads this study and benefits from what is found within it, I will heed the advice that I am accustomed to giving my esteemed colleagues in the education field, and I will consider myself as having achieved some laudable measure of success toward improving the world.

Organization of the Dissertation: Treein' the Man

The format of this study begins with a traditional approach familiar to academics (Denzin, 2003), with the first three chapters delineating the information needed to conceptualize the research project—introduction, literature review, theory and methodology—and the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters encompassing research analysis, conclusions, and recommendations based on the findings of the research. This approach is used designedly, not because it is convenient or because it confers a measure of scholarly comfort by avoiding the proffering of a potentially radical research perspective but in order to make it accessible to all interested parties. Paradoxically, the subject itself, an insider from the Southern rural policing community examining the deficiencies of the field to further reform, is sufficiently controversial and provocative in such a conservative occupational space, making radical methods unnecessary for gaining attention or meriting acclaim for taking risks. The risks, personal and social, inhere in the subject. Instead, the traditional structure of this study is intended to attract the very people who might benefit from its observations most, contemporary police and other criminal justice professionals of a scholarly bent who may be most amenable to an alteration of their vocational and social views but may need the comfort of recognition conveyed by a research structure that they recognize and esteem as valid. Nonetheless, this approach is guileless and not intended to be a ruse for ensnaring the unwary reader. It is merely intended to offer the curious mind a sound footing for experiencing ideas related to a socially conservative institution in dire need of new

thinking. Having embarked on the radical path that I present, the reader will have every opportunity to retreat into conservatism and the protective shell of traditional criminal justice processes and beliefs. It is my devout hope that most will not.

Chapter I, entitled simply "Looking Out for Lenny," presents the general frame for the study, including research interests, personal justification, context of study, and challenges and significance, thus setting the tone for the research itself, including the motivations for my pursuing such a radical subject, the personal autobiographical substrate for the study, the "places" in which it occurs and must be examined, and the obstacles, potential obstacles, and likely promise of conducting the work. Having been an integral part of a social institution of immense power, the criminal justice process, that controls various aspects of the lives of so many people, and having witnessed the inequities that infect that institution, I have determined to leave it behind by making some definitive statement about its realities and its possibilities, especially as it relates to the segment of policing that I am most familiar with, policing in the Southern, rural milieu. In order to underscore the profound significance that the criminal justice process has for the individual life, particularly those existing on the margins of society and its in-between spaces, and to add the flavor of Southern culture, I have started each chapter with a vignette from my own life. Each opening story is meant to personalize the experience of this research, not to acquaint readers with my life or regale them with my exploits, but to make a concrete attachment to the stories that explicate Southern police experience. By reading my experiences as they pertain to Southern and police cultures, I hope to inspire introspection on the part of the student, introspection that will, I believe, encourage a personal course of self-reflection that may well eventuate in a renewed interest in self-reform.

Chapter II, "The Dixie Review: Cock Fights, Guns, 'Shine, and 'Backer Juice," presents a concise review of the extant literature on Southern place and hypermasculinity as they relate to the research. Establishing Southern place is critical to understanding how rural policing occurs in that region and how the hypermasculine imperative is the salient factor among many that explains the often inexplicable behavior of police who are presumably devoted to "protecting and serving." Following the paradigm established by the scholars of curriculum reconceptualization (Pinar, 1978) which denominates curriculum and texts as exceeding the bounds of formal education and written materials, the section on the curriculum of Southern place examines and synopsizes those aspects of Southern culture and identity that constitute the Southern sense of self as evidenced predominantly through cultural expositions and literature. Authors examined include W. J. Cash, J. C. Cobb, Mark Twain, Flannery O'Connor, Alice Walker, bell hooks, and W. F. Pinar and Joe L. Kincheloe and others representative of the literature and studies of Southern culture. By no means exhaustive, cogent arguments could easily be made to include many others on this list, yet this sample does offer a cross-section of the corpus. By conflating these disparate aspects of Southernness, the reader can appreciate the mélange of reality and fantasy that conspire to create what is taken as "Southern" by so many. The section on hypermasculinity takes a look at works on masculinity generally and those few that specifically address the hypermasculinity of police officers, and features the seminal works of R. W. Connell, Theodore Reeser, and Victor J. Seidler, as well as others in the masculinities studies genre and what offerings are available from the policing field itself. By obtaining a rudimentary concept of Southern culture and police hypermasculinity, the reviewer of the study is prepared to understand what drives supposed public servants to acts of contradictory behavior.

Called "You Have the Right to Remain Silent—Don't Use It," Chapter III describes the theoretical and methodological framework that guides this research. The theory section begins with a review of traditional critical theory as developed by the Institute for Social Research, or Frankfurt School, and proceeds to an explanation of why I chose to concentrate specifically on the aspects of a theory that, while inherently social in attitude, directs itself to a variety of dimensions of human endeavor that do not necessarily bear upon social action or outcomes, such as art, music, religion, and architecture. By emphasizing critical social theory as the theoretical basis of my research, I conclusively establish examinations of power relations and social amelioration as the overarching theoretical themes of my study. Power relations pervade every aspect of human interactions, and critical social research in the tradition of Paulo Freire and others leaves no room for misconceptions about the point of this project—liberation. The methodological approach employed is intended to parse the details of my own experience to provide illumination of the field of Southern policing by using my experience as the focus of study. Eschewing the dangers typically associated with autobiographical and autoethnographical stances, such as the presumed propensity for embellishment and inveterate egotistic navel-gazing (Patton, 2002), I use critical autoethnography to highlight both the critical theoretical perspective employed and the focus of study as cultural rather than personal.

Chapter IV, "Penumbral Okefenokee & the Blue Polyester Curriculum," inaugurates the research proper by examining my life experiences that have impinged upon my thinking, philosophizing, and actions, especially those that have been influential in my pursuit of social justice as a police officer. "Penumbral Okefenokee" refers to an aspect of my heritage of which I have been profoundly aware yet am deplorably lacking in understanding of, a situation that has made me susceptible to the worst excesses of Southernness rather than the best it has to offer.

Having emerged from South Georgia "poor White trash" with few prospects and little hope, I examine how the pull of a culture that I have always found simultaneously abhorrent and attractive has influenced my thinking, and how the countervailing influences of an unquenchable love of learning, particularly through the medium of the written word, has acted to inspire me to continue on a quest of self-improvement, starting with a desire to stock my personal larder of information, yet, in recent years, with a better understanding of sociality and my place in fomenting a concern with social justice. "The Blue Polyester Curriculum," a nonce phrase derived from the police penchant for wearing uniforms made of cheap, blue synthesized fiber, indicates a review of the practical education I received as a police officer, an education that not only occurs outside of the confines of the police academy but virtually disdains the learning offered there. What is real for police officers is what occurs in the streets of their jurisdictions, and any attempt to codify that experience is viewed skeptically or with outright hostility. This section chronicles the salient events, thoughts, and ideas that constituted my own "blue polyester curriculum."

In Chapter 5, portentously entitled "Lenny Again," I analyze the stories presented in Chapter 4 and distill the pertinent information that enlightens the research project. Mining this mix of episodes from my Southern curriculum of hypermasculine place, I draw upon experiences before and after becoming a Southern rural police officer to demonstrate that the common thread of my experience has been a desperate attempt to meet the dictates of a pathological masculinity that, most relevant here, infect and direct the lives of most, if not all, Southern males to an aberrant degree, inducing personally and socially unhealthy thoughts and behaviors, and, given the negatively hegemonic position of Southern men, causes severely insalubrious social, political, and economic conditions for all of the micro-Souths. In Western culture and at least a

fair part of non-Western cultures, as masculine thinking goes, so goes the rest of the community, an axiom that assumes much more serious proportions when one accepts the prevalence of the hypermasculine imperative in affecting how male humans act upon their worlds. By dissecting my own experiences to identify common factors that act upon the Southern male psyche in police and non-police environments, I am convinced that fuel for healthier thinking and actions can be produced that can benefit all in the South, and, likely, the world.

The concluding chapter, "A Powder Blue Curriculum," presents and explicates my thoughts on what I discovered during my research, my suggestions for remediating a necessary but misdirected field of social endeavor, policing, and my closing observations about the field and its potential for enhancing social justice. In the suggestions that I make, none are as pertinent, in my view, as the need to promote critical thinking skills in police officers' activities and, absolutely indispensable, to inculcate the critical thinking philosophy in the police profession. Treating critical thinking as a skill set obtained through education and training, repetitive use, and concerted application is an approach to rectifying police practice that is doomed to ignominious failure. Only by inspiring police personnel with an appreciation of the value of internalizing a general ethos of promoting examination of their own cognitions and personal values and beliefs, or, a critical thinking philosophy, will there be even a remote hope of successfully changing the endemically pessimistic and imperious nature of police practice that currently exists. Policing need not be a space for desperate attempts to prove an all-encompassing self-concept of hypermasculinity. It can, and should, become a place for Southern police officers to personify the ideal of responsible, self-sacrificing, devoted public service. As Thucydides declaimed in the 5th century BCE, of all the manifestations of power, restraint impresses most, a sentiment that, applied to contemporary police work, can encourage modern

police officers to realize that public spaces are not their playground but are the public spheres in

which the principles of democracy are ratified, if they are validated at all.

CHAPTER II

THE DIXIE REVIEW: COCK FIGHTS, GUNS, 'SHINE, AND 'BACKER JUICE

When [man] stood still and looked around him…he found a god in that place. Whenever, henceforth, the god spoke it was from that particular place that the voice emanated.

Joe L. Kincheloe & William F. Pinar

How hard it is to escape from places. However carefully one goes they hold you—you leave little bits of yourself fluttering on the fences—like rags and shreds of your very life.

Katherine Mansfield

Tell about the South. What it's like there. What do they do there. Why do they live there. Why do they live at all.

William Faulkner

In the South the war is what AD is elsewhere; they date from it.

Mark Twain

One of my earliest memories is of a trip to see the cock fights. I recall that me, my father, my mother, and my younger brother all loaded into the family sedan and journeyed somewhere into the nearby South Georgia woods to see roosters pitted against each other until one or the other was killed, or rendered so badly injured that he was immediately euthanized with a quick and decisive wrench of his neck. I had never seen a cock fight before, though I was abstractly aware of what it entailed, and my father raised chickens, so I was very familiar with them; still, they were pets to me more than anything else. I remember some trepidation about the trip for a variety of reasons. At that time, any trip with my parents was a joy, just being somewhere with them was an affirmation of my love for them and I somehow felt safe venturing into the unknown with my father. Taking my brother and me on sojourns into the local woods and the

edges of the Okefenokee Swamp were not only familiar activities, they were treasured as quality time with Daddy, even before anyone had heard of "quality time" for parents and children, so virtually any trip that did not involve a trip to my bedroom for one of my regular beatings was looked forward to with gusto. Still, this trip was different. For one thing, I loved animals, all animals, and I hated to see one suffer for any reason. I would try to nurse virtually any injured beast back to health—rarely a successful endeavor—and to intentionally hurt something was incomprehensible to me. Another concern was being exposed to the local citizenry. Even though the people in the area were relatives and friends, fundamentally no different than me and my family, my brother and I had been sheltered from exposure to the most extreme versions of what passed for local color. I remember my parents having terrible arguments about my mother's insistence that her children not be left with certain relatives or even spend inordinate amounts of time around them, a proclamation that occasionally incensed my father for reasons that were not made known to me; consequently, I had early developed a simultaneous fear and fascination with these people. Even my own relatives were alternately exotic and contemptible to me. I wanted desperately to commune with my family while intuitively recognizing that they offered some type of unspecified potential harm. My mother was a nurturing, loving, devoted parent, so I knew that whatever the danger, she was doing what she deemed best for us, but I could not shake the feeling that there was adventure out there for me if I could just gain access to it.

Of course, I was not totally unfamiliar with the culture that had produced me and to which I was allowed only limited access. My father's brothers were often in proximity, especially when some occasion permitted an excuse for a bout of adult drunkenness (which was virtually any occasion, as it turned out), and we made periodic visits to my one remaining grandparent, my father's mother, who lived in one of the most squalid and unruly areas of town.

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Otherwise, however, I knew very little about family members who lived just a few miles away. I listened to stories my parents recounted, others that emerged as we visited my mother's family— a much safer group of people, evidently—about significant events and old times, yet, for the most part, I was oblivious to the culture that transpired around me daily. We lived in town and had plenty of neighbors, but they were a different sort of people. I recall that my family was disdained by neighbors who, for some reason, looked on us haughtily and dismissively, even to the point of forgoing civil amenities, or, more often, adhering to social protocol perfunctorily. I was never sure why exactly, though I often caught the stray remark that, for some reason, I perceived as hurtful and embarrassing, but I still did not understand for certain why we were viewed as somehow lower class. I believed, however, that my relatives were representative of what the neighbors found so objectionable, so by a young age, I, too, had developed a somewhat supercilious view of my family, an attitude that engendered feelings of shame to the same degree that it was insuppressible. I did not want to be ashamed of my family, yet I could not help it.

I was not ashamed or embarrassed as I anticipated the outing that day, though. For me, it was high adventure as well as an opportunity to get a close view of the social milieu that had spawned me, and of which I was almost wholly ignorant; moreover, I knew that there would be guns and dissolute, exciting swamp people there, people who lived as if the twentieth century had passed them by completely. My father had told me enough stories about his father and other relatives that they, and their ilk, had become almost mythological figures for me, and I never missed an opportunity to get a look. Stories about moonshine stills, hunting, trapping, violent deaths and even more violent lives, all contributed to my idealizing and admiring the local culture, even as I simultaneously developed a lofty sense of privilege not shared by my extended family. Besides, even as a small child, I had a powerful sense of the importance of place for

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people's lives and I felt a keen sense of alienation from my own sense of place in the world. It was my world and I knew so little about it! A larger world existed, I knew, but mine was basically my immediate family and a few close relatives on my mother's side of the family. The missing parts of my own heritage called to me with clarion poignancy and I wanted to know more about myself and my family's past. Notwithstanding some fear and anxiety about mingling with wild swamp folks, I was determined never to miss a chance to see them and the circumstances of their lives, so a trip to the cock fights could not be passed up.

Once we were all loaded into the car, we started off for what I imagined to be an unexplored wilderness. We drove for what seemed a long while, though, given my childish perception of time, could well have been a very brief period, and eventually began winding our way into deep woods down dusty dirt roads. Initially, there were many farm houses, barns, and livestock inhabiting verdant pastures, but these quickly gave way to pine trees and brush, with only the infrequent sighting of a house or other structure. Eventually, the pine forests melded into thick, impenetrable stands of hardwoods and brambles, and no houses at all. I remember distinctly thinking how narrow the dirt roads were and wondering how traffic coming from the other direction would have had difficulty squeezing past us. Not infrequently, a wild animal of some type, raccoon, fox, deer, or, most often a rabbit, would streak across our path and I wondered if we would see a bear or panther[1] or some other rare and dangerous species, a hope that was unfortunately met with disappointment; nevertheless, the ride was fun. The weather was warm but not South Georgia hot and the utter lack of anything resembling air conditioning in our car meant that we always rode with the windows down in warmer weather, and the view was excellent since there was nothing like a child restraint law to inhibit our enjoyment. We streaked down desolate country roads, my brother and me standing up in the back seat and hanging our

heads out the rear windows like dogs, something we occasionally imagined ourselves to be, even

trying to loll our tongues out like we had seen hounds do, and watching the dirt curl up in huge

clouds behind the car.

After what felt like an eternity of driving and innumerable turns down roads that often

looked like goat paths more than thoroughfares for motor vehicles, we turned off a final road into

what appeared to be the entrance to the Okefenokee itself but turned out to be another road that

looked as if it had seen only occasional traffic. We snaked our way through this path for a few

minutes then my father stopped to speak to a man. I will never forget the excitement that I felt on

seeing this fine specimen of redneck masculinity. He wore a white t-shirt covered by denim

overalls, held a long rifle slung casually across one shoulder and a Mason jar[2] of clear liquid in

the other hand. It could have been water, but in my mind, it had to be moonshine.[3] Overweight,

unshaven, and laconic, he was a little scary to me, and I noticed that my father, a gruff and

imposing figure himself, showed unusual deference, a fact that heightened my own sense of

concern. But after a few seconds and the exchange of a few curt words, we were permitted to

proceed.

As we pulled into the area the man had been guarding access to, I saw what I thought

were hundreds of vehicles of every type imaginable, and people everywhere. At my most

creative—and I had an imagination that rivaled that of the best storyteller—I could not have

expected what I found in that place. I cannot recall now exactly what I had expected, although

most of it undoubtedly came from impressions garnered from television and movies, but what I

discovered merited inclusion in any tall tale or stylized account of the backwoods South. Guns

were ubiquitous, virtually every man had a jar of the clear liquid that I very much hoped was

locally produced 'shine, dogs of prodigious variety ran around with apparent abandon, and there

were roosters everywhere. Some of the cocks were staked out as was the custom in the area, others were caged or boxed awaiting their imminent victory or ultimate doom, but wherever they were contained, they collectively produced a tumult of calls and challenges to each other. The noise was nearly deafening, and must have represented many hundreds of individual birds. And they were mean as hell! Having been bred for their propensity to fight other cocks, they would struggle vigorously to escape their owner's grasp as they were carried around the venue, some were even successful and had to be forcibly separated from each other by their handlers, who themselves looked like they might break out into combat at any time. As we walked toward the pitting areas, I made sure to stand close to my father. My brother, less conscious of his surroundings than me, was oblivious to any danger, and gamboled about curiously. Poor dumb kid. How quickly he could have become the victim of a ferocious dog or the meal of some peripatetic alligator. Oh, well, I thought, every little White trash boy for himself!

And the guns were intimidating in their numbers and varieties. I was all boy at that age, loved playing "Cowboys and Indians," loved absolutely no game better than "cops and robbers," and had a collection of toy guns that I cherished more than any of my other possessions. On the rare occasion that I found myself somewhere wanting to play and had forgotten to bring one of my own toy guns, I would fashion a serviceable toy firearm out of whatever materials were handy, doing a pretty good job in most cases, so I was a fan of firearms for as long as I could remember, but this was different. I cannot remember having seen any male there other than my father who did not have at least one firearm somewhere on his person or in his hands. There were pistols stuck into waistbands or contained in holsters on belts or slung under shoulders, shotguns laying against trees and vehicles or sported across shoulders and used as convenient resting places for work-weary arms, rifles dangling down toward the ground or propped on hips ready

for action. Some men carried several guns and probably had more in their vehicles, and everywhere, men with guns poised at the ready were on the watch, my father would later tell me against the interdiction of police, as if I had not known that to be the case before his confirmation. I was simultaneously fascinated by, and abhorrent of, this spectacle of martial splendor. While I tried to get a glance of as many real guns as I could, I was also acutely aware of the very real danger that they represented, and, like someone negotiating a snake pit, I avoided getting too close. Later, this incident would prove to be pivotal in helping me appreciate that reality is not always consistent with perceptions, a fact that would factor heavily into my appreciation for gaining first person perspective. Still, at the time, it was frighteningly exciting.

The various vehicles on display were almost as interesting as the guns. All of them appeared to be older models in various states of disrepair, rusty, banged up, and often lacking glass in at least one window. Pickup trucks were in abundance, of course, many with side panels on their beds to accommodate the transport of livestock (and, I was certain, poached game such as alligators). In addition to their use as conveyances, they functioned also as convenient places to relax, conduct business deals, and do a little gambling, poker apparently being the most prevalent diversion of that variety. Occasionally, unhappy children could be seen contained in a vehicle's interior, probably compelled to wait in the car while a father or step-father squandered much needed rent or food money gambling. Disgustingly, some of the pickup trucks held the remains of various animals, some with livestock, others with wild game like deer, in various stages of ghastly decay. In one, a deer head was visible with the lifeless tongue protruding grotesquely, in another, what was left of a putrescent hog—carcass, intestines, and other assorted offal—assailed the eyes and the nostrils. Row upon row of these dilapidated automobiles was on display, forming a sort of redoubt around the main event, the cockfights.

Once we made our way through the mingled throng of armed men, vicious dogs, and decrepit vehicles, we finally entered the area where the actual cock fights were being held. I will never forget that sight. Everywhere was piles of recently dead roosters, stacked as high as five or six feet, with blood running in tiny rivulets from the mounds of feathers and flesh. Men superintending the fights stood around chewing tobacco, talking, laughing, and sometimes arguing, with hands and clothes stained, some utterly soaked with blood, a state they appeared to be used to by their blithe disregard. Just as outside the pitting area, guns were nearly universal among the spectators and the participants, as were the Mason jars of what I was convinced was moonshine, another fact that my father would later substantiate. At the time I did not ask any questions. I was consumed and almost numb with fascination and revulsion. To this day, ironically, the thing that stands out in starkest relief in my memory was the presence of bleachers for the spectators to sit on. I could not believe the testimony of my own eyes. Here, in the middle of the South Georgia backwoods, on the very periphery of the great Okefenokee Swamp, to accommodate the spectators of brutal cock fighting, were bleachers, just like at a football game. It struck me as more than a little bizarre that such a pedestrian appliance could be found at what was otherwise an artifact of more barbarous times. All in all, the entire event gave the aspect of a reversion to a much older and more lawless time, at least from my limited perspective, and yet, I would later learn that such occurrences were simply part of the local way of life, a part of the culture that I lived around, in, among, and yet, had little knowledge of.

After my father spoke for a few minutes with some men, about what I cannot remember, we sat on the front row of a nearby set of bleachers that were only sparsely occupied. At the time, the seating was ideal; later, I would wish it had not been. When the first fight started I had not been sure what to expect, but if I had been uncertain to that point, I was about to acquire a

thorough education in cockfighting—and brutality. A couple of minutes after we were seated, several men approached opposing sides of the "pit," little more than a cordoned area of ground enclosed by wooden barriers about three feet high. In each group, one man restrained a rooster obviously eager to join the fray. Both birds were beautiful, with red feathers tinged with black on their ends, bright red combs, and iridescent feathers on their chests. They were huge birds. And on their spurs, the toes of their feet that jut out sharply at an oblique angle, they were wearing steel spur extensions. Immediately, I understood what was about to happen. Before coming to the cockfight, I had only been remotely conscious of the fact that animals died at cock fights, and the evidence of death displayed in piles of dead birds as we approached the pits had not fully registered, but when I saw those malicious steel spurs, I was left with no doubt what was to happen. Even as I formulated my thoughts, felt incipient dread suffuse my mind, and my blood run cold throughout my body, the command was given to pit[4] the birds. The first match up was quick and indecisive. The two roosters battered each other until they became entangled, with no noticeable injury to either. I was amazed that it only took a few seconds before it was stopped. Once their handlers separated the avian pugilists, instruction was again given to pit the birds. The result was just as quick as before, but with a totally different outcome. After a few hard strikes against each other, one of the metal spurs of the bird on the right skewered the head of the other bird, killing him instantly. The crowd emitted a raucous roar of intermingled appreciation and disappointment as the live bird was retrieved and the dead one lay on the now blood-soaked ground, staring outward with sightless, dead eyes. A few seconds after the uproar died down, a man scooped the dead bird up and tossed him nonchalantly onto a pile of other dead birds close by. I could not take my eyes off that rooster even as he lay on that gruesome heap. Revolving

through my mind incessantly was the realization that what just a few seconds before had been a living, vibrant being, was now just a carcass, a lifeless, insensate nothing. I was dumbstruck.

Before the blood from the previous match could even soak into the ground, two more groups of men approached the pit. I could not watch anymore. I'm not sure how much longer we stayed, how many matches there were, or how many birds died. As far as I know, they could have pitted bears, people, whatever, because I did not watch. I looked away and zoned out, the whole time feeling commingled feelings of disgust, sadness, and shame for not enjoying what was obviously a part of our way of life. A few times, I cast surreptitious glances at my little brother. He did not show any distress, emotional or otherwise, and seemed actually to enjoy himself. I could not believe it. That night, as we discussed the day's events, he gushed about what he had seen, and I responded in kind, feigning appreciation for what, to that point in my life was probably my most traumatic and disillusioning experience. At some point on the ride home, my father asked if I had had fun, and I dutifully assured him that I had. In later years, I likely would have enjoyed seeing him be thrown into a pit, but back then, he was a hero to me, and I would have done nothing to disappoint him. That is all that I remember about that ride home. For most of it, I was lost in thought and trying not to cry since I knew that would have pissed my father off to no end. I knew that boys were supposed to be tough, and until that day, I had thought that I was. After all, I loved all the traditional boyhood games, I already thought girls were well worth chasing, even though my friends my age did not get it, and I was as dirty and grimy most of the time as any little boy could be expected to be. So, why was I so soft-hearted? What would I do when I had to hunt or trap with other men? What I wanted to be more than anything when I grew up was a police officer, and now, I had to question if I could shoot a bad guy if necessary (a necessity that TV convinced me was exceedingly frequent if not daily). I had

no reason to doubt my budding manhood before—now I had reason to doubt my own masculinity when I could not have told anyone exactly what "masculinity" was.

I learned a few things that day that would resonate throughout my life. First, being a man in the South meant delighting in death and violence, and having a thorough knowledge of, and skill in using, the accoutrements of death, such as guns. It meant competing for the sake of competing, even through proxies like roosters. Being a man in the dark, dank recesses of the South Georgia swamps and backwoods meant enjoying substances like moonshine and being prepared to defend one's rights, real or imagined, with whatever force was needed. I also learned that being a Southern man, a man's man, meant fabricating interest in manly things, even if you hated them. It meant that being a man, most particularly a Southern, rural man, meant adhering to a certain image of manliness, and, critically, scanning the environment for the markers of manhood that would certify and cement membership in the club of hypermasculinity. There were many other things that I needed to know about Southern manhood, things that could only be learned through immersion in the manly experience in a multitude of Southern contexts, but that one experience was enough to indoctrinate me and get me started on a journey that would prove as painful, disheartening, and ignominious at times as it would prove exciting and exhilarating. And I could not have been any better schooled if I had sat in a classroom somewhere with some pedagogue intoning the requisites of the Southern male catechism. Formal schooling would be important to the process of my Southern hypermasculinization, but the most salient, unforgettable, and intractable lessons would come from life itself.

<center>*****</center>

Is it true what they say about Dixie?

Does the sun really shine all the time?

Do sweet magnolias blossom at everybody's door,

Do folks keep eating 'possum, till they can't eat no more?

Is it true what they say about Swanee?

Is a dream by that stream so sublime?

Do they laugh, do they love, like they say in ev'ry song?…

If it's true that's where I belong.

Caesar, Lerner, & Marks (1936), *Is it True What They Say About Dixie?*

In order to prosecute my search for the provenance of my own change of attitude regarding matters of social justice, and hope to have it positively influence my erstwhile occupation in some meaningful way, I must blaze the trail by examining the South itself, or, specifically, the Souths of my experience. To make any headway improving a profession populated by so many people who rarely, if ever, seriously consider the social and ethical consequences of their work (Cohen, 1986; King, 1991; Pollock, 2009), I must prepare the way by gaining some usable consensus of the mores, customs, practices, cultural norms, and ways of living that Southern folk experience in their daily lives; however, this is not a recipe book, a tell-all, or a history of the American South as such. Nor is it an anthropological study or criminological effort. Cataloging the minutia of the various Southern cultures, as fascinating as it would doubtless prove to be, would not further the aims of my research; moreover, given that I am using myself as the lone vector for this study, depending upon my experience to make any serious examination of such a multitude of cultural artifacts would constitute an astoundingly daunting project. Consequently, the focus for this study, and this literature review, will be macro-level social, economic, political, and institutional factors that bear significantly on the conduct,

behavior, thoughts, and actions of Southerners, and, specifically, how those factors collide with the most powerful social institution of all after the political, Southern policing.

Successfully completing this literature review and subsequently using it to potentiate my research requires an examination of the pertinent works relating to factual accounts and information concerning Southern culture, but most importantly, a concise review of the South's body of writing, expository and fictional. Harris (2008), describing Brian Casemore's scholarship, claims that "Southern literature and Southern White masculine identity are inextricably bound together" (p. viii)—a contention supported here—and the Souths, each distinct region and its accustomed ways of pursuing life and living, are revealed by their denizens through storytelling more than any other avenue (Cobb, 2005; Kincheloe, 1991; Simpson, 1983). Whether dramas, comedies, travelogues, newspapers, and now, web sites, blogs, or other adventitious outlets for expressing their accounts of their existences, people in the South like to portray their experiences through the medium of the compelling, engaging narrative, an approach to self-expression that subsumes the confessional and revelatory while technically safeguarding personal and community pride, self-respect, and sense of identity, aspects of the Southern social body proper which are held sacrosanct and are not readily, or usually willingly, submitted for exhibition. Southerners are quick to share a story and regale the outsider with tales of what it is like to live in "God's country" but the discerning auditor learns quickly—sometimes painfully—that personal details of self and family are not proper for examination, and in the many Souths that constitute that region, propriety is often everything and meticulously adhered to, with few deviations and rarely tolerated exceptions, a fact that is ingrained in the ethos and mythos of Southern living. So, enjoy the stories, just be careful what you ask about, and keep smiling, or, as they say in Georgia, keep smilin' like a jackass eatin' briars.

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Curriculum of Place: Knowing Your Place

Schmidt (2011) makes the following observation concerning curriculum theorists and their approach to place, "Curriculum writers use senses of places but rarely question its meaning or how it arose. Although places are prevalent across the disciplines, we largely speak of places as merely locations without much attention to the power of their meaning" (p. 21). This view has changed, at least for many Curriculum Studies scholars. Though her paper was just published in 2011, studying the significance of place in many aspects—social, political, educational—has started to assume a prominence previously unknown. Scholars of many stripes and from various disciplines have recognized the vital importance of identifying, studying, analyzing, and appreciating place and its implications for the lives of individuals and the conduct of societies (Agnew, 1987; Begnal, 2002; Chambers, 2006; Edgerton, 1991; Fouberg, Murphy, & de Blij, 2012; Gustafson, 2001; hooks, 2009; James, 1993; Malpas, 1999; Sibley, 1995), and few disciplines have embraced place as a focus of study with the enthusiasm and fecundity of curriculum studies (Casemore, 2005; Haynes, 2003; Kissling, 2012; Shenandoah, 2006; Whitlock, 2005). Recent work on the significance of place has encompassed a wealth of topics and foci, including how it bears on individual lives, international affairs and globalization, and regional differences. Perhaps most significant is the proliferation of graduate dissertations addressing themselves to themes relating to place as the subject of their research (Casemore, 2005; Findeisen, 2011; Fisher & Smith, 2012; Romero, 2007; Shenandoah, 2006; Swallow, 2005; Whitlock, 2005). The evidence of contemporary scholarship clearly underscores the popularity of place as a research topic, a fact that promises to produce a trove of new knowledge and insights.

What is place? Asking that question of a dozen people would doubtless elicit as many answers, or complete confusion as to the propriety of such a question for scholarly endeavor since, for so many people, it is not a question they have ever deemed necessitous of thought. One Appalachian resident interviewed for a documentary simply said, "Where you're from determines who you are" (NCLLP Films, 2004), as if nothing more needed to be said. Swallow (2005) describes it succinctly:

> What is a sense of place but a manifestation of who we are, the culmination of our life's experience that informs much of what we perceive, think, feel and do? A sense of place just is. A sense of place, he says, is what is accrued and never stops accruing from lives spent sensing places. It is our experiences in places, both positive and negative, that provides for the development of our sense of place. p. viii

Clearly, "place" as a concept of academic focus must be accepted as inherently subjective, exquisitely personal, inescapably historical, necessarily theoretical, innately philosophical, and rife with considerations of emotional and psychological import. As the lifelong Appalachian resident quoted before recognizes, place is everything you are, and, as at least one scholar points out (Haynes, 2003), place may only become pertinent on an individual level when one realizes that she no longer recognizes the place she occupies, or determines that the place occupied is interstitial place, an in-between condition that leaves one perennially disoriented and striving to relearn what her place in the world really is (Whitlock, 2007).

Critical to studies of place is the advent of globalization and intimately interconnected social arrangements. Whereas place, for millennia, has generally been associated with geography, customs, and kin, the postmodern world has engendered a new understanding of place for many people. In this new world, Goodson (1998) says that people "story the self" (p.

4), and as the focus turns inward in an attempt to understand this new world, "*the self becomes a reflexive project, an ongoing narrative project* [original italics]" that helps them cope with the realization that identity status is no longer discretely ascribed by social forces. In my own life, I have been a redneck, White trash, a student, a sailor, a cop, a teacher, all neatly prescribed identifies that have substantially contributed to the directions that my life has taken. With each new perception of my identity status, related decisions have been more or less automatic, determined more by the status itself than any conscious thinking on my part. As a redneck, I hunted, fished, fought, and engaged in numerous activities that might not have otherwise interested me, and as my identity transmuted into new configurations, I adopted the behaviors concomitant to those identities. For Goodson and like thinkers (Giddens, 1991), however, such previously immutable qualities of identity are now defunct, requiring that the postmodern person examine the self more meticulously in order to anchor oneself in the present through a thorough appreciation of the past.

Synopsizing the situation relating to the project of the self, Giddens (1991) accurately identifies the changes that modern people are currently experiencing and presages what can be expected in the future, noting that the reflexive project of the self

consists in the sustaining of the coherent, yet continuously revised biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems.… The more tradition loses its hold, and the more daily life is reconstituted in terms of the dialectical interplay of the local and the global, the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options. p. 5

Still, this new focus does not negate or nullify the importance of the social or collective in restructuring identity, a fact that Goodson (1998) affirms when he contends that, even though

postmodern identity emphasizes individualistic construction derived from self-reflection, "tribal and collective identities continue to appeal" (p. 5), a supposition for which he finds evidence in "the politics of minute difference," or the compelling need to differentiate in the context of sociality. Ironically, according to Giddens, as global change occurs with increasing rapidity, perplexing those struggling to attend to changing conditions, the "sense of place" obtains even more strongly. Finding support for his hypothesis in Freud's notion of "narcissism of minor difference" (cited in Giddens, 1991, p. 5), Giddens submits the possibility that, although life story work can intensify narcissism of minor difference, it also presents the possibility for restoring "the political, the collective, the general, the contextual, and the social." What this means for the study of the curriculum of place and autobiographical approaches is that place becomes more fertile, not less so, as a focus of research, since the restructuring of identity in volatile times means a fundamental reconfiguration of place as well.

As one of the early academics recognizing the crucial nature of place in curriculum theory, along with Pinar, Kincheloe (1991) sees "place" as "a window to the *Lebenswelt*, a vehicle to self-knowledge, and a crack in the structure that allows the archeologist of self to discover the etymology of one's research act" (p. 6); yet, he stipulates that place "is place only if accompanied by a history" (p. 8). What becomes clear from various observations from multiple perspectives is the centrality of place for understanding people and worlds, including the constitution of societies and the interactions of people, and provides the previously unparalleled opportunity to study place as it offers various curricula for learning aspects of self and others, especially if studied from the perspective suggested by Pinar et al. (1995) in denominating the various "texts" that express lives and activities. Eschewing "master narratives" (Lyotard, 1984) that seek to homogenize lives and educational experiences, the authors of the seminal and

epochal work, *Understanding Curriculum*, eloquently and scholastically emphasize the value of cultivating the unruly and cacophonous voices that emanate from the many curricula of place, voices that must delineate their own idiosyncratic course of study for the purpose of appreciating fully the individualized experience of being human. By engaging in the "extraordinarily complicated conversation" (Pinar, 2004), people risk disorientation, confusion, and intense anxiety from challenging often lifelong and cherished assumptions and beliefs, but, if one successfully negotiates the psychological perils of such a journey through the terra incognita of individual lives and histories, one may uncover the knowledge that allows fuller, richer lives infused with passion, caring, and love. In the end, by writing various curricula of place, the often vapid and sterile learning of formal educational institutions may be enriched and discovered may be what truly represents the fulfilled and lived life. That is the potential of studying the curriculum of place.

Curriculum of Southern Place: Where Ya From?

In the southern United States, after identifying oneself by name, invariably, the next question is, "Where are you from?" (or, rendered colloquially, "Where ya from?") and, occasionally, one may actually get the question before any curiosity about the name. In some Southern locales, one may even be asked where one's parents are from as well (Kincheloe, 1991). Human identity is inextricably intertwined with human geography, and the U.S. South is, if anything, an extreme case for many people. Southerners can be so fiercely protective and defensive of their profound sense of their location in the world, and so married to their firm sense of "Southern identity," that anything which assails it is subject to swift, often violent, reprisal or denunciation (Cao, Adams, & Jensen, 1997; Ellison, 1991; Shelden, 2001). Kincheloe (1991) attributes the intense feeling of place for Southerners compared to other regions as resultant of a

sense of defensiveness that developed after the Civil War when Southerners jealously defended their right to remain independent and apart from the North, and resisted the press to conflate the public and private spheres, which they held as "an invasion of their parlors" (p. 14), and the specter of racial integration was emblematic of this intrusion. And for Southerners, virtually everything becomes an extension of the concept of place: affiliation with schools, sports teams, residence, leisure activities, even type of vehicle driven, can all become sources of pride or contention, and sense of pride itself often leads to contention—sometimes with deadly results. This profound sense of place identity ultimately becomes the preponderant influence on the lives of many Southerners, influencing (if not dictating) how they interact with their worlds.

Proceeding from this supposition, the next logical step in any analysis of Southern place identity is to attempt to determine just how such a monumental influence affects the daily lives and attitudes of Southern people, perhaps most pertinently in their life educations, or how they come to interact with their worlds and their fellows, a phenomenon that I and others (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; Lake, 2013; Whitlock, 2005, 2013) call a "curriculum of Southern place." Reaffirming the manifold dimensions of Southern place, Bennett (1991) remarks,

> When we talk about the South as place, we are not referring to one South, but many. Because of the diversity of southern geography and consequent economic situations, several distinct cultural contexts are evident. This is readily seen in a cursory look at the southern literature. p. 101

Citing Southern authors as preeminent as Faulkner, Angelou, O'Connor, and James Still, each penning singular accounts of their own experience of their South, Bennett finds in their collective works authentication of certain distinctively Southern commonalities in the broader regional cultural context.

This chapter will review the literature of the curriculum of Southern place with a view toward illuminating the concepts and ideals which inform Southern lives and attitudes. Though not a new concept in qualitative research or curriculum studies (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; Whitlock, 2007), curriculum of Southern place is still in its formative stages as a research focus. Still, much significant work is underway intended to elaborate this potentially fruitful area of social and curriculum studies. By examining the literature associated with a curriculum of Southern place, aspirant researchers may find useful guidance that can contribute to their development of this vital area of study. This review will proceed from a critical social theoretical perspective, since my personal ethos dictates that issues of social justice—in the sense of Rawls' (1971) conception where social justice entails equitable rights and duties for all—and a commitment to Freire's (1970/2009) belief that

>…apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human.
>
>Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. p. 58

The critical social perspective not only permits but perspectively demands that all issues that bear upon social relations and their power differential components be scrutinized for the inequities and exploitative aspects that always exist (Agger, 2006; Freire, 1970; Johnson, 2006). Humans do not interact without some attempt, however subtle or clandestine, to gain advantage of one over another (Dunbar & Barrett, 2007; Flannery, Vazsonyi, & Waldman, 2007; Valsiner & Rosa, 2007) and any examination of their interactions must account for this. This is not to claim that humanity is inherently predisposed to unerringly adversarial, contentious, or violent engagement; quite the contrary, just as humans are innately aggressive they are just as

congenitally likely to seek mutual cooperation for survival purposes (Buss, 2008; Dunbar &

Barrett, 2007), a point often overlooked. Yet, any objective, self-critical examination of human

history must accept that the Nietzschean will to power[5] drives civilization and myriad societies

(Loewen, 1995/2007; Zinn, 1980/2003). What the critical social perspective seeks to ensure is

that the roughly 3 lb., semi-gelatinous organ that humans call a brain is used to overcome and

control baser propensities rather than passively accepting the status quo that so often relegates

marginalized segments of society to de facto—if not de jure—subjection to dominant groups.

Premising this study on a critical social theoretical perspective also does not establish an

exclusive theoretical focus that unceremoniously discounts or excludes useful insights from other

thinking. As will be discussed when considering the value of personal experience in curriculum

studies and the importance of place, multiple approaches to understanding a curriculum of place

are valid, maybe more so in the American South than elsewhere given the region's marked

diversity (Bell, 1992; Harris, 1995; Watkins, 2005). Consequently, psychoanalytic, postmodern,

poststructural, and other theoretical perspectives will be manifest, if not always explicitly

acknowledged. Neither life nor scholarship occurs in a hermetic sphere, and the discipline of

curriculum studies mandates that one examines individual lives, cultures, contexts, histories, and

other relevant data to gain adequate understanding (Clandinin, 2010; Pinar, 1978; Schubert,

2010).

Southern Identity

The non-existence of a unified—or unifying—Southern identity stands as axiomatic

(Cash, 1941/1991; Cobb, 2005), yet general defining elements can be identified and enumerated

that give indications to the mind set and interactive styles employed by persons (Geertz, 1973;

Erickson & Murphy, 2008; Haviland et al., 2010) who inhabit southern climes of the United

States. The reality is that wherever human groups aggregate and form sustained, mutually

dependent communities and long-term societies, they will develop commonalities for interacting

with their environments that are consistent with their individual personalities but which

contribute to some level of efficient collective functioning (Caprara & Cervone, 2000; Dunbar &

Barrett, 2007; Ryckman, 2004). Having established that certain aspects of cultural functioning

are expected to be similar based on proximity and mutual goals, the question then becomes, in

the context of the Southern U.S., what elements are similar, and how do they bear on important

social institutions and interactions, particularly equity in social benefits and the life-long

educative processes that influence these benefits?

Certain common emphases have emerged with regard to how Americans who are

identified as "Southerners" behave and interact with each other, notwithstanding which section

of the South one refers to. While some of these dimensions are relatively undisputed—

commitment to family, strong religious conviction, sentimental attachment to birthplace or

residence, patriotism (Crowther, 1992; Heyrman, 1997)—others are more controversial, such as

the supposed "Southern hypothesis"[6] which proposes that Southerners are more inclined toward

violent conflict resolution than Americans from other regions (Cao, Adams, & Jensen, 1997;

Ellison, 1991; Shelden, 2001) and that this culture of violence explains, at least partially, the

presumed increased incidence of violence of some African Americans who hail originally from

Southern communities. Others have speculated that an undercurrent of anti-intellectualism and

even ostentatious cretinism pervades most Southern locales, a contention often examined (Potter,

1961; Phillips, 1968; Woodward, 1958), and the inarguably pronounced racism that has typified

impressions of Southerners by many has encouraged some to pronounce the South as effectively

a separate society (Watkins, 2005; Zinn, 1962/2002, 1980/2003). Other aspects of "the mind of

the South" (Cash, 1941/1991) include a postulated sense of shame and resentment for the

Confederate loss in the Civil War (Osterweis, 1973; Wyatt-Brown, 1981) and the consequent

erosion of the South's way of life (Cash, 1941/1991; Singal, 1982), a profoundly conservative

approach to civil governance (Faust, 1988; Kelley, 1979), intolerance of sexual difference

(Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; Pinar, 1994), and a continuation of the rampant sexism that is often

used to caricature male and female relations (Cobb, 2005; Reed & Reed, 1996; Taylor, 1961).

Still others have identified constitutional traits such as the reputed indolence of Southerners[7] and

related to factors as remote as climate (Bertelson, 1967) that suggest a deep-seated contempt on

the part of some commentators, a prospect almost uniformly repudiated by Southerners of all

varieties.

Suffice it to say, many have complained that the negative presumptions about Southern

culture that are adduced almost reflexively are the result of vindictiveness and bitterness that

derive from past transgressions, especially around racial inequality, and are generated

predominantly from a Northern locus of context and perspective (Current, 1983; McIntyre, 2011)

bound to distort the realities of Southern life; nevertheless, perceptions are often sufficient to

constitute fact in the lay mind, and the perception of many, even in the South, is of a backward,

philistinic culture (Clayton, 1972; King, 1980) that continues to derogate and actively persecute

all who are not White male, heterosexual, and Christian (Kincheloe, 1991). On balance, common

perceptions of Southern culture appear to trend toward the negative, which provides evidence for

the Northernization hypothesis[8] proffered by Current (1983), with commentary ranging from the

merely critical to the overtly vituperative, disdainful, opprobrious, and condemnatory.

Nonetheless, some see the South as "rising once again" (King, 1980), though possibly from a

more progressive foundation, seeing the South's influence on everything from personal style to politics as pronounced.

"Locating" a Curriculum of Southern Place

Where does one start to mine the elements that constitute a curriculum of Southern place? Is there a mother lode of epistemological gems that can elucidate the complexity of Southern attitudes, emotions, social and political mores, or apprise one about the multitude of customs that construct the enigma that is the culture of the southern United States? As with anything human, answers to these questions are as multiform and complicated as the peoples themselves, for there is no "South" just as there is no North, East, or West. There is no unified, discrete Southern culture or sources of culture that one can point to and identify that which often eludes identification. The indisputable reality is that there are many "Souths," many regions, communities, districts, collectivities, and distinct groups that make up the wonderful and perplexing diversity of what this study seeks to explicate (Bennett, 1991; Pinar, 2004). The best that can be hoped for is to cite the generalities that may offer some insight into these exceptional American landscapes, and then hope that examination leads to provisional conclusions that can be employed for some useful purpose. Just like the enigmatic quark[9] of quantum physics that cannot be simultaneously located in space *and* time, curricula of Southern place must be appreciated in their multiple complexities, and on the level of the individual and the local. Still, the generalities that are sought can often be found in Southern history and literature (Gray, 2002), as well as the wealth of autobiographical studies of curriculum scholars that have emerged in recent decades (Casemore, 2008; Falk, 2004; Pinar, 1988, 1994, 2006; Whitlock, 2007). Understanding the curricula of Southern place may represent a complex and challenging prospect, but the wealth of existing research certainly makes this redoubtable task easier.

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Foundational Works Describing Southern Identity

There is no dearth of writings that chronicle the histories of the southern United States, from the simply documentary (Goldfield, 2002; Reed & Reed, 1996; Roberts, 2002) to the critical and sociological (Ellison, 1991; Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; McPherson, 2003; Wyatt-Brown, 1981; Zinn, 1962/2002) and the avowedly tendentious (Davidson, 1938; Hobson, 1983) to the ethnological (Reed, 2003; Scott, 1995) and fantastical (Mitchell, 1936). Yet, when it comes to describing the Southern identity—at least the Southern White male identity generally accepted as the standard by which all else Southern is judged—two volumes stand out in juxtaposition to all others and rate as canonical on the subject, and an additional two works incorporate a critical psychosocial perspective specifically addressing the importance of place in a curriculum of the South: Cash's (1941) *The Mind of the South*, Cobb's (2005) *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity*, Kincheloe and Pinar's (1991) *Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis: The Significance of Place*, and Pinar's (2004) *What is Curriculum Theory?* These four masterful works effectively chronicle the development and state of the Southern mentality and its implications more closely than other efforts, as well as managing to avoid the perilous intellectual shoals of sentimentality and pseudo-scholarship on the tempestuous seas of academic inquiry. Understanding what motivates Southerners to behave and think as they do is critical to an appreciation of how place factors into a curriculum of Southern place, making these four works of incalculable worth to the scholar. Kincheloe and Pinar (1991), and Pinar (2004), are especially resonant since they provide for a critical, self-reflective, psychosocial process for scrutinizing life, in the present case, Southern life, by way of *currere*, a systematic process that includes four steps, or moments, that include, the regressive, the progressive, the analytical, and the synthetical (Pinar, 2010). Cumulatively, these volumes offer the possibility of not only

understanding the culture and mind of the South, but present potential ways to effect an amelioration of its lesser lights—extreme violence, racial and sexual intolerance, unproductive political and social views—and an augmentation of its manifest strengths, such as devotion to community, family, spirituality, and reverence for place.

The Mind of W. J. Cash and His South

In his introduction to the 1991 edition of Cash's *The Mind of the South*, Wyatt-Brown (1991) tells the reader that Cash's primary objective in writing his book was to "convince the reader that his vision of the South cut through the myths, hypocrisies, reticences, and other denials by which its people had insulated themselves from their innermost consciousness" (p. viii) and that his purpose was, in effect, a moral one. The eloquent prose and expressive narrative that Cash wove was intended to engage his reader long enough to enlighten her about his homeland, with which he enjoyed a profoundly and inappeasably ambivalent relationship. But if his aim was, indeed, preeminently moral, an attempt to assuage the concerns of those who saw the South as somehow insular and unreceptive to modernity, grasping its traditions of social and racial class ever more tightly, one must adjudge Cash an abject failure, for, despite his protestations of pushing his region into the present, his attitudes and opinions prove his own lack of insight, a fact that Wyatt-Brown forewarns about when he writes that "the unspoken assumption is the cast of White men; both women and African Americans are excluded. Understanding this at the start may help us to enter his [Cash's] world" (p. ix). Regardless of the author's often disingenuous stance about race relations and White supremacy, which often turns his excellent history into a shamelessly self-serving apologia for Southern elitism (he actually claimed that Southern anger after the Civil War was caused by White guilt over how they had treated Blacks), it was the first substantial attempt to explicate Southern culture, especially in the

aftermath of the Civil War, and remains a superb resource for understanding the Southern

mythos and attitudes. One must simply pick the hair out of the dough.

According to Wyatt-Brown (1991), Cash proposes that the central theme of Southern

culture is "The Savage Ideal," which he defines as the determination of White society to preserve

with much male truculence those traditions, customs, and routines of mind that traditionally had

been honored down through the course of American development. Cash's pages also speak to the

persistence in Southern life of certain general tendencies: conservative principles about the role

of government; national defense; use of personal weaponry; family life; the relation of the sexes;

and the preservation of personal independence against outside encroachments of every sort. (p.

xvii). Few argue against Cash's evaluation on this score, and many find similar tendencies in

Southern regions today (Applebome, 1996; Cobb, 2005; Cooper & Terrill, 1990). Conservatism,

racial elitism, hypermasculinity and fantastical concepts of chivalry, resolution through violent

means, and God and country (Southern country) remain the defining qualities of Southern

sociality for many people when contemplating the region.

Still, Cash was progressive in comparison to his peers and fellow Southerners,

contrastingly so if one factors in the time period and economic circumstances of Cash's life. He

was no aristocrat, and money was never in ample supply (Clayton, 1997; Escott, 1992). He was,

however, educated, both formally and informally. His inquisitive nature and personal sense of

erudition are often identified as the prevailing traits of his that supported his scholarship in a

region infamous—if not always justifiably so—for its intellectual impoverishment. One of the

aspects of his writing that may be explained by his bent for learning is the critical perspective for

which he was noted that was so rare among his peers. For example, Cash repeatedly reported the

unrelenting grip with which the Southern elites kept others in poverty and abjection, Black and

White. He was an unapologetic supporter of working people of both races, and was a New Deal

supporter when it was dangerous to be so; yet, he often showed his exasperation with Whites

who suffered for their continued adherence to racism, suspicion of Northerners, and mistrust of

the banking system (Wyatt-Brown, 1991). Lauded for his exposition and interpretation of class

relations in the South, Cash (1941) could often slip into outright misogynistic scorn when

criticizing what he called "gyneolatry"[10] (p. 86) or the myth of Southern ladyhood. For Cash, the

proprietary interest that Southern males maintained for their women led to what he called the

"rape complex" (p. 116) that sustained White males fear of the rape of their women by prurient

African-American men.

Notwithstanding his legitimate and invaluable contributions to Southern studies, Cash

could devolve into exaggeration and stark absurdity. Taking a psychoanalytic tack, one can

surmise that his attacks on the reputed laziness, pervasive guilt over slavery and racism, and

rampant hedonism that he ascribed to his fellow Southerners, although containing kernels of

truth, was more likely a matter of projection in which Cash was unconsciously endeavoring to

purge himself of his own feelings of guilt and inadequacy. Too smart to ignore the cognitive

dissonance of his own thinking and avowed opinions, Cash probably made the rest of the South

the whipping child for his own remorse and self-loathing (Clayton, 1997; Wyatt-Brown, 1991).

Still, his accurate supposition that White Southerners had long sought prestige, power, and pride

for reasons other than the accumulation of wealth for itself alone makes him percipient and

prescient. More than immoderate levels of guilt for the inequities of their histories past, it was a

elaborate sense of pride that abhorred dishonor that motivated Southern men and women, to

insist on a patrimony that was largely fictitious (Cobb, 2005; McKnight, 1998). In the end, self-

anger of the Freudian variety may be the most parsimonious answer for the life-long melancholy

that would eventually lead to Cash's untimely, but probable, suicide in Mexico. Key (1949) postulated an unremitting sense of despair experienced by people who ponder the South, and some (Morrison, 1967; O'Brien, 2011; Wyatt-Brown, 1991) have speculated that Cash's relentless pessimism and sense of predetermination about his homeland's fate was the reason for his premature, self-inflicted death.[11]

Away Down South in Dixie…

Cobb's (2005) masterpiece, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity*, unquestionably ranks as a primary source for attempting an understanding of the Southern mentality in all of its general aspects. His own status as a Southerner, born, bred, and reared, allows him the advantage of the informed observer, while his dogged pursuit of objectivity and candor of expression on his subject matter make his book a consequential piece of scholarship on the subject of Southern identity and history (Inscoe, 2011). Used as a primary source for examining Southern ways and thinking, *Away Down South* serves as a substrate for all contemporary analysis of the Southern mind, and one of its signal advantages is represented by Cobb's approach to the unrelenting controversy of multiple Souths. Although he early considered conducting his study as a comparison of the many Southern societies with each other, he ultimately realized that what would serve most explicably would be to compare the South, or the common conceptualization of it, with the North:

> …it finally dawned on me that, instead of examining southern differences with 'other regions'…historians and other critical observers typically defined southern peculiarities solely in relation to 'the North.' In this usage, the North actually represented not simply another region or even…a 'geographical place' at all but an 'emotional idea' of the

reminder of a triumphantly superior America both literally and figuratively beyond and

without the ever-problematic South. p. 2

Operating from this fundamental premise, Cobb was able to construct a masterpiece of erudition

that expertly chronicles and illumines the enigmatic, often utterly inscrutable region and sub-

regions that constitute the southern U.S. (Sokol, 2007) that successfully avoided the

reductionism that Cash (1941) is often accused of (Underwood, 2007). According to Starnes

(2007), Cobb's achievement surpasses for its inclusivity, an aspect missing in Cash (1941) and

other historians writing about the South:

> Cobb's history is very much an inclusive one. He examines not only the predominant
>
> southern white male perspectives—although he covers it thoroughly with discussion of
>
> figures as varied as Thomas Jefferson, Jimmy Carter, and Jeff Foxworthy—but also the
>
> viewpoints of blacks and women. Cobb recognizes that there are two very distinct
>
> southern identities and experiences: those of whites and those of blacks, although many
>
> in both races happily cling to their southern roots. There are the obvious and dramatic
>
> experiential differences in this dual study, but also fascinating parallels. For example, as
>
> some whites endeared themselves to the once highly pejorative term ''redneck,'' some
>
> southern blacks have embraced the term ''bamas,'' originally an aspersion used by
>
> northern blacks against seemingly less sophisticated southern black transplants. p. 436

Cobb's influential work on Southern identity covers the gambit from the "origins of Southern

'Otherness'" (pp. 9-33) to the fabled Lost Cause (pp. 67-98), the Southern Renaissance (pp. 99-

129), a reexamination of Cash's (1941) *The Mind of the South* (pp. 164-184), the postulated

"crisis" of Southern White identity (pp. 212-235), and the dimensions of racism (pp. 261-287)

and politics (pp. 318-340). Overall, Cobb produced a comprehensive work that can guide

subsequent generations of researchers on this subject for years to come. In his examination of Southern climes, Cobb addresses the shame and guilt felt by many Southerners over slavery and the varieties of intolerance, as well as the defiance and cavalier attitudes of Southern White supremacists, the ascendancy of Southern culture perceived by many to be occurring around the country, its history of individual Southern identity and an attempt to determine definitively when it began, and a multitude of other aspects of Southern culture, mythos, and ethos that have directed the way people of the region have pursued their societies. Any assessment or analysis of Southernness must consult this comprehensive work to be considered accurate and complete.

The Critical Perspective of Kincheloe and Pinar

While Cash and Cobb's individual works can be considered together as an excellent exposition of the Southern mentality with regard to many dimensions of social behaviors and dispositions, they must properly be viewed as general examinations of Southern thinking along a continuum of multiple topics, ranging from the mundane to the grave, along with most other treatises (Bilger, 2002; Thompson, 2007; Wilson, 2006; Wood, 2011). But contention for pride of place as the first volume to scrutinize the Southern ethos and cultural mores from a curriculum studies stance must certainly go to Kincheloe and Pinar's (1991) *Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis: The Significance of Place*. Although Pinar has long emphasized the relevance of Southern identity and its encroachment on American life and importance for curriculum studies (Pinar, 1975; Pinar & Grumet, 1976) it was his collaboration with Kincheloe that can arguably be acknowledged as the paradigm-setting work that has acted as the launching point for many others. The study of the importance—some would say "criticality"—of place as the actuating factor in the curriculum of the person has started to garner considerable interest in recent

scholarship (personal communication, August, 2011, S. Ross) and Kincheloe and Pinar's work deserves recognition as a foundational treatise.

Habermas, Freud, and the Frankfurt School. *Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis* (1991) is a work avowedly steeped in critical theory and psychoanalysis based on Habermas' contention that Freudian psychoanalysis is the "science" which offers the most promising avenue for examining curriculum studies and related topics through a "systematic process of self-reflection" (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, p. 1), a crucial component of Pinar's (1975) approach to curriculum studies through *currere*, a way of examining and reconceptualizing the curriculum field by encouraging practitioners and theorists to examine their own lives, feelings, careers, and attitudes in order to enrich curriculum studies. Couched in postmodern and psychoanalytic tenets, Pinar (2004) describes *currere* this way:

> The method of currere reconceptualized curriculum from course objectives to complicated conversation with oneself (as a 'private' intellectual), an ongoing project of self-understanding in which one becomes mobilized for engaged pedagogical action—as a private-and-public intellectual – with others in the social reconstruction of the public sphere. p. 9

The validity of Pinar's approach can be attested by the proliferation of autobiographical approaches inspired by his concept of *currere* since the 1970's (Casemore, 2008; Graham, 1991; He, 2003; Kesson, 2001; Miller, 2005), a research methodology that has eclipsed its original psychoanalytic and postmodern precursors (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Grumet, 1992) and promises to expand into an international phenomenon, if, in fact, such is not already the case (Wang, 2006). Kincheloe and Pinar emphasize the critical theoretical aspects of their study by explaining that the critical perspective is necessary if curriculum studies is to assist the scholar in

promoting emancipation through praxis (Freire, 1970/2009), a dimension of curriculum studies that they both deem paramount (Kincheloe, 1995; Pinar, 2004). Specifically, they hold that social psychoanalysis attempts to establish the interrelationships between ideology and the emergence of particular societies, relationships that are considered important by others as well (Gibson, 1986; Gouldner, 1976). Understanding these interrelationships helps the scholar to appreciate and control for the distortions that inevitably occur due to power disparities and differentials that plague human interactions.

Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) underscore the criticality of location, or place, with regard to the individual's interactions with the world, and especially its relevance for pursuing the efficacious use of curriculum studies approaches to understanding the curriculum field, writing that curriculum theory "…must possess a particularistic social theory, a grounded view of the world in which education takes place. Without such a perspective, curriculum theory operates in isolation, serving to trivialize knowledge, fragmenting it into bits and pieces of memorizable waste, while obscuring the political effects of such a process" (p. 5). They further speculate that theorizing moves one to "a higher ground" (p. 6) that can "leave us stranded at higher elevation," a fate that should be avoided, and can be by developing and maintaining a sense of place. Regarding the South, they maintain that an appreciation of place allows the researcher to understand the supreme importance of place for studying that exceptionally place-bound region.

Particularities of "Otherness." In *Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis*, Kincheloe and Pinar identify aspects of the Southern mentality that have previously been considered pertinent— sexuality, gender, race, religion, family—but approach these attributes of Southern societies from a psychoanalytical and critical perspective. Serving as editors, the two make space for weighty contributions from various commentators, with Edgerton's (1991) conceptualization of

the "particularities of 'Otherness'" (pp. 77-97) being possibly the most momentous. By reiterating and expounding on the importance and potential productivity of the autobiographical methodology, she emphasizes how matters like sexuality and racism can be particularized so that the researcher, and individual, may gain a more accurate understanding of how these factors bear upon the individual life of the person in their respective and singular place. In the end, Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) made a monumental contribution to the study of the curriculum of place, and the curriculum of Southern place, by shepherding this indispensable volume into existence. The writing of *Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis* will doubtless reverberate to the advantage of the curriculum of place researcher for decades, if not in perpetuity. As Pinar has long proclaimed, understanding curriculum is largely the process of understanding individuals in their interactive relations to their social milieu, a stance that virtually requires examining the individual life by the individual involved.

Viewing the South through a critical lens. The theoretical construct that is called "critical," after the questioning and reasoned skepticism that is its most salient characteristic, was developed from the ideas of the Frankfurt School in Germany in the early twentieth century (Bronner, 2011; Brookfield, 2005; Calhoun, 1992; Hoy & McCarthy, 1994) and directed its gaze widely to include all aspects of humanity, a prospect that has endowed critical theory with broad applicability and the ability to sustain itself as a coherent theory, not the least of which is in education generally, and curriculum studies specifically (Apple, 1999b; Giroux, 1981; Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991) particularly in light of what many perceive as an all-out assault on the foundations of liberal education (Aronowitz, 2000; Torres, 1998; Weis & Fine, 2003). For many proponents of critical social theories who seek societal improvements in order to promote parity in social processes, education predicated upon the tenets of critical theory holds extraordinary

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promise (Agger, 2006; Apple, 2001; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003) and there may be nowhere else in the U.S. that that promise is most likely to be potentiated than the South, particularly given the disproportionate oppression visited on minorities in the South with education serving as a prominent example (Ferguson, 2001; Montgomery, 2006) and the history of resistance to implementing more equitable conditions on an institutional level (Roche, 1998; Watkins, 2005) that encompasses race and gender (Hill Collins, 2000). No human habitation is, or ever has been, free of the inequities and exploitative arrangements previously referred to, yet the American South, with its long history of slavery, misogyny, and violence, combined with general intolerance that persists even now, may be in most dire need of social remediation, or, to use Pinar's (2004) preferred, and more historically apropos, term, social reconstruction.

Important to modern conceptualizations of critical theory, however, is the need to emphasize that what is discussed here is a post-Marxist or neo-Marxist approach which no longer venerates the preordained rise of the proletariat that Marx and Engels supposed nor presumes the hegemony, or even validity, of economic factors in assessing the need for social change (Allman, 2001; Freeman-Moir, 1992; Giroux, 1985; Marx, 1845/1977). More often than not, modern critical theorists incorporate the fundamentals of critical or intellectually-engaged thinking to ensure that social actors have weighed the evidence and considered their circumstances to make logical, unbiased decisions on matters of social significance (Apple, 2001; Bronner & Kellner, 1989; Brookfield, 1987; Moore, 2007), a not unimportant point when one considers the furor and trepidation caused by the fear of encroaching communism in the U.S. in the twentieth century and the association of Marxist philosophy with communist ideology (Wood, 1986; Zinn, 1980/2003) though this approach is not without critics (Alston, 1995; Apple, 2009; Barbules &

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Beck, 1999; Fraser, 1997). Despite the discord evident in early conceptualizations of critical theory, contemporary critical perspectives, while not discounting class, economics, or any other pertinent dimension of sociality, does not award these traditional Marxian ideas prominence of place, instead considering the totality of context when examining social conditions (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2000; Young, 1998). An assessment of the literature that influences a conception of curriculum of Southern place must employ a critical perspective so that the reader can winnow the socially reconstructive wheat from the Southern mythic chaff of tradition and fantasy.

Curriculum-in-Place: The Significance of the South

In his comprehensive and insightful work, *What is Curriculum Theory?* (2004), Pinar proffers the contention that to be truly educated is to embark on a self-prescribed course of personal discovery and self-acknowledgement intended to enlighten the curriculum scholar, particularly current and prospective teachers, by requiring that they examine their histories and lives as objects of serious study. Presenting curriculum theory as an interdisciplinary examination of educational experience, he maintains that exploring the complicated conversation (Pinar, 2004) is the preferred medium for understanding the diverse field of curriculum studies. In pursuing his thesis, Pinar also addresses aspects of the American South that are integral to understanding the American psyche and its impact on education and curriculum, specifically the pronounced influence that Southern thought has had on national politics (Loewen, 2010) and the attendant and predictable results that politics has on education across the country. Not placing too fine a point onto his supposition, Pinar (2004) writes,

> Let us be clear: the political Left in this nation, including the progressive movement in
>
> public education, was defeated not only by its own excesses and miscalculations.
>
> American political progressivism was defeated by the (white) South. The defeat of the

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Left in the United States was a consequence of the South's political ascendancy

presidential politics after 1964. In allegiance with 'conservatives' nationwide, the

reactionary (and racialized and gendered) politics of the white South defused the

revolutionary potential of the 1960s…. p. 234.

Going on to lament the prevention of social and political gains by women and the loss of the

modest gains made by African Americans in the wake of Southern political influence, Pinar

blames the depreciation of the public sphere by Southern Whites as the bane of social

progressivism in the region. By forgoing a much needed disinterested civic space devoted to the

collective good, Southerners bypassed the chance to establish thoughtful debate, preferring

instead to make the public essentially private and leaving little room for healthy discourse.

Having assumed a position of national political prominence, their insularity has infected the

political discourse at the national level. Pinar's early and profound appreciation for Southern

influence on matters of national significance makes *What is Curriculum Theory?* not only

mandatory reading for anyone who aspires to be an effective educator or scholar, but equally for

those who desire to understand themselves and for those who pretend to achieve some effect on

social circumstances in the U.S. By reading this phenomenal work, one not only gains a more

edifying perspective on curriculum studies and education, one gains insight into the regional

flavor of Southern ideas and, particularly, the importance of place in the Southern psyche. Pinar

asserts that "the power of place as a category of social and individual experience is strong in the

South" (p. 95), an assertion that he finds supported by historians such as Potter (1968) who

confirms that "the relation between land and people remained more direct and more primal in the

South than in other parts of the country" (p. 15). It is, perhaps, this primal attachment to

Southern geography and sentiment that makes understanding the curricula of Southern place

through the lived life paramount for analyzing contemporary education and curricula throughout the nation.

Rural areas generally have been impugned as intellectual backwaters, a sentiment expressed by Marx and Engels when they accredited the bourgeoisie with one signal accomplishment, building cities that avoided "the idiocy of rural life" (Ching & Creed, 1997, p. vii). Noting that when intellectuals from the hegemonic urban perspective address rurality and intelligence they usually do so from a stance of improvement for rural areas, rather than validating them as sites of legitimate exploration, Ching and Creed (1997) understand why rustic Southerners might embrace anti-intellectualism as a mode of validating their socially imposed identities, saying that, "Given the thinly-veiled self-congratulation and condescension that informs such intellectual efforts, it is not surprising that self-consciously rustic people often become emphatically anti-intellectual" (p.11). In his treatise, Pinar identifies an underdeveloped intellectuality in the U.S. that stems largely from the South's historical and political hegemony that is now rampant throughout the country. Acknowledging a general tenor of anti-intellectualism in America, he, nevertheless, accredits much of the exacerbation of this anti-intellectual thinking—or abject failure to think—to Southern influence. Ascribing lackluster educational results and stultifying absence of self-refection to the Procrustean conformity exacted by the White Southern majority, he holds that it is "due to the deferral and displacement of racism and misogyny onto public education" (p. 9) rather than the public sphere for debate that makes the South, and the U.S. overall, such an intolerant nation. Prepossessed by bigotry, racism, and hatred for all that is not White and male, the South remains a bastion of backward thinking. Stark but persuasive in his language, Pinar makes it clear that it is Southern reactionary politics actuated by similarly reactionary and non-progressive social thinking that has led

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Southern society to repudiate more progressive ideas, a position that has held not only the South, but the nation in thrall.

By situating curriculum regionally, Pinar concludes that education must also be regionally approached to be effective. He views curriculum as not only representing a place but actually becoming a place:

> …a curricular embodiment and contradiction of peculiarly southern experience, taught in ways appropriate to the reconstruction of that experience, toward the end of demystifying southern history and culture…this curriculum is a form of social psychoanalysis; it permits the student to emerge as 'figure,' capable of critical participation in a historical present widely ignored and denied. The educational, economic, and cultural development of the region—and the nation—requires both. p. 94

Pinar points out the critical importance of taking such an approach by confirming Simpson (1983), Williamson's (1984), and Cash's (1941) assertion that, in the aftermath of their devastating loss in the Civil War, Southerner's inaugurated a determined process of purposeful forgetting to assuage their sense of loss and excuse their extraordinarily conspicuous failure to deal with a legacy of slavery, segregation, violence, and poverty. Writing that the South's collective self-denial on these issues has resulted in a "flight from reality" (p. 95) he maintains that distortions in several spheres have occurred, namely, culturally and economically, justifying attention to Southern history because of an undeniable "intensified relation to place and a psychological denial of the facts of the southern experience," *ibid*. For Pinar, bringing awareness of this untenable situation to the individual and collective conscious is a "pedagogical priority" since they also distort the psychosocial spheres of race, class, and gender. Reiterating the crux of his work, Pinar proposes that

only when the South is…reconstructed can the nation resume a progressive course toward

democratization. I propose the educational reconstruction of the South through a

'curriculum as social psychoanalysis' schooling that speaks to persisting problems of

race, class, and gender, not only in the South, but nationwide. Such a 'complicated

conversation' illustrates a curriculum in which academic knowledge, subjectivity, and

society are inextricably linked. It is this link, this promise of education for our private-

and-public lives as Americans, which curriculum theory elaborates. p. 11

In this masterful elucidation of the difficulties that restrain Southern progressivism in social and

political spheres, Pinar concisely describes those aspects of Southern culture that constrain it

generally: sexism, racism, homophobia, reactionary politics, blind adherence to a mythic and

non-existent past, violence, evangelical religiosity, and anti-intellectualism. Yet, he also suggests

a curricular approach that offers the promise of profound remediation, specifically, utilizing the

potentially revelatory processes associated with self-reflection, autobiographical methods, and

the technique and philosophy of *currere*, all intended to militate against the disastrous effects of

intellectual profligacy in the form of wasted educational opportunities. Pinar challenges the

motivated individual and the educator, practicing and aspirant, to challenge themselves to assess

with a gimlet eye the realities of modern society and education in order to decrease complacency

and enliven discourse. Pinar's observations, theorizing, and philosophizing in *What is*

Curriculum Theory? provides the reviewer of Southern culture useful insights into an often

unfathomable region, and helps to prepare the researcher for studying the South from the

perspective of a "critically engaged complicated conversation" that allows for minute inspection

of Southern life and culture by way of autoethnographic and autobiographical methods, a

consideration taken up in the next chapter.

Southern Literature—Masterful Storytellin'

In her brilliant analysis of place in fiction, Eudora Welty, discussing Faulkner's "Spotted Horses," ventured the opinion that imaginative stories provide a more precise representation of life than the lives themselves, asserting that fiction is pure representation and that feelings are bound to place, an idea with which Gray (1986) concurs, and which some pinpoint as the crucial nexus for understanding Southern culture and traditions (Chamberlin, 2003; Garrett, 1981). Elaborating on this theme, Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) assure the reader that the "relationship between place and feeling is central to curriculum theory's study of place" (p. 4). Holding that place elucidates the embedded social forces that allow people to particularize and appreciate their current position in society through a sound understanding of where they have come from, they maintain that such understanding is critical to ensuring that they can comprehend the social and emotional forces that direct them. And in the end, Faulkner avers that place is the product of creative natures, a reality constructed through use of language (cited in Gray, 1986) especially in Southern fiction. A sampling of several titans in the Southern literary tradition (here encompassing those who focus on the South if not those who are Southern themselves) can provide the needed understanding. Authors such as Mark Twain, Zora Neale Hurston, Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner, Alice Walker, and Carson McCullers can collectively serve as a précis for the fundamentals of understanding the Southern mind and disposition, most especially by appreciating its foundations in racism, sexism, violence, and an exaggerated machismo that drives Southern males to illogicality and sometimes abject and imponderable acts of absurdity. Their writings also underscore the exceptional importance of family and community for most Southerners, regardless of region, district, or parish. Undergirding these social elements is a religiosity that permeates everything about the South (Conser & Payne, 2008; Wilson, 2006b),

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from its celebrations to its academics, an aspect of Southern culture that may be repudiated but never ignored. Most important, however, is the need for storytelling for detailing the Southern experience. As Crews (1978/1995) tells it,

> Since where we lived and how we lived was almost hermetically sealed from everything and everybody else, fabrication became a way of life. Making up stories, it seems to me now, was not only a way for us to understand the way we lived but also a defense against it. p. 62

Through storytelling, the Southerner expresses what it means to be "Southern" and how that conception impacts life, individually and collectively, and by anatomizing their stories in the context of their manifest sociality, they can gain a remarkably accurate appreciation for what motivates and guides the expression of their lives and culture.

Huckleberry's Daddy and the Southern Literary Canon

Extolled by some as the work that established the paradigm for the American novel (Burt, 2004; Carter, 2008; Washington, June 1910), Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) occasionally gets overlooked as a seminal volume in the canon of Southern literature, yet no examination of the Southern literary corpus can be accurately or profitably conducted until coming to terms with Twain's still controversial magnum opus. Often praised to the level of hagiography (De Voto, 1932)—George Bernard Shaw exulted, "I am persuaded that the future historian of America will find your works as indispensable to him as a French historian finds the political tracts of Voltaire" (cited in Hildebrand, 2010, p. 151)—it periodically suffers spates of biting criticism that some see as disproportionate to its perceived sins and failings (Carter, 2008) but others accept as justified to one degree or another (American Psychological Association, 1996; Fikes, 2011; Furnas, 1985; Hildebrand, 2010). Whichever side one takes on the merits of

this much read book, the ineludible fact is that it continues to be used as a primary reference in American and international humanities and likely will maintain its status as one of the most adulated works of fiction in history (Burt, 2004; Schinkel, 2011; Walker, 1992). Pertinent to this study is its inclusive sweep with regard to Southern literature's influence on depictions and perceptions of Southern culture and identity and how it has contributed to forming these depictions and perceptions. Unquestionably, scrutinizing Southern literature must proceed from an examination of Twain's classic.

In his review of *Huckleberry Finn*, Burt (2004) writes that in "tapping the poetic resources of the American vernacular and the dramatic and thematic possibilities of the American landscape" (p. 80) Twain has won high praise, and he cites such eminent scholars as William Dean Howells, who compared the author to Abraham Lincoln in scope, and Ernest Hemmingway who effused, "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn…*" (pp. 80-81), although Burt concedes that Hemmingway's assessment is extreme, calling it an "oft-quoted overgeneralization." Further enumerating such preeminent authorities as Robert Louis Stevenson, H. L. Mencken, and some slightly faint praise from T. S. Eliot who held that Twain "wrote a much greater book than he could have known he was writing" (cited in Burt, 2004, p. 82), that reviewer also trotted out several critics such as William Van O'Connor and Leo Marx whom he quotes as indicting others for "overvaluing Huck as a mythic hero and the implication of his adventures." According to Burt, O'Connor and Marx also lambaste Twain himself for mishandling the books central moral focus, Jim's status as a slave and a person and inexplicitly stating his supposed moral disapprobation of social inequality. Most often, however, it is the characterizations of Jim and other African Americans that draw the recurrent ire of critics, especially those concerned with the pejorative language and

demeaning behavior used as representative of Black parlance and interpersonal interactions (Asim, 2007; Fikes, 2011; Lester, 1992). For example, Fikes (2011) describes the "minstrel-like, accommodating character of Jim" (p. 240) as indicative of what many find exceptionable. Although the name of Huck's partner in adventure, Nigger Jim, is often the primary locution cited as objectionable and emblematic of the lack of social value of the book, the liberal use of the racial epithet "nigger" is just as often adduced (214 instances of its use, in fact). Notwithstanding its exalted—possibly sanctified—status, protests of *Huckleberry Finn* continue into the twenty-first century, with some denouncing it as immanently racist (hooks, 2003; Wellington, 2003) while others, many finding it practically irreproachable, decry what they deem censorship of a classic work firmly enshrined in the American bibliographic trove (Fikes, 2011; Flora & MacKethan, 2001).

Despite the episodic renewal of debates concerning the social limitations, or lack thereof, relative to *Huckleberry Finn*, what is universally accepted is that Twain intended the work as a castigation of not slavery, since that heinous institution had been destroyed by the time of the book's writing, but social inequity generally, as well as the hypocrisy of institutionalized religion and the romanticization of the South, twin perils that Twain identified as having been responsible for causing the Civil War and destroying the South (Magill, 1989). Still, Twain did not purport to write *Huckleberry Finn* as a moral tale, and when discussions of the moral utility of the book were bruited, as Twain's biographer, Powers (2005) has it

> Mark Twain himself sounded the first warning. Toward the end of his 1880 stint, he thought to write the novel's famous 'Notice': Persons attempting to find a Motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a Moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a Plot in it will be shot. p. 475

Powers' anecdote lends some tenuous credence to Eliot's comment alluding to Twain's inadvertent authorial tour de force (cf. Burt, 2004, p. 82); of course, Twain's remarks could have been self-effacing bravado in order to silence critics, whom he abhorred (Powers, 2005). Regardless of Twain's protestations to the contrary, his masterpiece is often touted as an explicitly moral work of fiction. In Magill's (1989) view, "Twain…maintained an almost perfect fidelity to Huck's point of view in order to dramatize the conflict between Huck's own innate innocence and natural goodness and the dictates of a corrupt society" (p. 7), a perspective shared by many (Burt, 2004; Carter, 2008; Furnas, 1985) if disparately (Kleist, 2009; Lynch, 2006; Schinkel, 2011) but not all (Leonard, Tenney, & Davis, 1992). Even if one comes down on the side of Twain as moral fabulist, without question, assertions testifying to Twain's literary and moral probity occasionally strain credulity. Perhaps overstating the case for Huck's development as a person, Burt (2004) opines,

> The biggest challenge to Huck's growing respect for Jim as a man and a friend is his realization that his assistance in Jim's escape goes against established authority and his previously accepted moral code in which Jim is property that should be returned to its owner. Although his conscience, schooled by custom and civilization, tells him that 'people that acts as I'd been acting about that nigger goes to everlasting fire,' Huck resolves 'All right, then I'll *go* to hell,' committing to protect Jim's freedom, a decision that marks Huck's independence, maturation, and rejection of hypocrisy and injustice. p. 83

Not the first to vaunt Twain's solicitude for his downtrodden brethren, Burt (2004) nevertheless seems to develop his apotheosis of the great author from whole cloth, offering little of evidentiary value to substantiate his grandiose claims.

The dimension of *Huckleberry Finn*'s importance most relevant to this study is Twain's

excellent portrayal of his protagonist's psychosocial development. Although Twain expertly

delineates individual occurrences in Huck's socialization, it is his luminous depiction of Huck's

personal battle with ideology and self-realization as a person capable of independent thought and

autonomous agency that impresses most. In his review of the book as a literary achievement,

Lynch (2006) refers to Bakhtin's (1981) concepts of the "internally-persuasive word" and the

"authoritative word" to frame Huck's struggle with his personal development and social

awareness:

> ...it happens more frequently that an individual's becoming, an ideological process, is
>
> characterized precisely by a sharp gap between these two categories: in one, the
>
> authoritative word (religious, political, moral; the word of a father, of adults and of
>
> teachers, etc.) that does not know internal persuasiveness, in the other internally
>
> persuasive word that is denied all privilege, backed up by no authority at all, and is
>
> frequently not even acknowledged in society (not by public opinion, nor by scholarly
>
> norms, nor by criticism), not even in the legal code. The struggle and dialogic
>
> interrelationship of these categories of ideological discourse are what usually determine
>
> the history of an individual ideological consciousness. p. 342

In the context of literary analysis, Murphy (1984) calls Bakhtin's competing seats of psychic

power acting on the individual consciousness a "progressive entanglement in literacy" (p. 365),

yet one might co-opt his terminology and refer just as serviceably to a progressive entanglement

in place, thus neatly encapsulating the struggles of the individual to differentiate and individuate

from the enveloping and all-pervasive influence of native place. The individual struggle to

accomplish self-actualization is difficult enough when one chooses to leave the original context

of place, hoping that distance and time will assuage the pangs of loss and regret that such a decision will, inevitably, produce, yet is certainly markedly more difficult to negotiate when one valiantly refuses to abandon the accustomed place of love and comfort and attempt some form of social and personal remediation (Casemore, 2008; Falk, 2004; Whitlock, 2005), a perspective voiced aptly by Kincheloe (1991) when he says, "I am a child of the South, one who has sought to understand the rhythms of southern life and their effects on me" (p. 131). Bakhtin's (1981) concept of the "individual ideological consciousness" (p. 342) also lends theoretical support for the idea of a parallel alternative identity (PAI), discussed in this research, a social construct that many find necessary to successfully persevere in limiting social contexts while trying to develop their individual psychic place in the world. Taking a cue from Freud's psychoanalytic concepts, the reassurance of a parallel alternative identity allows the developing ego to defend itself against the psychic insults lobbed at it by the intense id and the severe superego. Having somewhere to reside psychologically that is free of the drumbeats of indoctrination and reproduction offers the developing person occasional respite from a curriculum of place that can be deemed more threatening than nurturing. In Twain's literary masterpiece, one sees a superb example of what the struggles toward self-determination and psychic self-governance can be like, an example that unpacks, brackets, and disrupts the cultural assumptions of the American South, and, significantly, does so from the perspective not of a supremely capable intellect informed by advanced learning or from the security of a stable familial unit, but from the position of one marginalized and relegated to the fringes of Southern rural society, a place that many Southerners, especially those from LBGT and other minority communities, as well as the socially progressive, find themselves.

However the debates over Twain's masterwork resolve themselves, if such an improbable event ever happens, the reality confronted here is that *Huckleberry Finn* as a window into the customs and cultural practices of the American South remains useful. Often commended for his exacting and felicitous use of Southern White and African-American dialect (Burt, 2004), and as a chronicler of Southern folkways, especially that of his vast experience, Twain's works still afford insight into an intractably perplexing culture, and reading *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), and many of the American bard's other works limning Southern themes and portraying Southern settings can be informative if not wholly elucidating. Included in his collection of Southern practices is use of language, cuisine, social institutions, the prevalence and diversity of Southern violence, gender norms, race relations, economic imparity, superstitions, and a host of other cultural aspects germane to studies of the South. Most recently, new angles of examination have sought to establish that Twain's works containing Southern idioms, especially *Huckleberry Finn*, actually catalog African-American culture more than White culture, prompting some researchers to posit the idea that Huck should be characterized as African-American (Alberti, 1995; Fishkin, 1994; Hildebrand, 2010). Invoking De Voto's (1932) original suggestion that Twain had incorporated Black practices and folkways into his work directly from experience, Hildebrand (2010) particularly notes the infusion of African-American religious rituals and superstitions that she contends distinguish African-Africa culture brought to the Americas by enslaved Africans and she cites Lott (1995) as stating categorically that "the closer Twain got to black cultural practices and to racially subversive meanings, the more, paradoxically, his blackface debts multiplied" (p. 151). Even a cursory, superficial review of Twain's fiction reveals that it is much more complex than might be expected by the inexperienced researcher, and it is prime for extensive sociological and literary analysis, and

making appreciation of Twain's Souths crucial for extended investigations of the curriculum of Southern place.

Margaret's Mythology: The South in the Wind

Examining the corpus of Southern literature for the lineaments that hint at Southern identity fairly demands that one address the watershed success of Margaret Mitchell's blockbuster, *Gone with the Wind* (1936), not for its historical accuracy or confirmatory or enlightening depictions of Southernness, however, but just the opposite, for its phenomenally inaccurate descriptions of the historic South (Beye, 1993; Hunter, June 28, 1998; Jones, 1983) and its supposed chivalric ethos. Vaunting the beau ideal of the hypermasculine male protagonist who is devoted, often zealously and fatally so, to the integrity of regional home and the sanctity of unsullied womanhood, Mitchell's magnum opus has propounded a conceptualization of the Old South and Southerners that remains as intransigently interesting to some (Campbell, 1981; Juddery, 2008; Taylor, 1989) as it is recalcitrantly misleading to others (Haskell, 2010), and has become an inextricable part of Southern iconography. The book, and its incontestably popular film adaptation (Selznick & Fleming, 1939), have entered the popular consciousness and continue to influence immoderately the perceptions that many have of the South and it cultural sequelae (Kirstein, 1972; Tindall, 2006), even in the minds and quasi-memories of those who have lived there. Dealing with the fallout of Mitchell's prodigiously successful work requires confronting exciting myths and enduringly popular stories that have captured the hearts and minds of generations, Southern and otherwise, myths and stories that have spawned multiple others (Cox, 2011; Gomez-Galisteo, 2011), making any repudiation of the genre particularly difficult. Included in the category of Southern myth, Kincheloe (1991) cites the "Lost Cause," "Southern Womanhood," the "Happy Darkie," as well as the "Honor Myth" (p. 128). Still, he

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enumerates a number of "Southern treasures" along with debunking the myths. Among these he includes "closeness to the land," "a feel for the rhythms of natures," and valuing "the aesthetic of sport" (pp. 145-146). He also includes a "special sensitivity" (p. 148) to strained racial relations and an appreciation for time through "not letting it be filled with other-directed and organized activity" (p. 149). Critically, he notes as a treasure that the South "is a place where people love storytelling and believe that this tradition builds community by linking us to our past" (p. 149) and that the South is also "a place where people revere the impulses of the imagination that shape our speech, music, our literature, our love of place, and our potential" (p. 150). In identifying these treasures, though, Kincheloe disavows nostalgia, romance, and sentimentality, steadfastly asserting that the ghosts must be juxtaposed with the treasures to gain clear understanding of Southern culture. Notwithstanding the inherent problems associated with assessing the misconceptions engendered by Mitchell and her favorite progeny, *Gone with the Wind,* however, no real understanding of Southern climes is possible without taking a critical perspective of this hegemonically influential work (Curran, 2008; Francisco, Vaughan, & Francisco, 2000; Pryon, 1986).

Despite the enchantment that the general public has experienced with Mitchell's (1936) masterwork and its film version, many historians and cultural critics have long dismissed it as pabulum and assailed it as portraying the South in a romantic light that does not adequately account for the region's significant diversity (Cox, 2011; Carnes, 1996; Ryan, 2006), and some have excoriated the work for its simplistic notions about Southern life and history. In "*Gone with the Wind* as Vulgar Literature" (cited in Harwell, 1992), Floyd Watkins takes an acrimoniously severe tone when he writes,

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Southern readers—and foolish romantic readers everywhere—dream of an impossible

past, expect more of the present than can be realized, ignore an authentic culture while

praising a false culture that never existed, foolishly defend themselves against attacks

from the North, use false defenses of illogic and rhetoric, become vulnerable to attacks

that could be avoided, fall victim to false and pretentious characters in dreamers and

political demagogues, ignore and condemn the yeomanry and the peasantry. p. 205

While most commentators do not assume such an imperious perspective when reviewing the

novel's influence, critical examinations are, indeed, not typically favorable (Adams, 2007;

Pickrel, 1987; Ryan, 2005; Vials, 2006). Criticisms of *Gone with the Wind* the novel range from

allegations of shallow and stereotyped characterizations (Carnes, 1996), misrepresentation of the

historical period, culture, and mores (Francisco, Vaughan, & Francisco, 2000; Taylor, 1979), and

romanticization of grave social issues such as the heinous institution of human slavery (Ryan,

2006), to charges of poor writing and overestimating the book as good literature (Watkins,

1970).

To the latter accusation, some, at least in recent decades, have found much to admire in

the book. Burt (2004), while not lauding *Gone with the* Wind as great literature or validating it as

culturally accurate, does strike a more conciliatory tone than most critics. Offering an

exceptionally, maybe prosaically, pragmatic assessment, he observes that

…despite its enormous popularity and impact, *Gone with the Wind* has received relatively

little scholarly attention, and its creator has been largely consigned to the critical limbo of

the popular romance writer rather than considered as a literary artist. It may be that *Gone*

with the Wind is more a popular culture achievement, not a literary one, that the creator of

the most popular romantic novel in history should be viewed mainly as the chief

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progenitor of the modern romance genre. However, Mitchell deserves additional credit

for creating an enduring woman-centered fiction that deals in important ways with issues

about the ambiguous roles of women in modern society. pp. 585-586

Moreover, according to Burt, the protagonist, Scarlett, can be seen as representing a transitional

character in modern female fictional characters, an assessment that parallels the reality of

contemporary womanhood then and now. Describing Scarlett as having strong feminine and

powerful masculine traits, she is a living contradiction in terms, simultaneously dependent, thus

complying with antebellum Southern norms and mores while also questing for autonomy and

self-sufficiency. Alternately demure and uncharacteristically assertive for a Southern woman of

her time, she is the "self-centered southern belle, oblivious to people who do not contribute to

her sense of entitlement.…[o]n the other hand, she is an aggressive manipulator who rejects

passive victimage [*sic*] with a survivalist mentality that fuels her drive for mastery" (p. 587). In a

following passage, Burt notes what might well attest to the Southern outlook generally: "The

axes on which Mitchell imagined survival to balance are self-reliance and dependence. Carried to

extreme, self-reliance becomes isolation and even solipsism; dependence, at worst, becomes the

loss of selfhood and identity." Indeed, the desire to sustain autonomy while contending with the

inescapable reality of dependence may act as an apt description of the fears of Southerners

overall (Cash, 1941; Cobb, 2005).

Still, critics are not generally kind when assessing the literary and sociological value of

the astonishingly popular work (Fahs, 2000), and Burt (2004) makes no claims to the literary

pantheon for Mitchell and her landmark fictional work, yet he does astutely mark the social

significance of the work, highlighting the ways that she addresses gender roles and identities as

well as the import of traditional Southern masculinity and its hypermasculine overtones.

Scarlett is a complex blend of her mother's feminine side and her father's masculine character, and the novel's events show how both work themselves out in Scarlett's defiance of convention and drive for independence and control. Yet her dominance by traditional values of dependence on the old southern order and its definition of women finally dooms her. p. 588

As an illustrative example of the dichotomy of feelings Scarlett experiences, Burt proffers her choices in men. Contradictory and replete with ambivalence, Scarlett vacillates between two extremes, the "equally iconoclastic, masculine, aggressive Rhett" and the dutiful and inerrantly chivalrous Ashley Wilkes, who exemplifies the Old South and its presumed protection and stability. In the end, Scarlett stands as a model for the twentieth century woman contending with the perennially dueling forces of traditional femininity and nascent independence, a battle that she finally loses because she "is incapable of articulating a meaningful role for herself beyond the traditional gender expectation of her past" (p. 588); nevertheless, in Burt's estimation, she does succeed in establishing a model for the "new woman." Despite her optimistic tag line, "Tomorrow is another day" (Mitchell, 1936, p. 1037), Burt (2004) concludes that the eternal conflict between male and female gender roles that she has masterly and exhaustively dramatized remains unresolved, suggesting "a basic tension in women and men that continues to await a satisfying synthesis" (p. 589). Although Burt's moderate review certainly provides a more evenhanded analysis on the literary merits of *Gone with the Wind*, rightly acknowledging both its popularity and impact, and ascertaining relevant dimensions that probably justify its inclusion as great literature in the Southern and romance genres, as a source for discerning historically accurate Southern modes and manners, it must be adjudged a notable failure.

Notwithstanding Burt's (2004) inarguably fair assessment of Mitchell's novel, many have

identified myriad potentially deleterious sociological effects of the work (Juddery, 2008;

Williams, 2005). In its characterizations of indomitably courageous men determined to defend

vulnerable Southern womanhood against the implicit encroachments of Black male sexual

aggression, the irrecoverable loss of the antebellum code of male honor, and the hegemony of

White privilege—exclusively male and propertied, but a status that poorer White males may,

presumably, aspire to—Mitchell's ostensibly fictive work written for her own entertainment

while convalescing (Edwards, 1983) may legitimately be criticized, if not summarily indicted,

for fostering an image of the South and its mores and customs that, in fact, never existed, but

contemporaneously serve only to perpetuate the disjunction between a mythologized South and a

world that despairingly seeks a rapprochement between its heinous past and the promise of a

socially more equitable future (Cox, 2011; Duvall, 2008; Jones, 1983; Pryon, 1983). To contend

with the misconceptions and often sophomoric and jejune imagery engendered by Mitchell's

fabulist account of Southern antebellum and post-bellum life, many counternarratives have been

offered that question the veracity of versions of Southern life often touted reminiscently as

exemplars of the "good 'ol days" of the South (Adams, 2007; Beye, 1993; Cox, 2011; Fahs,

2000; Ryan, 2005; Vials, 2006). These counternarratives often directly challenge the mythicizing

that Mitchell and others have engaged in when extolling the virtues of a past, non-existent

Southern culture and offer more measured, historically accurate accounts of what Southern life

was actually like before and after the Civil War (Cox, 2011; Williams, 2005).

In one popular retelling of the *Gone with the Wind* narrative, Randall (2002) recounts the

story of Cynara, Scarlett O'Hara's mulatto half-sister, born into slavery yet ardently committed

to achieving a full life as an individual irrespective of her servitude. This ingenious, complex,

multi-layered work of fiction successfully and provocatively portrays the counterstory of a real human being literally and emotionally shackled and handily dispels the whitewashed, romanticized version of a Caucasian South. The service that Randall and other authors exploring this counter genre perform (Allison, 1992; Lee, 1960; Morrison, 1987; Walker, 1982), whether their works are launched from an historical or fictional basis, is to insist that the reader examine the history of the American South from a more objective and socially, politically, and morally informed stance. While these writers have not managed to exorcize the ghosts of the South's mythological past they have incited sundry and multifarious conversations that, similar to the complicated conversation of the curriculum Reconceptualization (Pinar, 2004), promise to redirect the focus to a more intelligent and accurate understanding of what constitutes the South and its history; nevertheless, understanding Southern behavior, customs, thinking, and apparently ineradicable beliefs means coming to terms with Mitchell and her powerhouse work.

"Don't Sit on Uncle Remus' Lap!"

One of the most debated—and alternately despised and cherished—literary products of the American South is Joel Chandler Harris' *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings* (1880), often referred to simply as *Uncle Remus Tales*. Featuring tales such as "The Wonderful Tar-baby" and "How the Birds Talk," and animatedly colorful characters such as Br'er[12] Rabbit and his arch enemy Brer Fox, Harris' folksy tales of the Old South and antebellum Southern plantation life were immensely popular in his own time, and gained renewed purchase in the popular conscious with Disney's 1946 film adaptation *Song of the South*. Harris' recurrently controversial work recounts the fictional lives of allegorical animal characters who personify the people and cultural ways of Harris' youth and young adulthood, presumably adducing moral lessons for the edification of the reader (Bickley, 2008; Peterson, 2011), a position maintained by Harris during

his lifetime. Despite Harris' avowed purpose in writing his collected works, and the stout defense of his writings forwarded by many critics (Brasch, 2000; Brookes, 1950; Mixon, 1990; Russo, 1992), a swirl of controversy continues to engulf *Uncle Remus Tales* and conversations relating to it, most often centering on what many consider its unvarnished racist content (Cochran, 2004; Walker, 1989) and what Zinn (1980/2003) called Harris' "paternalistic urgings of friendship for the negro" (p. 208).

According to Ronnick (1998), the controversies surrounding Harris' memorable, if much-contested, work seem to crystallize around several repetitive general themes that encompass "their use of folklore, their use of dialect, and their role in the creation or perversion of the 'happy darky' myth" (para. 1), a contention for which he appears to find plentiful support (Gaston, 1970; Montenyohl, 1986; Russo, 1992; Stafford, 1946), and, indeed, a cursory review of critiques of Harris' *Uncle Remus Tales* seems to sustain Ronnick's supposition. Unquestionably, most critiques address aspects of Harris' use of the Gullah dialect found in his stories and the authenticity and relevance of the putative African-American folklore chronicled (Fraile, 2007; Troike, 2010), with the foci placed on accuracy and authorial intention (Ives, 1955; Troike, 2010). Criticisms range from adjudging his dialogue and narratives blatantly racist to unintentionally paternalistic and condescending and many perspectives between. The point has been repeatedly made that a Southern White male of privilege presuming to advance commentary on the speech and customs of African-Americans in the antebellum and post-bellum South is as purposeless as an ex-slave making surmises about the lives of White plantation-era slaveholders. All that the former slave could offer would be a unique and individualized account from the stance of one outside of the experience of the other; correspondingly, Harris' depictions of slave life are tendentious at best, potentially fomenting images of African-American life that

he could not possibly understand properly, and disastrously harmful at worst, predisposing generations of Americans, Black and White, to internalizing distortions of African-American history and even malicious falsehoods. Walker's (2012) take on the debate is as novel as it is incisive. A native of Putnam County, Georgia (incidentally, Harris' ancestral home as well) Walker objects strenuously to his expropriation of particulars of her heritage, contending that "As far as I'm concerned, he stole a good part of my heritage. How did he steal it? By making me feel ashamed of it" (p. 31), a position that Johnson (2007) maintains "had something to do with the prevalent view of Harris as racist, his portrayal of Black speech as merely a form of ridicule" (p. 239). Walker's stance expresses not only her own vehement opinion of Harris' romanticized remembrance of the South but that of many (Brode, 2005; Cochran, 2004; Keenan, Winter 1984; Tindall, 2006), if to variant degrees. While not rejecting the veracity or significance of Harris' racist overtones, Johnson does aver that he intended to render faithful portrayals of African Americans based on his experience, and, as a self-professed believer in racial equality, any derogation of Blacks was inadvertent and imputable to his ignorance. Still, she accepts that *Uncle Remus Tales* is a product of its times and that from the "vantage point of whites, Remus was a type to be admired, but the same qualities that white readers of Harris's day appreciated are the qualities that make modern readers uneasy" (p. 249). Miller (1987) may have gotten closest to the crux of the matter by saying that "Harris appears to have been trapped in a permanent rebellion against his own skin" (p. 617), at once staunchly opposed to racial inequality but not yet capable of appreciating the immanent racism part and parcel of his patrimony.

Maybe the most plausible argument for explaining the debate over *Uncle Remus Tales* is described by Ritterhouse (2003), when she discusses the controversy within the White community when essaying interpretations of Harris' works and their intent. She opines that

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White Southerners in the Reconstruction era and early twentieth century were involved in a desperate attempt to redefine themselves and reconstitute the collective social memory, an endeavor that had momentous implications for the direction taken by the New South. Describing the perils associated with their efforts, she writes that

> there is no such thing as 'simply remembering' in the sense of gaining direct, and unmediated, access to the past. Our memories are not like artifacts stashed away in a drawer waiting to be taken out whole and unaltered whenever we want them. Instead, remembering is an act of the present that addresses the needs of the present by shaping and reshaping material from the past… By molding the past, groups give shape to their expectations for the present and the future, which is crucial to their efforts to create a certain social reality using political, economic, and cultural tools. pp. 587-589

For the new and old elite of the American South, emerging from the shadow of the Lost Cause was critical to persevere and recover some semblance of social stability, a prospect jeopardized by a continued focus on antiquated and possibly anachronistic tales of anthropomorphized forest animals representing a defunct slave culture. Notwithstanding lingering racial animus or a longing for a deceased, romanticized past, Southerners in the twentieth century generally wanted to enjoy the largesse offered by modernity (Cash, 1941; Wilson, 2006), and Uncle Remus could not help to attain the idyllic state desired.

On the whole, Harris was a man as complex and ambivalent in his thinking as most, and as exasperatingly difficult as it may be to disentangle his intentions from the realities of his most memorable work, statements affirm that, though he professed racial equality and a progressive social agenda, he had a different view of what that idea meant than should be expected of a progressive intent upon social parity. Harris often devalued the worth of African-Americans and

made declarative remarks that were clearly intended to affirm his belief in the superiority of the White race (Kinney, Spring 2001), ideas that did not comport with the writings of this prolific author where he consistently vaunted the need for equality. Often accused of understating the indisputable brutality and other shameful dimensions of the Southern institution of slavery (Cochran, 2004), Harris's oeuvre, and his reputation, have suffered for his inconsistency and failure to engage in serious self-criticism. Perhaps the most virulent criticism of Harris' iconic work comes from a literary perspective itself. Miller (1987) alleges that had Harris' not been an influential editor and member of the New South Movement *Uncle Remus Tales* would long ago have been consigned to the dustbin of literary history with other clever but unremarkable local color writers. As Miller has it "…the trail of Harris' biography…leads inevitably to Uncle Remus: the genial mask behind which he liberated himself sufficiently to create—for better or for worse—some of the more durable figures in American culture" (p. 617). Assessments of worth aside, what remains consequential, then, is the significant influence that Harris' collection of Southern fables has had, and continues to have, on Southerners perceptions of themselves.

Irrespective of which side of the debate one lands regarding Harris' *Uncle Remus Tales*, one must acknowledge its significance as a source for understanding Southern culture, particularly in historical context, and especially for appreciating the rank sentimentality and mythological misconceptions that impinge preponderantly on the psyches of traditional-minded and progressive-minded Southerners alike. Of considerable difficulty for all Southerners is anatomizing their regional influences and parsing the intellective wheat from the mythic chaff with regard to conceptualizing their social relationships and even their own perceptions of self. If Harris' *Uncle Remus Tales* accomplishes nothing else, it casts a penetrating light on how contested notions of what constitutes Southernness can contribute to the dialogue on

understanding Southern place, and how hotly and vociferously debated can be the attendant dialogue. Examining the Souths of different experiences can be conducive to enhanced understanding of the region and doing so through the medium of its embattled literary works can be the most productive of all.

Southern Gothic—Wasn't the South Scary Enough?

Using the derelict surroundings of a moribund culture, the disturbed behaviors and thoughts of deranged and self-deluded characters, the macabre environs of dysfunctional, anachronistic societies and families, and employing extremes of violence, prejudice, and emotions, the Southern Gothic is a sub-genre of gothic literature and popular culture that seeks to uncover the underbelly of Southern mores and customs and expose them to the light of sociological scrutiny (Davidson, 1957; Presley, 1972; Simpson, 1985; Skillion, 2001). Unlike its parent genre, works of the Southern Gothic do not typically present such situations and narratives for gratuitous consumption but with the intention of examining Southern culture and societies for their defects and areas ripe for improvement, socially, politically, economically, and otherwise (Flora, 2002; Palmer, 2006). With a long tradition that saw its greatest expansion in the social ferment of the early twentieth century, the Southern Gothic still reverberates through the popular consciousness, casting the details of the Southern way of life in actual, as well as fictional, context. Given its suffusion in the sociological mainstream of thought about the American South any review of literature that attempts to elucidate Southern culture for academic purposes must train its gaze on this important area of storytelling. The South is, after all, described most often and, possibly, most accurately, by the richness of its stories and myths, and some of those stories are unlovely, stark, and pervaded by violence, injustice, and sometimes terror (Ciuba, 2007; Donaldson, 1997; Yaeger, 1997).

Alternately referred to as "Southern gothic" and "Southern grotesque," the common themes in the works of this genre are cruelty, the supernatural, barbarity, insanity, profound disillusionment leading to disabling personality disorders, threatening and menacing settings, unhealthy and unsettling relationships, and extremes of violence and criminality (Bailey, 2010; Ciuba, 2007; Flora, 2002; Skillion, 2001), with the seminal authors having expounded the literature including such luminaries as Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner, Truman Capote, Carson McCullers, Tennessee Williams, Harper Lee, and Eudora Welty, and with storylines as dissimilar as escaped convicts on a killing spree (O'Connor, 1953), the disintegration of once affluent and revered Southern families (Faulkner, 1929), the extremes of gender role expectations and sexual politics (Williams, 1947), the ennui resulting from social status and its attendant bewilderment (McCullers, 1940), and the tragedy and ramifications of social injustice based on prejudice and bigotry (Lee, 1960). Although Southern gothic encompasses the supernatural and fantastical in its subject matter, this review is designedly restricted to those works that do not stray into those particular areas of creative writing, or that do so only lightly, in order to maintain a steadfast gaze on what can be gleaned about Southern culture that is plausibly indicative of actual behavior. To ensure appreciation of the variety of Southern gothic fare, the output of several authors will be sampled.

O'Connor and Faulkner: Chronicling the dark South. Although Flannery O'Connor and William Faulkner will be dealt with in some detail later in this chapter, framing the discussion of Southern gothic literature mandates that the discussion proceed from these two pivotal authors since they are generally cited as the emblematic writers in the genre (Simpson, 1985). Mingling violence, social and familial dysfunction, and religious and role confusion in the upheaval of the post-Civil War South, both authors festoon their works with provocative acts of

barbarous cruelty, depression, loneliness, and alcohol abuse, doubtless epiphenomenal in their works because so glaringly and painfully evident in their own lives (Blotner, 2005; Brinkmeyer, 1989). In what many find her most arresting use of violence as a commentary on what she perceives as the intermingling of force and religion, O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" (1953) makes an indelible impression upon the mind of the reader. In the story, a Southern family on an outing in the rural countryside stops to assist what they think is three stranded motorists, only to initiate a sequence of violence, savagery, terror, and murder that seems almost superfluous at times. Yet, the plot contributes elegantly, if luridly, to the understanding that O'Connor wishes to convey: atonement often means sacrifice, pain, and finality, and redemptive acts do not always connote conciliation or propitiation, and, in fact, sometimes lead to the ultimate recompense, death. Her characterization of the grandmother—instigator, religious hypocrite, simultaneously pitiable and contemptible, and fatuously opinionated—stands as one of the most colorful descriptions of human nature in the sum of the genre, an unforgettable and hopeless shill for religious zealotry and sanctimonious philosophizing. Vehemently railed against for what was generally perceived as extreme and gratuitous violence (Martin, 1968), O'Connor's short story continues to excite thinking about what it means to live in rural, Southern surroundings and what such a life implies, and additionally acts to emphatically disabuse the reader of quixotic misconceptions about the indolent, easy rustic life. While the necessity and utility of specific literary devices such as the brutal acts of her characters is arguable, in comparison to the often inane, overly simplistic, and insipid characterizations mooted by other authors describing the South, O'Connor's now iconic work may at least be judged positively for its brutish honesty, a position assumed avowedly by O'Connor (1994) herself.

Faulkner (April 1930) takes a similarly macabre approach in contemplating the South of his understanding in "A Rose for Emily." The unseen main character, Emily Grierson, is the last living representation of a dying Southern aristocracy in Faulkner's small, fictional town of Jefferson, Mississippi, set in Yoknapatawpha County, the author's accustomed fictive haunt. The haughty but destitute Miss Emily is a relic of a bygone age that never existed in its putative magnificence, if it ever existed at all, yet she refuses to accept reality, as does the town. Once wealthy, Emily has become a recluse, refusing to pay her property taxes, never venturing outside or socializing, and defiantly insisting that she is still the matriarch of an esteemed, influential Southern family. Faulkner's brilliance in telling his short story is to contrast the duplicity of the town with that of Miss Emily in demonstrating how they both hew to a myth of the Old South that has no substance. After Emily's death, the townspeople temerariously search the old house, as if frightened of the old woman and the ghost of her exaggerated reputation. When they discover the mummified remains of Miss Emily's long-dead lover in her bedroom, and a clear indentation in her pillow implying that she had continued to sleep beside him, Faulkner horrifically accentuates the absurdity of the town's, and Emily's, adherence to pointless and obsolete social conventions. Avoiding the callousness and shock of literal violence invoked by O'Connor, Faulkner, nevertheless, manages to impress upon the reader allegorically the equally terrifying aspects of continuing to comply with a social framework that is moribund if not thoroughly dead. Having confirmed the death of Miss Emily, the town of Jefferson has the opportunity to move on, as does the South clung to so desperately.

Riding Southern desire. In his astonishingly comprehensive play, "A Street Car Named Desire," Tennessee Williams (1947) succeeds in showcasing the plethora of Southern angst experienced by many in the South in the wake of cultural disintegration and dispossession caused

by the Civil War and its subsequent anomie. Blanche Dubois, a fading socialite and progeny of a supposedly aristocratic Louisiana family, arrives in New Orleans on a street car running the 'Desire' circuit, ostensibly to visit her sister but, in reality, because she has nowhere else to go. Having been fired from her teaching job for having an illicit affair with a 17-year-old student, the family property has been foreclosed, and Blanche is penurious. Still, the self-possessed Southern belle manages to maintain a façade of gentility and grace that Stanley, her brother-in-law, sees through immediately, exciting both his disdain and igniting an incipient urge to subdue Blanche mentally, and ultimately, sexually. Further complicating her situation and her slide into self-imposed emotional exile, Blanche's husband from a brief marriage has committed suicide because of the mental anguish that he experiences as a homosexual man in a homophobic South. Despite a personal life in shambles, Blanche persists in her irrepressible self-delusions of grandeur, further stoking the fires of Stanley's antipathy. In the end, Stanley impliedly rapes Blanche—symbolizing the hegemonic supremacy of White, male dominance in the South—and has her committed to a mental asylum. Blanche's stereotypical last line of the play functions as the emblematic statement of Southern illusions of a past relegated to memory as well as Blanche's own personal despondency. Speaking to the attendant who has come to take her away, she says with affected and meretricious bravada, "Whoever you are, I have always depended upon the kindness of strangers." In the end, the denouement and the close are as unedifying for Blanche as they are for many Southerners—an insupportable and foolish continuation in the belief that the South will rise again in the mantle of its former, imagined glory.

The lonely hunter—Carson McCullers' solitary South. In her first novel, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter,* Carson McCullers (1940) produced an incomparable masterpiece. Replete with multifarious and complex characters, the novel adduces the gamut of tribulations that

Southerners of her era contended with in seeking some sense of fulfillment as individuals while combating the ignorance and obstinacy of a backward culture. Her treatment of minorities and other oppressed and marginalized persons in genuine depth makes her debut work a testament to how literary artistry can contribute substantively to social commentary and the betterment of inequitable social conditions through the vehicle of fiction, and testifying further to the validity of contemporary qualitative approaches to research that use fiction methodologically.

The story centers on the relationship of Mick Kelly, an adolescent girl who aspires to become a concert pianist, and John Singer, a deaf-mute young man living in Kelly's father's boarding house. Initially resentful of Singer, Mick develops affection for him and an appreciation of his sensitivity after he introduces her to classical music, a medium that he "feels" rather than hears. Having ingratiated himself to Mick, Singer tries valiantly to help her and his other friends, including a Black physician, Dr. Copland, and an alcoholic newcomer, in resolving their problems. Although Singer works tirelessly to be a confidant for his acquaintances and tries to ease their emotional and existential burdens, he eventually succumbs himself to the dolors of isolation and loneliness, the chief theme of the novel. A *bildungsroman* that incorporates the usual dimensions associated with the genre—despair, longing, confusion, identity crisis—the novel is notable as Southern gothic in its frank and atypical examination of racism, atheism, feminism, and in its portrayal of the outcome of the coming-of-age as less than satisfying. Shunning the happy outcome, McCullers depicts the suicide of Singer, despondent over his estrangement from an institutionalized friend and his profound sense of isolation, Mick's employment as a menial laborer, and Dr. Copland's tuberculosis. McCullers' exhibits a rare gift among writers who intend to enumerate the frailties of society through the lens of the individual life, the ability to show how individual neuroses and ailments of the soul can operate on the

societal as well as the individual level of consciousness. The heart is, indeed, a lonely hunter, for a disillusioned region as well as for the isolated person.

What the Southern gothic makes abundantly clear through its masterful depictions of people negotiating the vicissitudes of a post-bellum South beset by insecurities and without a sense of social direction is that to triumph over adversity, individually and collectively, the Southerner must examine her location in place, her unique curriculum of Southern self, to purposely mediate the residual effects of social inequality and difference, a requirement that appears to have gone largely unheeded and unexplored in the contemporary South. By renouncing the fairy tale existence promoted by *Gone with the Wind* (Mitchell, 1936) and its ilk, and facing the often brutal, barbarous aspects of Southern history and the continued inequities of a White-male privileged society, Southerners can adopt a self-concept that truly admits of pride and dignity rather than an imagined history of valor that vouchsafes nothing but unrelenting guilt and continued social isolation. Failure to accept the occasionally shocking reality of historic violence, sexual domination, racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, jingoism, and arrant regionalism leaves the Southerner as vulnerable as ever.

The Faulkner Factor—Meandering Through Yoknapatawpha

Perhaps no other author has exposed the violent, dissociable, and inequitable underbelly of the mythos of Southern culture as has William Faulkner (Blotner, 2005; Parini, 2005; Weinstein, 2009). Not largely appreciated until the mid-twentieth century when he won the Nobel Prize for literature (Gray, 1996; Weinstein, 2009), though his work was regionally popular as early as 1919, Faulkner's work is predominantly focused upon the politics of sexuality and race (Sensibar, 2010; Williamson, 1995), yet interwoven throughout his oeuvre is a detailed and stark outline of what Southern culture is to its inhabitants and, possibly more important, various

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conceptions of what they believe it is (Minter, 1997). Faulkner's South is infused with history, pride, honor, shame, sexuality, horror, substance abuse, poverty, infidelity, evangelism, racism, violence, and social inequality, and is as paradoxical and self-contradictory as was Faulkner himself (Gray, 1996; Weinstein, 2009), a condition that besets many Southerners as it, indeed, afflicts people from many regions. Faulkner perhaps best epitomizes his style and his view of his beloved South in his classic, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929/1991), a novel that not only describes the angst and disillusionment that charted the course for post-Civil War Southern culture, but also neatly illustrates the stream of consciousness and multiple perspective approaches for which Faulkner would become renowned (Anderson, 1990; Brooks, 1963; Marshall, 1989; Radloff, 1986). Derived from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, act 5, scene 5, in which the title character soliloquizes:

> Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow,
>
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
>
> To the last syllable of recorded time,
>
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
>
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
>
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
>
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
>
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
>
> Told by an idiot, full of *sound and fury* [emphasis added],
>
> Signifying nothing.

His use of this passage he explained when accepting his Nobel Prize in literature as important because it symbolized the idiocy of so much that is said without passion and conviction

(Mathews, 1982; Ross, 1989), a sentiment obvious from his using the voices of "idiots" from so many different levels of understanding.

Not only does Faulkner expertly present a fictional manner of thought of a dispossessed and formerly affluent and socially high-ranking Southern family meant to typify the state of Southern culture and ideology of his time, he skillfully builds the narrative through the multiplicitous perspectives of several members of the Compson family, including deep thinkers and simpletons, and even includes the voice of an African-American family servant to demonstrate that perspectives are as numerous and multifarious as are the people who possess them (Dahill-Baue, 1996; Polk, 1993). Personified in the character of Dilsey Gibson, the matriarch of the Compsons' servant family, the African-American perspective is one of moral probity that observes as the self-absorbed, formerly powerful, and influential Southern family destroys itself through alcohol abuse, promiscuity, violence, and a longing for a time that will never return and a status that they should never have attained (Castille, 1992; Mathews, 1991). The Compsons lost that which was most critical to their sense of self and significance, land, and watching others possess what would always be their land would prove more agonizing than was bearable. Sexism is also manifest in the novel especially in Faulkner's identification of Caddy, the female protagonist as the "hero" of the work, even though he did not give her a distinct voice, instead representing her through her brothers' accounts. He additionally writes her as a stereotypical nurturing yet sexually profligate character, typical of the Madonna-whore conception of women that has been employed by Southern men to understand Southern women (Cash, 1941/1991; Cobb, 2005; Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991). Often taken as a comprehensive description of the South in the post-Civil War era—at least as conceptualized by Faulkner—the book, and his many others, chronicles the despair, anguish, personal and societal torment

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experienced by White Southerners as they grapple with the anomie and disillusionment they encounter while refusing to relinquish an idealized view of a time of perfection that never existed (Blotner, 2005; Cobb, 2005; Gray, 2002; Weinstein, 2009; Williamson, 1995). In the end, it is the more pragmatic characters who find a way of coping, while the sentimentalists and progressivists expire (Gray, 1996; Polk, 1993).

The constants that survive the antebellum period and persist to form the educative elements of future Southerners are violence, self-directed and interpersonal; racism toward anyone not White and Southern; religious fervor used to justify the excesses of bigotry and hate; sexism couched in the language of protection of the "weaker sex," a near sacrament in Southern culture; alcohol and other substance abuse intended to sooth the mental and emotional pain of marginalization after hegemony; and the preeminence of family and place as the primary bases for attempts to muster and sustain self-pride and a sense of meaning. These same themes appear in Faulkner's other works of significance—*As I Lay Dying* (1930)*, Go Down Moses* (1942/1990)*, Absolam, Absolam!* (1936)—and are the quintessential statements, for many, on what it means to be Southern (Bloom, 1995; Cobb, 2005). Yet, Faulkner, like so many White Southerners since the advent of emancipation and, most especially, since the Civil Rights era, experienced profound incongruities in his thoughts and consequent actions. While no apologist for Southern racism (Grimwood, 1987), thinking himself particularly progressive in virulently bigoted times, he still considered himself, and the White race, as superior to African Americans and other non-Whites (Crews, 1992; Kinney, 1993/1994; McMillen & Polk, 1992; Sundquist, 1983). This same self-confusion persists to the present day and serves to inform White concepts of Southern identity, with perhaps no other single factor weighing as critically upon the amelioration of social interactions that are influenced by race and racial intolerance. If the South

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is truly experiencing a "renaissance," as some scholars such as King (1980) have posited, dealing with race is key to making sure that the renaissance is constructive and progressive, and, in any case, is indispensable for understanding the region, and Faulkner was among the first modern, Southern authors of fiction to cast a resplendent light on the subject. Possibly, Bloom (2002) comes nearest to comprehending Faulkner's literary effulgence when he writes that

> Faulkner's genius is exemplified by his fecundity in creating persuasive if frequently dreadful men and women. We have had no American Dickens: an amalgam of Mark Twain, Henry James, and William Faulkner—sublimely absurd conglomerate—would come closest. p. 564

Yet, those "dreadful men and women" are part and parcel of the historical and contemporary Souths, making Faulkner's raw, often imperfect, delineations of their complex characters educative for the scholar even now.

Flannery O'Connor and Southern Ambivalence

Thought by many to be a paragon of the Southern critical fiction writer (Baumgaertner, 1988; Brinkmeyer, 1989; Martin, 1968), others have noted the profound ambivalences and incongruities of O'Connor's opinions and themes (Cash, 2002; Friedman & Clark, 1985; Gooch, 2009). Notwithstanding criticisms of her personal and social views (Bacon, 1993; Gooch, 2009), and undeniably hypocritical stances with regard to race relations and sexual politics (Desmond, 1987; Giannone, 2000; Gooch, 2009), equally undeniable is her continued influence on perceptions of the South from the perspective of the reader of Southern fiction (Gordon, 2000; Westling, 1985). Though lauded most often for her short stories and non-fiction social commentary, perhaps her most illuminating works are her two novels, *Wise Blood* (1952) and *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960), each of which emphasizes the presumed Southern tendency to

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resort to extremes of violence in dealing with significant social issues, even spiritual matters

such as religion, which inarguably served as the predominant theme in O'Connor's work.

Possibly the most pronounced failing of O'Connor's writing from a socially meliorative aspect is

that her fiction ignored the turmoil of her times, most noticeably the Civil Rights era, while

vehemently challenging Southern religious establishments. For O'Connor, Christianity was a

matter to be approached on individualistic terms rather than kowtowing to the dogma of

established religions (Friedman & Clark, 1985). Consistent with her penchant for paradoxical

and inconsistent opinions, she considered herself a devout Catholic all of her life. Although her

life was ended prematurely by terminal illness[13] that also extinguished her burgeoning talent,

O'Connor remains influential having provided intellectual fuel for many Southerners to

reconsider their opinions and attitudes, and any examination of the Southern identity must come

to terms with her influence.

A "Purple" Perception of Southern Place

In her award-winning and influential novel about the exigencies of Southern life for a

disempowered yet eminently powerful African-American woman in the early twentieth century,

Alice Walker (1982) makes her seminal contribution (Dieke, 1999) to what has burgeoned as a

fruitful genre, the literature of traditionally marginalized Southern voices from the "Womanist"

perspective (Walker, 1983). Her masterly work, *The Color Purple*, fictionally examines the

plight of a woman of color named Celie in the post-Civil War South and poignantly enumerates

the trials, tribulations, and vicissitudes for a Black woman who lacks money, power, influence,

affection, and even the necessary physical attributes that might offer some sense of self-concept

(Smith, September 1982). The novel explores its protagonist's struggles to achieve a modicum of

self-respect, security, and autonomy in a culture that provides no respite or refuge, dominated by

White society and male hegemony from both races, and constraining the most basic functions of human experience, such as sexual expression (Kaplan, 1996; Walker, 1983). Walker (1997) would later autobiographically confirm much of what the fictitious Celie experienced as being formative in her own life, and also serve to affirm the value of the autobiographical research methodology for contributing substantively to understanding of curriculum studies. Not without controversy or criticism, this already canonical work of fiction occupies a prominent place in the pantheon of the literature of the curriculum of Southern place if only because it illustrates the importance of the voices that were lost over time that could have been illuminating. Authors such as Walker represent the best hope to recover some of these lost perspectives and better inform about what really constitutes the Southern curriculum of place.

In a similar, contemporary, and non-fiction account of Southern place, hooks (2009) reviews her own experience of place as an African-American woman, including its Southern element, in *Belonging: A Culture of Place*, a collection of essays in which she examines what she calls her "repetitive circular journey," describing it as "one wherein I move around and around, from place to place, then end at the location I started from—my old Kentucky home" (p. 3). Expanding on her concepts of "sociospatial segregation" and the "imperialist White supremacist capitalist patriarchy," hooks' counternarrative discusses her experiences as an African-American woman and the plight of generations of African Americans who have subsisted in a Black rural America that is rife with ambivalence as "southern born blacks [who] long to return to the rich sub-cultures of our upbringing yet fear returning to old style racism" (p. 60) contend with their mixed feelings about home, another example of the quandary faced by those who must exist in in-between spaces in order to persist in marginalized circumstances while trying desperately to have an authentic life, a situation that I term a parallel alternative identity. Ranging from racism

to politics and myriad other aspects of rural life, hooks' treatment of her own Southern roots

offers what she calls a "real knowing" (p. 90) of Southern rural life, taking a stance that allows

for a scholarly assessment of the similarities and disparities of the region known as the South. As

a chronicle of the intimacies of Southern customs and mores, *Belonging* stands favorably

alongside the scholarship of Cash and Cobb, perhaps even exceeding them in stark honesty.

Voices from Southern Swamps, Forests, & Hollows

Since he spearheaded the Reconceptualization of curriculum studies proclaimed by

MacDonald (1975), Pinar (1975) has propounded the value of personal perspective as expressed

through autobiography as critical for the advancement and refinement of the curriculum field, a

position not universally accepted without qualifications (Gilmore, 2001) but finding the support

of many other scholars (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Doll & Gough, 2002; Florio-Ruane, 2001;

Graham, 1991; Grumet, 1980; He, 2003; Miller, 2005) and affirmed by historical antecedents

(Gandhi, 1957/1993; Horton, Kohl, & Kohl, 1990; Malcolm X, 1966; Mandela, 1994). Having

seized upon this realization of the potential for expanding curricular horizons, many

contemporary scholars have produced works of profound influence upon education that focus on

the intensely personal to enlighten the curriculum studies field (Casemore, 2008; Falk, 2004;

Grumet, 1992; Helfenbein, 2004; Whitlock, 2007). Embracing this approach for the

kaleidoscopically diverse field of curriculum studies has allowed for a variety of curricula as

opposed to any one overarching curricular paradigm (Pinar et al., 1995), and has contributed to

the development of a rich multiplicity of curricular and pedagogical perspectives in a field,

American education, that has traditionally been directed by the hegemonic forces of technicist,

conservative perspectives (Marshall et al., 2007; Pinar, 2006; Schiro, 2008; Tyler, 1949), a

propitious change that Pinar (2006) sees as redirecting curriculum from a bureaucratic to an

intellectual exercise, which many would assert should always have been the case. Still, the traditional technicist approach to curriculum that was the paradigm of the curriculum development era is far from displaced (Schubert, 2010), remaining the primary focus of many curriculum scholars and pedagogues, notwithstanding the Reconceptualization.

This Corner of Canaan **and the curriculum of Southern place.** In one of the more influential contemporary works that has directly examined the socially educative process of Southern life through personal experience, Whitlock (2007) emphasizes the struggles and hardships that any person attempting to pursue an "alternative lifestyle" must contend with. In her refulgent personal narrative inspired by her dissertation thesis, Whitlock covers a broad spectrum of aspects of Southern life that bear upon maturation and enculturation previously delineated, a constellation of aspects that have been called Southern curriculum studies (Pinar, 2007) and has been pursued by a number of modern curriculum scholars (Casemore, 2008; Edgerton, 1991; Haynes, 2003).

In her acknowledgements, Whitlock (2007) opines that "memory is made when the heart takes a picture" (p. xxi), a fitting preface to a profoundly moving narrative about her experience as a White, liberal, working-class, fundamentalist Christian, teacher-educator, lesbian reared in an evangelical, fiercely conservative, homophobic South. Immediately confirming that there is no one "Southern sensibility" (p. 1), just as there is no single Southern dialect, she nevertheless contends that "Southern love of place, love of Southern place, cannot remain unconfronted." She acknowledges from the outset that her attempt to understand this love of Southern environs is what actuates her study. She refuses to abandon the culture that produced her, despite its historic limitations and social transgressions, its manifest deficiencies and egregious depredations against the oppressed, yet she maintains a self-consciously critical perspective throughout, recognizing

that her world is what it is, and that lamenting the past will produce no substantive change. In the

end, she avers that she will no longer fight for the Lost Cause but will ardently search for "causes

worth fighting for" (p. 2). In her acceptance of the concept of "curriculum of place" she

envisions a "circle/cycle of self, place, society, and culture." Drawing from Pinar et al.'s (1995)

conceptualization of the complicated conversation (p. 848), Whitlock (2007) adduces her

offering to her readers:

> Moonlight and magnolias, the well-worn euphemism for Southern facades of civility and
>
> gentility, obscure the landscape of Southern place in clouds of myth and nostalgia. One
>
> cannot unpack and classify that which is shadowed by the past. Place unclouded is central
>
> to the study, as it interplays with social and cultural politics to inform and be informed by
>
> curriculum.… I offer several points at which to join in the conversation: place, self, self
>
> and other, culture, and society. p. 2

On this substrate, Whitlock scrutinizes her life, her perspectives, her beliefs, her memories, and

her "place."

In structuring her study of "Southern curriculum of place" (p. 6), Whitlock (2007) wishes

to examine "anomalous forms of Southernness" in order to show that all forms of Southern

existence are not predicated on an identification that has served to protect and vaunt

homophobia, racism, misogyny, and a host of other examples of bigotry and intolerance. She

also points up the largely mythical perception of the South as a place of pastoral scenes, close

interaction with the earth, small-town existence, and simplicity and spirituality. Her work

avowedly intends to demonstrate that there is an extraordinarily complex variety to Southernness

that cannot be constrained by misconceptions and popular portrayals. Through examination of

her own experiences she does her part to further "complicate" the conversation that examines a

curriculum of place. By training the light of self-reflection on her own experience, Whitlock embarks on a journey of "self-in-place-in-past" (p. 9) that supplants the self-perpetuating conceptions of Southernness that limits itself to dominant race, class, and gender issues. As with any complex phenomenon, she proposes to elaborate on a culture that transcends what is commonly believed and actually encompasses myriad aspects, good and bad, that both commend and discommend themselves to the curious scholar and idle examiner alike. Almost portentously she admonishes the reader that "It is what white Southerners cling to that clings to us right back" (p. 12).

Proceeding largely from the social psychoanalytical approach proposed by Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) that requires a self-critical stance for examining experience, context, and circumstances based on the Frankfurt School and its adherents, Whitlock (2007) formalizes her study as an inquiry into contemporary Southern reconstruction—emphasizing the small "r"— which she sees as a "curricular reconstruction of cultural renewal and social consciousness within Southern place(s)" (p. 17). As she describes it, this curricular reconstruction "conjoins social psychoanalytically informed curricular processes" specified for the particularities of Southern lives. Positing a lack on the part of Southerners of the "psychology of social commitment" (Pinar, 1981, p. 180), she affirms that Southern lived experiences, if they are to include Pinar's take, must subsume "narratives of place" and a "renegotiation of past-in-place" (Whitlock, 2007, p. 17). Just as Cash (1941) attempted to understand the "mind of the South" and Roberts (2002) the "South of mind" (p. 371), Whitlock aspires to unpack the secrets and latent ruminations of her own Southern psyche.

After underscoring the politics of place that in the Southern context McPherson (2003) describes as the tendency to "preserve the south [sic]" (p. 9), Whitlock wants to contribute to the

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curricular conversation by bearing witness to the "uncomfortable knowledges" (p. 18) that link the social concerns of curriculum theory and the "particularities of Southern ways." Building on McPherson's ideas, Whitlock also identifies Boym's (2001) description of nostalgia as "hypochondria of the heart" (p. 3) because it venerates what is simultaneously lauded and vilified, the sense of past as somehow idyllic while acknowledging its defects. This creates a dual image that distorts, and Whitlock (2007) wonders "What might happen to the South when Southern images are forced into single focus?" (p. 23). She also enumerates Boym's (2001) concepts of the "phantom homeland" (p. xvi) that can cause one to confuse an idealized perception of the past with the reality, and his two types of nostalgia, *restorative* and *reflective*, the former tending to protect the sacred image and the latter forcing one into introspection for the purpose of challenging cherished ideals of individual pasts. In contrast to this approach, she suggests a "queered nostalgia" (p. 25) that confirms Probyn's (1996, p. 112) dictum that one "go back different" than one left, even if one only left emotionally or maturationally rather than physically.

Whitlock (2007) concedes that she hardly knows "what to think anymore" (p. 43) when she observes her world through her still Southern fundamentalist eyes. Despite her acceptance of herself as a lesbian woman in a perilous zone of regional homophobia ensconced in an almost equally pernicious national environment of homo-paranoia, her blue collar, fundamentalist Christian past pulls on her and her every opinion and impulse. Finding herself positioned within "the fissures of fundamentalism," she must employ a parallel alternative identity to successfully negotiate the landmines and vicissitudes of surviving in the ideologically harsh environment of the contemporary South. The concept of PAI recognizes that some people must maintain two functional identities in order to subsist in environments from which they cannot escape and that

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are uncongenial to their concept of honest living, one they present to observers and allows for harmonious living and another that honors the actual beliefs and emotions of the person. It appears that Whitlock posits a similar idea, yet, having accepted the inexorable and strenuous tug exerted by her past, Whitlock, conjecturing on the curricular aspects of the Southern curriculum of place and its potential for pedagogical and curricular reform, concurs with Britzman (1998, p. 49) who speculates, "What would curriculum be like if the curriculum began with the problem of living a life?" Coupled with this insight, Whitlock confirms Pinar's (2004, p. 188) belief in the "private meaning and public hope" of self-reflection as it relates to the complicated conversation. According to Pinar, part of the reason for the complicated aspects of curriculum is exactly because place is such an integral and inseparable part of it, thus verifying and underscoring the value of curriculum of place as assessed through personal experience.

Whitlock (2007) cites Schubert (1986) as postulating that people's lives are the curriculum of most import when he says that the "curriculum is the interpretation of lived experiences" (p. 33). Encapsulated in this statement is her belief that through biography and autobiography, one can arrive at the most promising potential new entrées into the curriculum studies field, a sentiment with which Pinar (1988) agrees, as do many others (Connelly, He, & Phillion, 2008; Edgerton, 1991; Florio-Ruane, 2001; Graham, 1991). The paradox of *This Corner of Canaan* (2007) is that, while it serves as an outstanding primer on using personal experience, biography, autobiography, and self-reflection to advance scholarship in the fields of education and curriculum studies, as well as being a useful psychoanalytic vehicle for examining the distinctive curriculum of Southern personhood, following its precepts means that it can only be a guide, eschewing dogma as antithetical to its mission. Whitlock is happy to point the way, but each person must be their own guide as they make the journey prescribed by the process of

the Reconceptualization and *currere* (Grumet, 1980; Kridel, 1999; Pinar, 1975, 2006) and autobiographical methodologies.

Casemore's autobiographical demand. On the cover of Casemore's (2008), *The Autobiographical Demand of Place*, a sprawling crepe myrtle—often emblematic of the "pastoral South"—dominates the foreground, framed by a residential neighborhood of brick and wood-frame dwellings that include green yards of grass and various trees, bushes, and assorted shrubbery. A slight haziness and gray sky implies early morning fog, and the lone vehicle visible on the streets is a parked Ford pickup truck, older, and appearing to be used predominantly for work, such as construction, and likely the family's primary mode of conveyance, given its indication of modest income. A more tranquil Southern tableau would be difficult to imagine, and yet, the thoughts between the covers of Casemore's insightful work shatter this preconception, perhaps the effect intended all along. Inarguably, a peaceful, serene morning in a residential locale could typify the image that many Southerners would like to convey, but the realities of the various Southern cultures are vastly different from those proposed in literature and various media.

This seminal work in the autobiographical examination of the curriculum of Southern place begins with an introduction by Judith Harris (2008) who tells the reader that "America needs a witness" (p. viii) and that "the recognizable definition of place is contingent on certain identifications we make with our cultural surroundings." Referring to Britzman's (1998) concept of "difficult knowledge," which specifies that teachers must challenge students—and themselves—intellectually in order to impart the tenets of social justice, Harris assures readers that Casemore has pursued difficult knowledge so that he can deconstruct assumptions about Southern culture and help the reader achieve a more informed perspective. She also recognizes

Pinar's influence on Casemore's scholarship, particularly the criticality of autobiographical writing and self-discovery that informs so much of modern curriculum studies. His effort, Harris declares, has allowed Casemore to "exercise his personal voice" (p. ix), one of the aims of the reconceptualized curriculum field (Grumet, 1980; Kridel, 1999; Pinar, 1981).

The opening paragraph of Casemore's (2005) introduction provides an informative aperçu for what the reader will discover as the author traverses the landscape of his life experience, as well as offering a definitive rationale of the reason for his scholarship and a potential credo for anyone seeking a better understanding of life through personal introspection:

> I want to understand the role of place in my experience. As a figure of autobiographical inquiry, place signifies the diverse and intersecting worlds in which I dwell, to which I contribute meaning, and from which I take the measure of my being…. Through place, I question the relationship between the object world and my internal landscape, the public sphere and the localities of my internal life. My experience of place thus bears the history of the way I have been called into various forms of culture and community and can reveal possibilities for my continual reengagement with a complex social world. p. 1

Acknowledging the ascendant significance of place for understanding Southern studies, curriculum, and regional cultures, Casemore announces his intention to "interrogate the meaning and function of this environment in our everyday lives" (p. 2). He identifies White patriarchal culture as central to the Southern conception of self and place as the paramount aspect of that self-identity. The inestimable value of place in autobiographical research is that it "complicates" autobiographies and unsettles presumptions about people's lives and themselves. He acknowledges Romine's (2002) observation that, in its most rigid rhetorical application, Southern culture demands that its acolytes banish controversial and potentially contentious

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subjects from the public sphere, thus predisposing Southerners to perpetuating their biases and misconceptions, and further assigns prominence to the Southern male writing tradition as the primary vehicle for pursuing this tack (Romine, 1999). Hedging not at all, Casemore (2005) notes that "to investigate 'place' in the South is to take up a discourse that has been used to obscure conditions of domination and oppression and to prevent political resistance and social change" (p. 2), concluding that it is an exceptionally productive avenue of research and scholarship. Ultimately, Casemore (2005) wishes to disrupt the misapprehension that Southern White males have an "autochthonous and harmonious relationship to Southern place" (p. 5) in the hope that he can contribute to the "progressive reconstruction of the American South," a desire articulated by others (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; Whitlock, 2007).

In pursuit of his conceptualization of place's significance in the curricular, social, and personal realms, Casemore (2005) asserts the importance of accepting that place is not merely geographical and regional but encompasses subjective meanings and social identities (p. 6) and he avers that one should understand place as ideological as well as physical, being created through mind and language and constituted through certain mores and values that may often be prejudicial and biased (p. 7). To profit from this knowledge of the complexity of place, especially a curriculum of Southern place, these ideas must first be "unsettled." Part of this process involves locating the 'lieux de mémoire'[14] or sites of memory described by Nora (1989) since memory and place are so inextricably entwined, particularly important given that "loss of lived memory to dictatorial history is felt in terms of place" (Casemore, 2008, p. 8). Additionally, he cites Mitchell's (2002) more expansive notion of place extracted from his psychoanalytic frame, especially the process of transference, which indicates how the unconscious aids in constructing understandings of place and placed-based communities (p. 11).

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The real significance for the examination of place is that it is created through human signification, an ineluctably transpersonal experience that propels individuality into the social realm, allowing—or requiring—people to assist with the construction of shared worlds. Tying this all to Kincheloe and Pinar's (1991) germinal volume, *Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis*, Casemore confirms the educational and political potential of place for positively altering the world by contributing to curriculum theory. This is illustrated by the South's profound conservatism and anti-intellectualism which he attributes to the "place-particular knowledge" (p. 12) generated from the platitudinous White male ideology that pervades Southern thinking. In support of this contention, he quotes the authors:

> the southern fury against social theoretical generalization that emerges from a radical particularity often encourages an idea-related xenophobia, a discomfort with the intellectual, an aversion to analysis, and a reluctance to embrace reform and social change. Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, p. 14

Extrapolating from their work, Casemore holds that a progressive social and educational program is needed to counteract these tendencies.

To actuate his project, Casemore (2005) invites the reader to utilize "auto/biographical demand" (p. 14), a process that not only necessitates a thorough, extensive scrutinizing of one's own life, but includes the need to obtain understanding of how the lives of others are intimately bound to one's own. In furtherance of this idea, he says that with "the provocation of the auto/biographical demand, a writer faces the confusion of self-narration sliding into an account of another and description of another disclosing aspects of the self" (p. 16). Important here is to accept that the writing must adapt to accommodate the shifting perspectives from the self to the Other. If one is diligent, various social perspectives will be discovered when one realizes the

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extent to which individual lives are bound to that of others. He also adduces the psychoanalytical concept of "working-through" proposed by Laplanche and Pontalis (1973) as having tremendous utility for uncovering repressed content so crucial for success, and to avoid the "grip of mechanisms of repetition" (p. 488) that can derail introspection.

Casemore's scholarship indicates a pronounced dependence on sense of place in the South for social identity, especially with regard to literature, criticism, and everyday discourse (p. 27), a finding that confirms Pinar's (2004) "intensified relation to place" (p. 95) that he holds exists in the American South. The fantasy of taking the South as a cultural entity that can be relied upon for stability and reassurance in the face of an intense sense of self-alienation assuages Southern angst and allows for effective interactions with daily life. He also cites Romine (1999) as having identified a tendency toward "deferred reflection" (p. 9) on the part of Southerners so that they can avoid their fear of what such self-scrutiny might reveal about themselves and their culture. For the intrepid Southerner who wishes to explore the mine fields of their own history and experience, he invokes Ladd's (2002) injunction to deconstruct the chimera of a "stable site of tradition and history" (p. 56) and accept the construction of a place that is more provisional and fleeting. And he enjoins people to embrace Lippard's (1997) idea of thinking of each view of place as a palimpsest capable of revealing multiple layers of meaning so that they can more fully appreciate the sociopolitical character of the places that impact lives. Critical to this endeavor from Casemore's (2008) viewpoint is to understand that "place constructs us as much as we construct it" (pp. 34-35) and that, whether real or imagined, place becomes a template for configuring lives. In the case of the curriculum of Southern place, Casemore is exceedingly concerned by how "the past inhabits the present, throwing its shadow over the acts we would deem egregious and wrong" (p. 39), and he is most particularly bothered

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by how the past continues to affect Southern race and gender relations to the detriment of an ameliorated society, lamenting specifically the "South's gendered pedagogy of whiteness and its racialized pedagogy of gender." Notwithstanding the extreme diversity that is identifiable in Southern culture regionally and on the level of smaller societal components, he agrees with O'Brien's (1979) identification of an allegiance to "an undifferentiated cultural identity" (p. 5) that was exacerbated by secession and continues to impinge upon Southern social functioning, disallowing a realistic appraisal of social interactions and permitting the continuance of inequitable social arrangements. As proof of his contention, Casemore holds Yaeger's (2000) position that the "virtues of rootedness" (p. 14) act against the pursuit of necessary progressive change in the South that can only be gained by challenging the region's reactionary gender and race issues by dispensing with the traditional, romantic Southern conception of the significance of place. Through his examination of Southern White male writers, Casemore (2005) intends to demonstrate that the region's literature and criticism have served as a platform for development of a "narrative of domination" (p. 49) meant to compensate for the psychological insufficiencies that Southern White men experience in the aftermath of Civil War and Reconstruction. Their "idolatry of the landscape" (Mitchell, 2002, p. 264) allows for a "subliminal cultural rhetoric" (Casemore, 2008, p. 49) undergirded by their sense of place, making place not just physical but a "psychic terrain." All of this supports Silverman's (1992) concept of the dominant fiction of Southern commitment to place as the master narrative that actuates continued belief in societally deleterious acts and beliefs.

Integral to Casemore's (2008) exposition of what he considers the hegemony of White male dominance in the South—and important to his own self-exploration regarding the significance of place—is his examination of White male Southern literature, an aspect that he

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pursues predominantly through the conduit of Donald Davidson and the ideologically illiberal

Nashville Agrarians who promoted the historically flawed mythos of the Old South during the

mid-twentieth century. Works by Davidson (1938, 1957) were touted by his followers as

apologia for the continued social and economic inequalities that afflicted Southern Blacks,

machinations that Davidson himself committed great literary efforts toward affirming. While

Davidson and his proselytes were convinced of the rectitude and propriety of their

ethnocentrism, Casemore produces a variety of works that dispel the persistent myth of Southern

chivalry and probity as it is based on traditional social arrangements. Among these are McKnight

(1998) and Kenan (1992), writers that he holds will "unmoor us from the South's binding 'sense

of place' to compel our reconceptualization of the 'ground' on which Southern place rests"

(Casemore, 2008, p. 76), an indispensable prerequisite for dealing with the region's inglorious

history of racial, sexual, and gendered antagonism.

In analyzing Casemore's (2008) important work, which is bound to prove influential and

productive for curriculum studies scholars generally, and even more so for those interested in

examining the curriculum of Southern place, perhaps the most elucidative commentary comes

from Casemore himself. Describing the dimensions of Southern place, he tells the reader that it

> is neither unified nor bound. Its meaning is irreducible to geography, history, literature,
> or subjectivity. It is a complex interweaving of these forces and the stories these forces
> exclude. Southern place informs, even binds, national politics [Pinar, 2004], speaks the
> region's history of racial violence, lives on in quotidian speech and memory, and
> continually transforms despite our efforts to fix and define it. p. 101

Affirming the prominence of the South and Southern ideological beliefs on national politics,

Black and Black (1992) avouch that, in many ways, the South offers a glimpse into what is

known as America, writing that now "one looks at the South and sees America. There is abundant reason to pay close attention to future political developments in the South, for it now shapes the trends and sets the pace of national political outcomes and processes" (p. 366). Having sounded the tocsin that should alert people to the dangers associated with an ascendant South and its fundamentalist and retrogressive, anti-intellectual thinking, these authors further note that the South, with its contingent of distinctive histories, cultures, and problems, and given its monumental political influence since the 1960s, represents the problems that dog the country as a whole. Although the nascent political shift in American politics that may be discerned in the election, and subsequent re-election, of an African-American president may stand in opposition to their possibly alarmist position, glad-handing and back-slapping may be dangerously premature. As many reactionary, conservative movements such as the various home-grown militia have made palpably and distressingly evident, there is a vibrant and worrisome undercurrent of myopic thinking that periodically produces opposition, and sporadic outright violence, toward progressive initiatives in the United States, and taking them lightly would suggest a complacency that can be ill-afforded.

In one of his many enlightening autobiographical interludes that interleave the chapters of *The Autobiographical Demand of Place*, Casemore explains how his self-exploration of the curriculum of Southern place informs his life and pedagogical praxis, writing that he analyzes contemporary Southern literature with a view toward ensuring social justice, and that he interrogates place in order to broaden his conception of home so that he can more completely understand the myriad complex social terrains that his students traverse (pp. 71-72). Proclaiming that he teaches with the express intention of "unsettling experiences we take for granted" (p. 72), he warns that the persistence of Southerners in insisting on a universal sense of place only works

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to obscure the circumstances of their lives. He admits that his research has allowed him to appreciate the desire for "secure place" (p. 73) and the need to nourish it, but he stipulates that surrendering this desire for mastery can allow for new configurations and examinations of subjectivity, which can only result in more equitable social arrangements and justice.

Curriculum of Southern Place and Curriculum Studies

As nature abhors a vacuum, the field of curriculum studies eschews rigidity, narrow conceptions of research methodology, and prescribed foci for it scholarship (Pinar, 1975). Since the Reconceptualization of the 1970's, methodological diversity with a pronounced emphasis on qualitative approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Glense, 2006; Smith, 1999) has been the predominant idea and has, indisputably, resulted in a curriculum scholarship that is richer and more productive than at any time in its history. This diversity of scholarly methods and philosophies has not only permitted an efflorescence that may provide the curriculum studies field with the theoretical infusion of new ideas that will keep it vibrant as a field of inquiry (Eisner, 1991; He, 2010), but has helped to make space for a variety of previously marginalized voices whose contributions were historically ignored, derided, or simply died aborning (Bergson, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Smith, 1999). With the advent of the Reconceptualization and its myriad perspectives, these formerly unheard stories are now assuming levels of prominence and are themselves reinvigorating the curriculum discipline. Although not all scholars of the curriculum field are convinced of the inherent utility of this new diversity and favor a return to strict disciplinarity on many levels (Wraga, 1999), this is unlikely to occur on a wholesale scale. The plethora of approaches to curriculum scholarship now evident and attested in the literature confirms for many that the Reconceptualization and its infusion of new ideas was long overdue (Eisner, 1991; Grumet, 1980; Pinar et al, 1995; Smith, 1994).

Of the many possible aspects of curriculum inquiry ushered in by the revised view of the curriculum field, one of the most promising in respect of its potential for illuminating the uniquely personal as it bears on social interactions and their importance for ensuring enhanced processes of social justice (Ayers, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Rawls, 1971), is an appreciation for how place factors into the curriculum of the personal, or how location and its attendant experiences contribute to people's interactions with their world (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991). People are, in the greater sense, where they come from, making a thorough understanding of how place actuates and influences their understandings and attitudes critical to fully knowing their world and how they interact with others, for good or ill, and probably never more important than when they seek equity for dispossessed and disenfranchised segments of society (Hood, 2001; Ng-A-Fook, 2007; Swallow, 2005).

In the examination of curriculum of place, few regions are as compelling with regard to their attachment to geography as is the American South. Long avowing an inordinate commitment to what it means to be a Southerner and all that entails, people of the Southern United States are arguably more invested in their geographical identity than any other region in the U.S. (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991), a fact that, while comforting for many Southerners themselves and giving rise to an embedded mythos of what being "Southern" means (Cash, 1941; Cobb, 2005), has had immoderately negative results in many cases, leading some historians and other commentators to condemn the South as a place not to be (Zinn, 1962/2002). Such a broad indictment taken out of context is undeserved—for most places, certainly—but nevertheless colors the perspective of many when pondering the South. Yet, given the resurgence of Southern influence on national affairs, coming to terms with Dixie is clearly not an option for society, and certainly is of significant importance for those who would continue to invigorate the

field of curriculum studies. By reviewing the extant works on Southern culture, through critical examinations of non-fiction and fictional works that purport to describe the South, one can gain some purchase that will permit systematic, qualitative studies of the American South that can further elucidate the mysteries and enigmas that continue to intrigue. Understanding the mythos and realities of Southern culture can offer the necessary base of knowledge that can be used to effect genuine remediation of social inequities and allow for a renewed region where all Southerners, indeed, all Americans, can take justifiable pride in Southern heritage while never neglecting or forgetting the suffering and iniquities that are part of Southern history.

Curriculum of Hypermasculine Place and Police

Even a cursory review of the literature on masculinity and maleness reveals that men are made, not born, at least psychologically (Adams, & Savran, 2002; Chong, 2005) and socially (Gardiner, 2002; Jackson, 1990), not a surprising conclusion to anyone familiar with work on the social construction of gender (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Butler, 1990; Diamond & Butterworth, 2008; Mumby, 1998; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Furthermore, the place—physical, social, cultural, psychological—where they are born and reared is crucial to understanding behavior, cognitions, and attitudes displayed by them (Fisher & Smith, 2012; Hough, 1992) as well as appreciating their identity constructs. At birth, men are possessed of a suite of physical attributes, including a penis, testicles, and a specific chromosomal configuration, and later in their development, particularly during adolescence and the advent of sexual maturity, they experience hormonal elaborations that will further refine their genetic complement of maleness. Those attributes of manhood, however, that most preoccupy people in academia and science, those proclivities that fascinate and exasperate, those features of being a "man" that are most often deemed problematic or admirable, are predominantly the outcome of socialization processes,

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again, processes not limited to men or even enlightening given the history of research in this area (Johnson, 1997); nonetheless, many people persist in the putative and thoroughly mistaken belief that "boys will be boys" without really comprehending the implications of the extant literature on the socialization of men (Cahill, 1986).

As I pursue this examination of the writings that pertain to masculinity and the effects of space, literal and conceptual, on the expression of masculinity, the reader will see the palpable results of the social concept of manhood, and its dangers and possibilities for amelioration of social phenomena that perpetuate the exclusion of whole sectors of society. Patriarchy is pernicious, and, paradoxically, in the hands of those who have exploited it for millennia for little more than the aggrandizement of ego (Connell, 1987; Fenstermaker, & West, 2002; Søndergaard, 2005), a reality that continues to have profound implications for individuals and whole societies. Although, failure to acknowledge the hegemony of the human ego foredooms one to intellectual and existential mediocrity, so, ego must be accounted for scholastically if not validated socially. On this premise, "humanizing" masculinity, thus mediating it in light of the traditional constraints of a male-dominated world, and exposing men to the precepts of "caring" (Noddings, 1984), an idea that finds significant support (hooks, 2004; Lee & Owens, 2002; Payne, 1995; Pinar, 2001) especially for its mitigating effects on patriarchal influences affecting the lives of the Other, offers promising avenues for substantive social change (Deustch, 2007), but requires more than facile adoption of the term. According to Noddings (1984/2003)

> in a world shaken by the violence of nations and groups whose acts are 'justified' by the
>
> principles they espouse, an ethic of care is even more important and ultimately
>
> reasonable. Our efforts should be directed to transforming the conditions that make
>
> caring difficult or impossible. This means working to eliminate poverty and exploitation,

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protecting the earth as the home of all living things, and rejecting violence as a means of

defense except under conditions of direct attack and then only to prevent immediate

harm. p. xiv

Thinking like Noddings' is prerequisite to correcting the disharmonies and disjunctions in social

worlds, but even more important, may be critical to survival, and as masculinity has been the

edifice upon which the disruptions and problems of the world are founded, its serious scholarly

examination must also be one of the crucial bases from which people seek to renovate

dysfunctional societies.

Reading Masculinity

Writings on the subject of masculinity are voluminous, so copious, in fact, that entire

book-length bibliographies have been compiled to comprehend them (Flood, 1995; Janssen,

2008). Given the overwhelming predominance of male publishers (Franklin, 2011), as in the

majority of other fields, this is likely no surprise. And within the prodigious output of authors on

the subject, specialization has been nuanced and equally productive (Berger, Wallis, & Watson,

1995), a reality consistent with Connell's (1995) conception of "multiple masculinities" and the

variety of masculine dimensions that have titillated the interests of researchers; consequently, for

the sake of brevity, the following section will take a varied but limited sampling of the

masculinist literary fare. In doing so, the intention is to offer a concise overview of what has

constituted writings on the subject of masculinity to this point, and identify some areas in need of

further, or initial, investigation.

Conceptualizing Masculinity

In her framing of masculinity as occurring on multiple conceptual planes, Connell (1995)

recognized that attributes of masculinity intersect with other areas of sociological interest,

including culture, time, sexual orientation, gender conception, history, race, age, and ability, just to name a small set. To operationalize her model, she devised four classifications: hegemony, subordination, complicity, and marginalization (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Other writers have concentrated on various aspects of masculinity that seek to elucidate the understanding of what motivates men and how contemporary masculinity can be reconciled felicitously with a globalizing and pluralistic planet (Connell, 1998), including topics that address "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell, 2002; Galdas & Cheater, 2010; Wetherell & Edley, 1999), or the acceptance of patriarchy as legitimate; "subordinate masculinity" (Connell, 1995; Goff, Allison, Di Leone, & Kahn, 2011; Groes-Green, 2009) in which heteronormativity trumps, and subordinates, homosexuality; "complicit masculinity" (Connell, 1995), occurring when men rationally reject hegemonic masculinity but fail to act for change; and "marginalized masculinity" (Cheng, 1999; Jenkins & Hine, 2001) suffered by men who subscribe to hegemonic masculinity but fail to benefit from its potential because of secondary factors to maleness such as race. bell hooks (1995), along with other feminist and critical authors (Gilligan, 1982; May & Strikwerda, 1992), examines masculinity as it relates to female oppression, with hooks (2004b) further addressing how traditional discourses of White supremacy have encouraged African-American men to attempt to subjugate Black women. Others examine masculinity as it relates to culture (Corbett, 2011; Kraska, 2001), male attributes (Connell, 2005), biology, Western masculinity (Taylor, 2002), physical and psychological development (Kilmartin, 2005; Levant & Pollack, 1995), and the so-called "crisis of masculinity" which proffers the attenuated idea that men are in crisis because of feminist activism, or, more charitably, due to the epochal structural changes in society itself (Allen, 2002; Heartfield, 2002; Horrocks & Campling, 1994; Payne, 1995; Walsh, 2010). Some theorists and researchers concentrate on pressures associated with

maleness (Arrindell, 2005), while others seek answers to inform aspects of risk-taking behavior (Wagner, 2001) or men's health issues (Broom & Tovey, 2009; Williamson, 1995). Some are interested in how the media affects masculine behaviors (Berkowitz, 1984; Darnell & Wilson, 2006; Potter, 1999) and others how substance use and abuse are operative in men's lives (Grant, 2012; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Traditional masculinity is one area of focus (Kimmel, 1996; Mansfield, 2006; Stearns, 1990) as well as how violence factors into men's self-concept and concomitant behaviors (Kaufman, 2001; Kimmel & Messner, 2012) and the effect of masculine self-conceptualization and ego syntonic behaviors contribute to crime rates (Stephenson, 1995). Also, power—social, political, and physical—takes a central place in studies of masculinity (Connell, 1987; Mumby, 1998; Søndergaard, 2005) since it has been power, manifested physically, socially, and emotionally that has allowed for men's domination for eons (Edley & Wetherell, 1995).

Having considered the variety of masculine aspects that are available for study, definitional confusion and debate is probable, with some commentators refuting the existence of the construct of masculinity altogether (MacInnes, 1998; Stoltenberg, 1993). Notwithstanding these disputes over the existence or non-existence of masculinity as a definable concept, the arguments themselves serve to attest to its reality, at least to the extent that it is worth debating; moreover, the consequences of masculine behaviors and ideology are real enough (Adams & Govender, 2008; Frosh, 1992; Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002; Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002; Seidler, 1994), so squandering inordinate amounts of time on definitional wrangling is contraindicated from a research perspective, especially when real lives are affected by the behaviors of hypermasculinity. Consequently, for the sake of study, here I shall use an operating definition of masculinity and maleness, concepts that I shall conflate into "masculinity."

So what is masculinity? Saltzman Chafetz (1974, cited in Levine, 1998, p. 13) enumerates seven traits of traditional Western masculinity, including, *physical*—virile, athletic, strong, brave and unconcerned about appearance and aging; *functional*—provider, caretaker; *sexual*—sexually aggressive and promiscuous, experienced; *emotional*—unemotional, stoic; *intellectual*—logical, rational, objective, practical; and *interpersonal approach*—leadership ability, dominant, disciplinarian, independent, individualistic. Additional traits identified include being ambitious, uninhibited, success-oriented, competitive, proud, egotistical, moral, trustworthy, decisive, and adventurous. David and Brannon (1974, cited in Levine, 1998) add four rules for firmly establishing masculinity in Western culture:

1. *No Sissy Stuff*: anything that even remotely hints of femininity is prohibited. A real man must avoid any behavior or characteristic associated with women;

2. *Be a Big Wheel*: masculinity is measured by success, power, and the admiration of others. One must possess wealth, fame, and status to be considered manly;

3. *Be a Sturdy Oak*: manliness requires rationality, toughness, and self-reliance. A man must remain calm in any situation, show no emotion, and admit no weakness;

4. *Give 'em Hell*: men must exude an aura of daring and aggression, and must be willing to take risks, to "go for it" even when reason and fear suggest otherwise. p. 145

Others have identified similar trait constellations (Connell, 1987; Jackson, 1990; Levant & Pollack, 1995). Taking a provocative approach, Seidler (1994) examines masculinity from a critical perspective that examines male behaviors as an artifact of the Enlightenment confirmation of power and male privilege, incorporating a Marxist perspective for good measure, but positing his thoughts from a wide sociological perspective. Notwithstanding the remarkable diversity related to scholarship on masculinity studies, for purposes of this study, the operative

definition of masculinity will be described as possessing characteristics, attributes, or qualities

of, or demonstrating behaviors ascribable to, that deemed typical of a man (Reeser, 2010). Doing

so requires casting a broad net to sample the various conceptualizations of masculine behaviors,

yet ultimately returns to some precise commonalities.

Masculinity and Curriculum Studies

The reconceptualization of curriculum in the 1970s, although it did not supplant

curriculum development as the chief curricular focus, did launch an era of expanded views of

curriculum with many previously marginalized or completely unheard voices speaking on issues

of education and schooling (Apple, 2010; Gallegos, 2010; Pinar & Grumet, 1974; Popkewitz,

2009) and permitted virtually any valid research or philosophical focus to assume status as a

legitimate topic of scholarly review (Au, 2011; Clandinin, 2010; Pinar, 1981); in fact, one of the

signal advantages of the field of curriculum studies that emerged from the Reconceptualization is

its inclusivity and its belief that research foci are inherently philosophical and praxis-oriented

(He, 2010; Schubert, 2010), an aspect valued not least for its emancipatory potential, an attribute

admired by all curriculum studies practitioners (Kemmis, 1995) since it challenges the will of the

powerful (Schubert, 2010).

Despite the laudable and productive inclusivity of curriculum studies which has allowed

for multiplicitous areas of study, masculinity as a discrete subject of inquiry has been largely

ignored. Various theories and theorists have delved into studies of sub-aspects of masculinity—

male privilege, psychoanalytic facets, caring, its relation to feminist ideas, homophobia,

violence, education, race (Atwell-Vassey, 1998; Bliss, 1995; Ferguson, 2001; Gilligan, 1982;

Hill Collins, 2000; McLaren, 1992; Noddings, 1984; Pinar, 1981b)—yet, little in curriculum

studies scholarship has been devoted exclusively to masculinity as the central focus of analysis, a

lacuna that begs to be filled with thoughtful, qualitatively derived scholarship. Pinar (1994)

touches on this in his insightful volume, *Autobiography, Politics, and Sexuality*:

> …men have no theoretical apparatus, no parallel to feminism, to help them to understand
>
> what has happened and what is happening to them.… Men experience the changed status
>
> of women, the changed nature of personality and physical requirements, and they have no
>
> male-gender specific theory to permit them to understand, accept, and legitimate these
>
> developments. p. 187

Most studies that encompass some dimension of masculinity direct their attention to the

historically oppressive nature of maleness (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986;

Butler, 1990; Grumet, 1988; hooks, 2004; Trinh, 1989), or, contemporarily, toward identifying

and explaining the presence or absence of the supposed "crisis" in masculinity (Payne, 1995) that

stipulates that men are lost concerning how to interact with a world suddenly preoccupied with

feminism and other social foci that reputedly have displaced them in the ordo cognoscenti, or

"knowing order." What is lacking in curriculum studies with regard to masculinity as a research

focus are definitive examinations of the masculine cognitions, conceptualizations, and behaviors

that are not freighted with explicit or implicit negativity. The results of such studies will

doubtless provide fuel for further research that may impart useful new data to all areas of the

curriculum studies corpus.

Reading Masculine Place Geographically and Psychologically

The centrality of place in understanding human behavior and its manifestations in culture

and interactions is vital (Fisher & Smith, 2012; Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991). Without fully

appreciating the sense of place that undergirds human expression, one can never really know

anyone as individual sense of "place" in the world determines the values, beliefs, norms, and

myths that actuate humanity (Deamer, 1990; Malpas, 1999), and can be decisive in the direction

that people ultimately take in life (Tuan & Tuan, 2001). (Dis)placement, a term that I use to

encompass not only physical dislocation but the sense of placelessness and animosity to origins

that induces a sense of pervasive anxiety and instability (Entrikin, 1991; Schroeder, 2007), can

lead to adverse life chances and outcomes, as well as threats to health such as substance abuse,

depression, and suicide (Hammond, 2004; Kobak, 2012). Place is a part of individuals that

cannot be escaped or ignored (Begnal, 2002; Fisher & Smith, 2012b), regardless of the attitude

that one takes or where one travels, and must be understood objectively and subjectively in order

to conceptualize its external and internal realities, a dimension possibly understood best from in-

between spaces (Entrikin, 1991). Aesthetics may be part of understanding of place, but are never

determinative of the sense that people have of it (Hayden, 1997; Simpson, 2002). It is memories

and affiliations, strong, tenuous, or even non-existent that marks place in individual psyches,

creating the possibility that the urban dweller can feel as strong (or even stronger) since of

nostalgia and affection for place as the inhabitant of bucolic splendor. Place impacts upon

religious and spiritual understanding, a dimension of psychological place that strengthens

devotion to place and can excite angst, sadness, and violence when the spiritual sense of place is

perceived to be under threat (de Souza & Rymarz, 2007; Geertz, 2004). To understand place, one

must approach it holistically since the concept cannot be reduced to an analytical process, despite

attempts to do so (Gustafson, 2001). And anything that threatens to disrupt sense of place in the

world causes anger, defensiveness, alienation, and despair (Evans, 2005; Meyrowitz, 1986),

especially when it is invaded by others, colonized, or expropriated for purposes that are

disrespectful of the understanding of Other cultures (Gumpert & Drucker, 2012; Kincaid, 2000).

Assuredly, place simultaneously reveals and obscures, making examination of place essential to

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understanding (McDowell, 1999) and the involvement of educational and pedagogical investment imperative (Gruenewald, 2003; James, 1993) for enlarging that understanding.

Generally, human masculinity can be understood as consistent across geographic space in its general outline. The same basic construction of traits and behaviors that motivate men in one locale operates in others (Allen, 2002; Karras, 2002; West, 1994) with only the details of specific social and cultural male constructs varying on a continuum of elemental attributes (Reeser, 2010), virtually always working to establish masculine identity as associated with power, status, hegemony, and domination of others, especially Others, an aspect of masculinity confirmed by case studies (Jackson, 1990). Although the details of masculine expression can vary starkly (Holter, 2006; Kirshner, 1977), the basic theme holds regardless of location or culture. Wrangham and Peterson (1996), along with other anthropologists and many social science researchers (Anderson, 2003; Baron & Bryne, 1977; Savage-Rumbaugh, Shanker, & Taylor, 2001), locate this consistency of male behavior in proto-human forbears, with variations on a theme becoming prevalent through human history and development. As an example, the Sambia tribe of Papua, New Guinea (Herdt, 2006), proud of their warrior heritage and martial prowess, initiate their boys into manhood through an elaborate process that includes pre-adolescent boys performing fellatio to climax on their adult mentors. The boys then swallow the ejaculate to imbibe the essence of manhood. While this decidedly homoerotic act might contribute to viewing the Sambia men as somehow more in tune with their feminine natures than most Western masculine subcultures, this would be a misconception, as it must be understood that the homoeroticism involved is just one phase of an extensive initiation process that is largely centered on violence directed toward the novice boys and is ultimately intended to exorcise them of feminine characteristics derived from too close an association with their mothers and other

female associates. The point is still to make them men who run the show. A more familiar example is the homoerotic behavior of the men of ancient Greece, who often extolled the superiority of male-male relationships rather than the prurient acts of simple sexuality (Crompton, 2003). Moreover, these inarguably homosexual unions were exceedingly circumscribed in their construction and masculinity was still based pronouncedly on the martial culture (Burg & Ravetz, 2001; Fickey & Grimm, 2002). In addition, a well-confirmed aspect of ancient Greek homoeroticism was to affirm the superordinate position of men with respect to women, considered little more than biological matrices for producing the man's offspring as well as keepers of the home (Patterson, 1991; Pomeroy, 1999). Yet, it is not the congruities of masculinity that offer the promise in research, it is the incongruities.

Most of the variety in masculine culture occurs in the psychological and social particulars that have emerged as human populations have migrated and diversified, and are especially worth studying as they relate to social, political, and gender interactions—historical male hegemony in societal interactions remains intact (Craib, 1987; Hearn, 2004; Myers, 2012; Slavin, 2001; Winter & Robert, 1980). Although women have made significant advances in assuming an equitable place in most Western societies, simple demographics such as occupational status, ascendance to electoral office, and accumulation of wealth serve as microcosmic proxies for the larger macrocosm of the world of human interaction (DeLamotte, Meeker, & O'Barr, 1997; Mounsey, 2001; Pomeroy, 1991). Perhaps even more interesting are the sub-hegemonic structures identifiable within male cultures, such as White males' attempts to subordinate men from other racial and ethnic groups, phenomena that has been prodigiously documented in the literature (Adams & Savran, 2002; Bederman, 1995; Berg, 1998; DeLamater & Myers, 2010; Duneier, 1992; hooks, 1990; Lindquist, 2012; Neal, 2011; Reeser, 2010; Staples, 1978; Uebel &

Stecopoulos, 1997) and has its most profound expression in the Southern U. S. (Duvall, 2008; Estes, 2000; Nowatzki, 1994; Ritterhouse, 2006). Regardless of place inhabited, it appears that men must have an Other to colonize, and White males have an insatiate desire to colonize all.

Curriculum of Southern Place and the Hypermasculine Imperative

The American South has long been considered a region of paradoxes and ambiguities, presenting simultaneously to the interested reviewer charming customs and friendly, sociable peoples (Mittendorf & Ayers, 1998) as well as a history of reprehensible cruelties and barbarous events motivated by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and xenophobic misconceptions (Carter, 2007; Cooper & Terrill, 2008; Cooper & Terrill, 2009; Harris, 2006) that persist to modern day (Kaufman, 2001; Till-Mobley & Benson, 2004). Yet the mystique of the South (Zinn, 1964) and its attendant contradictions and non sequiturs have only contributed to increased interest in the region and its flawed history, with some even identifying a hegemonic influence on the rest of the nation (Applebome, 1996; Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991), and of all the aspects of Southern life and history that make it an enigma that intrigues researcher and laity alike, possibly none is more compelling than the behaviors, attitudes, and cultural beliefs of Southern men, especially the often anachronistic behaviors of Southern White males (Roberts, 2002). Southern White male culture continually perplexes and piques the curiosity with its admixture of Victorian era bravado and pseudo-gentlemanly acts of chivalry (or at least the common perception among Southern men of what constitutes chivalric behavior). Yet, the greatest paradox of White Southern masculinity may be its origin in false and exaggerated beliefs in occurrences of Southern history (Baym, 1992; Cash, 1941/1991; Cobb, 2005; Gaston, 1970; Mayfield, 1995; Sommerville, 1995). Southern White males often invoke codes of gallantry and morality that never existed, or occurred at the level of social strata unknown to them except anecdotally, and certainly not with

the regularity and self-sacrificing motives often attributed to historical Southern males of the so-called Southern aristocracy (Mayfield, 1995), a social stratum often challenged as a concept since there is ample evidence that it was chiefly a myth (Friend, 2009).

As the South has become a focus of much social science research in recent decades, more attention has been paid to the various dimensions of education, formal and informal, that have potentiated the expression of Southern culture (Boles, 2004; Castenell, 1993; McLaurin, 1998; Reed, 1994). One fruitful approach to educational research in curriculum studies has been examination of what has been called the curriculum of place (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991), which places a theoretical and autobiographical focus on lived experience to illuminate and inform the individual life in order to contribute to the amelioration of social interactions (Casemore, 2008; Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; Whitlock, 2007). Welty (1977) opined that where man stood still he found a god in that place, and Harrison (2002) remarks that humans "take our measure of being from what surrounds us, and what surrounds us is always, to some extent, of our own making" (p. 349), a sentiment that serves as an excellent benchmark for considering what constitutes a valid curriculum of place. This approach has resonated with many scholars studying the realities of the experienced curriculum and the lived curriculum and has special potential for providing indigenous and other traditionally marginalized cultures and subcultures with an explanatory frame for examining their intimate understandings of themselves, as well as assisting them toward attaining understanding (Falk, 2004; He, 2003; Kawakami, 2008), and is finding fertile ground as an approach to research in graduate studies (Casemore, 2005; Findeisen, 2011; Hood, 2001; Romero, 2007; Shenandoah, 2006; Swallow, 2005; Whitlock, 2005).

Included in this research perspective are the beliefs that a curriculum of place "allows one to understand where he or she is" by definitively identifying where one has started from, and that

as "place informs our quest to understand the social world, our attention is adjusted to the concrete, the named, the identified" (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, pp. 4-5) one is able to act against the tyranny of the positivist construction of the objective and abstract (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991). Drawing on Till (2001), who says that "place is the cultural and spatial context within which we construct and locate our individual and collective identities" (p. 275), Whitlock (2007b) adds that curriculum of place is a "circle/cycle of self, place, society, and culture" (p. 2), a postulate that concisely describes the inclusive nature of the idea. Both authors implicitly recognize the importance of appreciating one's place and sense of identity as crucial for negotiating power structures within society, a fact that bears immoderately on education and life (Apple, 1999; Casemore, 2008; Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991). According to Casemore (2008), utilizing the curriculum of place perspective permits one to appreciate "the diverse and intersecting world" (p. 1) in which one dwells—and adopting the postmodern construct (Harvey, 1990), one could emphasize 'worlds'—and he underscores the central importance of accepting that place is not just "a location or region but also absorbs subjective meanings and social identities" (p. 6). He also delineates the continuous nature of viewing curriculum as place, especially through the methodology of autobiographical inquiry:

> If we accept that place is ideological as well as physically dimensional, created in the mind and through language as well as the landscape, and thus constituted through certain values, some prejudicial, we have an opportunity to explore it as something that emerges laden with personal and public meanings. But first we must unsettle it. p. 7

Casemore's point is to appreciate that one is never done experiencing the curriculum of place, and that it travels with one wherever one goes, a notion understood by others who have explored the concept (Chambers, 2008; Falk, 2004; Whitlock, 2007b). Other scholars pursuing curriculum

of place have identified additional considerations that further elucidate the concept. In her study

of the indigenous Kangiryuarmuit of Canada, Chambers (2008) lists four dimensions of

curriculum of place that make it useful for studying lives and education in particular, though she

concedes that others are likely relevant:

1. *A curriculum of place calls for a different sense of time*. One must appreciate that

   circumstances largely dictate the appreciation of time and what it means.

2. *A curriculum of place is enskillment*. It requires that people know certain things to

   persevere and successfully inhabit their space, physically and psychologically.

3. *A curriculum of place calls for an 'education of attention.'* People must engage in

   'direct and sensuous engagement with the world' and must also be aware that

   watching is relational since they must assume they are also being watched.

4. *A curriculum of place is a wayfinding*. It requires that they learn place by

   traveling and dwelling actively in the place. Ingold, 2000, pp. 113-128

The idea of place as an intellectual endeavor worthy of attention is ancient but has taken renewed

importance in recent years (Hubbard & Kitchin, 2010), particularly with the advent of

globalization and the proliferation of the Internet and social media and the sense of

(dis)placement they have generated (Goodings, Locke, & Brown, 2007; Headrick, 2010;

Meyrowitz, 1986; Moon, 2010). The commonality of these approaches to curriculum of place is

the requirement that people examine their identities, lives, societies, and relationships as they are

influenced and constructed through interactions, literally and conceptually, with the places that

people inhabit with the aim of achieving a more perspicuous understanding of what it means to

carry place with one for a lifetime. With such an understanding, place becomes profoundly more

than mere geography or environment, attaining the much weightier status of personal educative

process.

Curriculum of Southern Masculine Place

Whitlock (2005) asks, "What is the lure of home?… Homeplace is an aspect of Southern

place and feeling Southern inundated with conventional notions of Southern identity; a

curriculum of place should consider the socially constructed sense of place that arises from

homeplace experiences" (pp. 8-9), a self-rhetorical question and self-generated rejoinder that

nicely summarizes the need for pursuing a curriculum of Southern place. Actually born of

academic investigations into Southern culture (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991), curriculum of place

has unlimited potential for revealing the social complexities of the region, where one is enjoined

by Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) to resurrect the "social historical consciousness" (p. 138) for the

purposes of social justice and equity. They hold that Southerners provide a privileged vantage

from which to address social relations in the South through their stories, folklore, and

autobiographies. Citing the inherently subversive power of memories for enacting change, they

envision a curriculum of Southern place as providing space for initiating discourse that can

effectually reject the conditions of Southern social inequities often viewed as rational or natural

(Freire & Macedo, 1987). Understanding history offers people the opportunity to appreciate

interrelationships as productive of the conditions of individual lives (Giroux, 1981) and the

curriculum of Southern place is conceptualized to effect this understanding in what may be the

most written about but least understood region of the country (Falk, 2004). Confirming the

"autobiographical dimensions of Southern place," Casemore (2008) warns that "one's

perspective on the landscape can obscure the past and one's relationship to others" (p. 111), yet it

can also be used as a process for constructing more complex autobiographies that recognize lives

and personal histories that have been marginalized or suppressed by understandings of place that are self-delusive and reject culpability for suffering. Clearly, a curriculum of Southern place holds immense promise for understanding this enigmatic area of human interaction (Rostan & Davis, 2012) especially as it pertains to masculinity.

"Justa Good Ol' Boys"

Attempts to encapsulate any aspect of Southern culture are fraught with difficulties, not least of which is the stupendous diversity of the culture and its subcultures (Morland, 1971; Roebuck, & Murty, 1996; Townsend, 2011; Wilson, 2006) with some commentators debating whether the "South" can be said to exist at all (Pillsbury & Wilson, 2006). Further complicating descriptions of Southern culture has been the influx of other cultures in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, a dimension that tends to offer evidence to the naysayers argument that the South is far from homogenous; however, it is not necessary to engage in a debate over cultural structural specifics when examining the masculinity of Southern White males since commonalities over time have persisted, as they do in virtually all cultures (Ember & Ember, 2011; Fouberg, Murphy, & de Blij, 2012). On that basis, and stipulating that not all Southern White males can be comprehended in any single operative description, one can offer a tenable description of the Southern White male that enumerates certain generalities and encompasses men from various parts of the culture and includes multiple economic and class features (Friend, 2009; Wilson, 2006).

Those characteristics evidenced by Southern White males that represent what many people construe as "Southern" include a constellation of general behaviors and beliefs that vary within and across circumstances (Ngrassia, 2010). Some of these identified in the literature are extreme loyalty; a strong sense of family and community, especially a territorial attachment to

geographic space; a profound sense of machismo that includes sexual dominance of women and periodic threats and manifestations of violence; political and social conservatism; inexplicable and insupportable xenophobia; an exaggeratedly unapologetic homophobia; overt and covert racial animus toward non-Whites; anti-intellectualism; risk-taking; inordinate preoccupation with Southern identity; and a boastful and often provocative temperament (DuRocher, 2011; Friend, 2009; Friend & Glover, 2004; Gebhard, 1997; Mayfield, 2009; Nesbett, & Cohen, 1996). Researchers who describe these traits emphasize that they are changeable and do not represent all Southern White males; nevertheless, these features of Southern White manhood are not uncommon in the region that constitutes the U.S. South. These traits and attitudes may also be said to be prevalent among American men generally with many traits transcending geographic bounds to constitute part of the overall character of human males altogether (Bienvenue, & Hudon, 2005; Green, 1993; Meinecke, 1981; O'Brien, Hunt, & Hart, 2005). That White Southern male behavior is basically an exaggeration of typical male behavior is not an unreasonable argument. Still, the predictable and equally reasonable question that such a position might elicit would be, "Why is this 'typical' White male hypermasculine behavior so pronounced in the U.S. South?"

Dangerous Males—Dealing with Maleness as Socially Pathological

The literature reveals that hypermasculinity almost uniformly describes those aspects of stereotypical masculine behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and actions that are considered beyond the pale socially (Anahita, 2006; Guerrero, 2009; Vass & Gold, 1995). Most often these are extreme elaborations of traits common to most men and usually conferring some identifiable evolutionary and social survival advantage that may or may not continue to be useful (Dunbar & Barrett, 2007). In the case of hypermasculine expression, however, society typically deems the

characteristics under scrutiny as deleterious to the continued successful functioning of communal

living; nevertheless, the instance of hypermasculinity, despite social proscriptions against it, is

unquestionably growing in frequency in some circles with gangsta rap, NASCAR, professional

wrestling, and mixed martial arts subcultures representing just a few examples (Cheever, 2007;

Lawrence, 2005). The threat to social interaction comes from the ancillary traits that are part and

parcel of the hypermasculine demeanor, such as misogyny, extreme violence, jingoism, nativism,

homophobia, racism, and reckless behavior generally (Beesley & McGuire, 2009; Cheever,

2007; Kusz, 2007; Mosher & Tomkins, 1988; Parrott & Zeichner, 2003; Watkins, 1992) as well

as detrimentally affecting the health of the men exhibiting hypermasculinity[15] (Meinecke, 1981;

Norris, Davis, Martell, & Leonesio, 1999; Tiusanen, 2011). Also perilous is the existence of

hypermasculinity in some of the most powerful social institutions such as political activism

(Ling, 2000), military forces (Rosen, Knudson, & Fancher, 2003), church (Ward, 2005), and

police (Barrie & Broomhall, 2012). There is additional concern over the influence that the

culture of hypermasculinity is having on contemporary male youth, especially from vulnerable

populations (Zamel, 2004) such as urban youth gangs. Without question, undergirding the

growing popularity of the phenomenon is the media, which abets the negative aspects of

archetypal male expression by seeking to valorize it and make it profitable (Darnell & Wilson,

2006; Scharrer, 2001, 2001b). Just as Honneth (2004) described the failure of contemporary

intellectuals to appreciate the socially ameliorative power of critical theory as a "social

pathology of reason" one may also place the inexplicable trend toward hypermasculinity among

certain subcultures as a failure to recognize the need for more rational social interactions. As

mentioned, the social pathology of hypermasculinity has tangible disadvantages for the rational

pursuit of communal living, and nowhere is the potential for inequitable and oppressive activity

more probable, particularly on the immediate functioning of daily life, than in the work of police.

<center>**Sweltering *In the Heat of the Night*: Exploring Southern Masculine Police Spaces**</center>

Understanding masculinity and its attendant behaviors requires premising scholarly

explorations on an immutable fact: masculinity is not a discrete ethos, temperament, or

constitutional way of interacting with the world; factually, as Connell (1995) has posited, there

are multiple masculinities that men act upon, a conceptualization now espoused widely (Eliot,

2010; Fine, 2009; Jerome, 2001; Smiler, 2006), and one may extend her concept by proposing

that of the congeries of masculinities that we may encounter, each occurs on a continuum from

the socially extolled to the societally unacceptable and that these continua of masculinities

determine if a man succeeds within applicable social parameters or finds himself ostracized—or

berated, bullied, and possibly brutally murdered (Kaufman, 2001b)—for straying too far on the

scale. An illustrative example is found in the U. S. where a man who fails to adhere to the

Western masculine protocol risks, as a minimum, surreptitious condemnation, and at worst,

serious violence or death. Incidence of assault against homosexual males and transvestites is

significantly higher than similar violence against heterosexual men (Federal Bureau of

Investigation, 2010). Conversely, men who drift too far toward the upper end of the continuum

into the area of hypermasculinity endanger their liberty by violating social norms, and possibly

death by inadvertently incurring the coercive force of social institutions (Foucault, 1977;

Mcelvain, 2008; Morrison, 2010) such as police. The paradox of this situation obtains when one

realizes that, notwithstanding their presumably unacceptable social behavior, these "bad boys"

are often portrayed with implicit if not overt admiration in various media (Callanan &

Rosenberger, 2011; Ferguson, Cruz, Martinez, Rueda, Ferguson, & Negy, 2008; Kolnes, Smith,

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& Brank, 2008). The outlaw may have to face the legal and social music for his excesses, but the theme song in the background is often the catchier tune. The aspect of the bad boy phenomenon, however, that should prompt serious consideration by academics and lay public alike is the substantial proportion of bad boys who serve on the thin blue line of police work.

Rending the Thick Blue Veil

Often referenced in the literature on police in the U.S. is the "thin blue line," a metaphor for the putative belief that a very small population of professional police act as a rampart against lawlessness and disorder in society (Correll, Park, Judd, Wittenbrink, Sadler, & Keesee, 2007; Dicker, 1998; Wertsch, 1998; Wester & Lyubelsky, 2005). Unfortunately, some have noted that the metaphor also acts as a screen to obscure police misbehavior and provide an ideological justification for abuse of legitimate, societally sanctioned coercive power (Asch, 1971; Cohen, 1986; Kunstler & Ratner, 2004; Martin, 2002; Weisburd, Greenspan, Hamilton, Bryant, & Williams, 2001). The rhetoric describes a coherent police profession that uniformly serves the public good, working for the best outcomes in all situations, especially those that threaten danger to health or life, and an avowed promise from those in the profession to willingly sacrifice all for the greater good. The bombast notwithstanding, the reality of police work is often quite different. With over 17,000 individual police agencies[16] in the U.S. (U.S. Census Data, 2012) subject only to state laws and agency policies and procedures, uniformity is completely lacking, and historical attempts to establish professional standards have generally been unavailing (Goldsmith, 2005; Sykes, 1985). Consequently, the thin blue line has occasionally become a thick blue veil that operates to conceal corruption and misconduct (Klockars, Ivković, & Haberfeld, 2004), erode public confidence (Kappeler, 2006; McCoy, 2010), and disillusion scores of police recruits who themselves have internalized the rhetoric of public service and professionalism (Barker, 1999;

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Crank, 2004; Poole & Regoli, 1979) only to find the reality substantially different from their expectations. Rather than despair of ever achieving the desiderated level of police professionalism in reality, however, the more constructive response is to proactively seek remediation, individually and collectively, through social activism to ensure the highest standards of police work and finally elevate its practitioners to the exalted state that they so often believe they occupy. This study is predicated on that ideal.

Combating the Hypermasculine Ethos of Police Work

The field of curriculum studies has much to offer the world of education, scholarship, and society in general. Inclusive, philosophically derived, and committed to altering unjust social conditions and arrangements by challenging the configurations of power (Schubert, 2010), perhaps the paramount feature of curriculum studies for contributing to social amelioration is its focus on bracketing and unpacking social phenomena for the purpose of questioning and engaging in self-reflection (Connelly, He, & Phillion, 2008; Green, Camilli, & Elmore, 2006). Schubert (2010) enumerates some of the dimensions of curriculum studies including pointing out that "those in curriculum studies seek to understand through attention to a holistic range of consequences—from intended to unintended" (p. 232) and further that "one might say that engaging in curriculum studies is to embrace a never-ending quest wherein philosophy is embedded in action for the purpose of making life more worthwhile," and it is exactly these aspects that I plan to address with my contribution to the corpus of curriculum studies scholarship. The extant literature on police reform suggests that little has been done toward utilizing self-scrutiny as research methodology for parsing the experience of individual police officers to use in redressing the excesses and blatant iniquities of what should be the most honorable profession in the world. My express intention is to add to the existing studies and

expand upon this seldom explored area of sociological and educational study. In doing so, I will also advance the cause of improved training and education for police and other public safety professionals by indicating the myriad opportunities and methods available for addressing their attitudes, beliefs, practices, and norms relating to their cultures. The curricular advantages for those interested in advancing the philosophy of community and serviced-oriented policing in police training and academic settings will be obvious, as well as the advantage that will accrue to the individual police officer who aims to make a sincere commitment to public service.

The reality of modern police work, especially as practiced in the southern United States, is that too many of its officers use their authority and jurisdictions as fora in which to test, prove, or demonstrate their hypermasculine impulses, a situation that detracts from their efficacy as public servants and endangers the very public they have sworn to protect (Asch, 1971; Prokos & Padavic, 2002). Entrusting such awesome power and legally indemnified authority over the lives and liberties of millions of people in a putatively free society is rife with difficulties, existent and potential, and must be closely monitored by citizens and their appointed and elected representatives (Reiner, 2010), yet the reality of the virtual autonomy and liberal discretion conferred upon law enforcement officers makes such scrutiny a near impossibility (Brown, 1988; Livingston, 1999; Reiner, 2010). Alternatively, one must encourage all involved—police, politicians, public administrators, and citizens—to establish a paradigm in police practice that demands certain behavior and attitudes aimed toward increased professionalism. I contend that the most promising approach to achieving this admittedly ambitious goal is to start within the confines of police practice itself by fostering an environment that encourages self-scrutiny among police with the intention of impelling them to commit to becoming the most vocal critics of their own profession. The more studies of personal experience engaged in by police officers

available for review that there are, the more probable will be the realization of a truly honorable police profession. If accountability drives culture, and culture dictates accountability, there must be a paradigm shift of Kuhnian proportions[17] (Kuhn, 1962) in the way that contemporary police agencies conduct themselves, and reaching such a milestone can only come through a societal insistence that it become the normative model for the police profession.

By scrutinizing my own experience as a career police officer I expect to uncover pertinent details that will be useful for enlightening those in the police profession and those who depend upon its practitioners for their safety and for the maintenance of an orderly society. By demonstrating that there are better and nobler ways of policing, I will present those in the profession with a model for self-examination intended to refine their practice, and, hopefully, rectify the social inequities that have preoccupied me in my career. Taking a critical perspective on the profession that I love through the critical autoethnographic method will allow others to benefit from my faults, mistakes, misconceptions, missteps, prejudices, biases, and misguided pursuits. If mistakes truly offer the best guide to learning then I shall offer mine and those that I have witnessed as object lessons for the effective instruction of others in the police and public safety professions. Only through exacting, continuous self-appraisal will any person or institution achieve an appreciable degree of self-correction and strive effectively to become an exemplar of responsible social involvement.

Reading Police Hypermasculinity

In their landmark study of masculinity as it bears on police practice in various world cultures, Barrie and Broomhall (2012) accurately identify the subject of police masculinities as an underdeveloped field of inquiry in dire need of exploration. Proceeding from an international perspective, these authors provide what is arguably the first in-depth study of how gender issues

have formed perceptions about, and among, police, particularly how the sense of hypermasculinity impels police officers around the globe to adopt certain stereotypical traits that purportedly confirm their status as tough police officers. A paramount aspect of this study is the emphasis that it places on the culpability of media and the development of the "police personality" that virtually predisposes law enforcement officers to behavior that affirms their hypermasculine status, a contention that finds ample support in the literature (Reel, 2006). While psychologists generally discount the existence of predisposing personality factors that may be called a police personality (Aylward, 1985; Laguna, Linn, Ward, & Rupslaukyte, 2010), my experience and research leaves me with an abiding belief that, whether or not it exists innately, cops develop a definite police personality as they negotiate their careers and the norms, customs, practices and expectations that inhere to the field. By drawing from international scholarship (Garrioch, 2012; Mori, 2012; Wilson, 2012), Barrie and Broomhall underscore the apparently universal nature of police hypermasculinity, thus establishing a valid base to launch confirmatory or disconfirmatory studies. What the various commentators confirm is that the hypermasculine imperative permeates the police profession regardless of culture or societal construct. While the provenance of this phenomenon is debatable, with some scholars attributing police hypermasculine behavior to nothing more elegant than the general tendency of men toward such behavior and the greater opportunities for police to exploit natural impulses (Riksheim & Chermak, 1993; Sekhon, 2011), others find extraneous societal factors as operative, such as factors that inhere in the police profession itself, or the paramount influence of media, including TV, movies, video games, and literature, as determinative (Reel, 2012). Notwithstanding the possible causes offered to explain the existence of hypermasculinity in the police profession, what stands out as nearly indisputable is the concentrated presence of the hypermasculine

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imperative among police on a global scale, exhibited by behaviors that episodically include excessive and often unwarranted violence toward constituents, misuse and abuse of legally conferred authority, arbitrary use of discretion, and failures to protect the most vulnerable members of societies, behaviors that have been documented elsewhere (Bayley, 1986; Cooper, 2009; Kappeler, Sluder, & Alpert, 1994; Niederhoffer, 1969; O'Neill, Marks, & Singh, 2007; Skolnick, 1966; Weisburd, Greenspan, Hamilton, Bryant, & Williams, 2001). This original volume also affirms the need for progressive police leadership at all levels of the hierarchy to effect substantive changes that militate against such excesses (Silvestri, 2012), a position that is also confirmed in the literature (Andreescu & Vito, 2010; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Pollock, 2009).

While the existence of police hypermasculine behavior is a fairly uncontroversial point, the causes for such behavior preoccupy scholars and often center upon possible explanations from the putative belief in a "police personality" that attributes hypermasculinity to psychological or temperamental factors (Aylward, 1985; Laguna, Linn, Ward, & Rupslaukyte, 2010), to culture as the overarching contributor to police behavior (Loftus, 2012; O'Neill, Marks, & Singh, 2007). Other hypotheses cite social, political, and even regional differences as revealing (Brown, 1988; Capsambelis, 2009), yet the omnipresence of such behaviors worldwide tends to obviate such contentions. Most studies surveyed cogently confirm that the critical determiners of police abuse of authority and other descriptors of hypermasculine behaviors are directly assignable to factors that derive from the natural inclinations of men in groups who indulge their masculine tendencies to an aberrant degree when abetted by cultural dimensions such as peer pressure (Wolf, 2008), inappropriate indoctrination into the police profession (Hyams, 1991), and the absence of properly directed leadership foci (Isenberg, 2009). What stands out conspicuously in the literature on the causes of police hypermasculine behavior is the

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need for extensive studies aimed at learning what can be done to ameliorate such behaviors to assist police officers in attaining genuine professionalism in their field. Many ideas have been proposed for dealing with correcting police excesses, including more and better ethics training (Barker, 2011; Jones, Owens, & Smith, 1995), psychological screening for police recruits (Peter & Weiss, 2010; Salters-Pedneault, Ruef, & Orr, 2010), enhancing the educational attainment of police officers and improving technical training (Berg, 1990; Paoline & Terrill, 2007; Shernock, 1992), and ensuring effective leadership behaviors in the police profession (King, 1991; Kleinig, 1990; Myron, 1992), most crucially at the chief police executive level; nevertheless, all of these proposals have been tested to some degree, with limited success.

All told, the literature on police hypermasculinity appears sparse. Although much research has been conducted that addresses police abuse of power and misconduct and analyzing masculinity as potential causation, very seldom does the research explicitly train its gaze on hypermasculinity as a discrete construct, clearly premising such studies on inherent dimensions of the police profession. At this point, what is most important is that research into the hypermasculine behaviors of police officers continue, and one valuable approach might be refocusing from the selective view of police hypermasculinity per se to a focus on hypermasculinity generally. Given the evident corollaries between hypermasculine behavior in the male population worldwide and that they mirror the most troubling aspects of police hypermasculinity, concentrating on the general hypermasculine literature may well provide insights that may allow for extrapolation to hypermasculine police culture. Inferring from such luminaries in masculinity scholarship as R. W. Connell, Todd W. Reeser, and Victor J. Seidler offers the promise of illuminating police hypermasculinity as a sub-study of masculinity studies, allowing both areas of scholarship to benefit synergistically from what is discovered. Without

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question, the tradition of masculine hegemony in social interactions makes this field of academic inquiry well worth any effort expended.

The *Song of the South* is a Discordant Tune

Ultimately, any review of the literature of the curriculum of Southern place, whether directed toward an understanding through expository examinations of Southern culture or by parsing the details of fictional accounts or popular products, produces sundry evidence for contemplating the Souths as consisting of multiple micro-cultures, each with their own special constitution and geographically, politically, socially, and intellectually unique way of approaching life and living. Like a fantastic tapestry of many cultures, past and emerging, the Souths are truly wondrous in their diversity and constitute a mosaic of many ways of interacting with the world; consequently, attempts to behold the South must start with accepting it as a complex mosaic that resists encapsulation by any neat definitional approach. There are as many ways of being Southern as there are ways of expressing Southernness; on this hand, Southern culture is a rarefied experience as difficult to grasp intellectually as gossamer is physically.

Still, the commonalities are there as well, and may best be perceived as a macramé whose knots obdurately contest homogenization. The political and social conservatism exacerbated by infusions of religious zealotry keep much—if not most—of the South from embracing the promise, and contending with the perils, of twenty-first century life. The desire to cling to a suppositious chivalrous, idyllic past that never actually existed, so destined never to be, leaves many Southerners awaiting a future that will not only disappoint when it arrives, but may well prove irreversibly apocalyptic on an existential level. Southerners insistence that the social world be the way they want it rather than the way it is leaves them unwilling to employ a healthy approach to considering life's possibilities through continuous self-reflection and remediation, an

approach that could productively be deemed *currere* on a regional, social plane. By using the Pinarian approach to autobiography on a societal level making use of the existing infrastructure of public education, the Souths could mitigate the worst of their self-delusive thoughts and behaviors and achieve not only a brighter future for themselves and their progeny but, potentially, provide the model for the nation. What might be accomplished if Southern schools, governments, and social institutions of all makes began subjecting themselves to a process that included the regressive, progressive, analytic, and synthetics moments (Pinar, 2004) and with the aim of chameleonic reinvention at will when the realities of an increasingly changeable environment demanded? In such a world, diversity and novelty would become utilitarian, making them valued as social constructs, and permitting the strength of an annealed sociality.

In the final analysis, what one learns most about the South and its common features is that fear motivates most of Southern culture, attitudes, mores, customs, and interactions. Southerners live in fear of big government once again invading their world and attempting to remake their ways of life (Cash, 1941; Cobb, 1999). Certainly, Southern men are just as apprehensive about the fears common to their other regional brethren, yet their primary fears are much narrower and more specific. Men in Western cultures generally feel the inexorable demand of the hypermasculine impulse that prompts them to exert their influence, real and presumed, to differentiate themselves from the mass of their peers and establish some degree of dominance over their fellows and assert control over their domains, which includes not only material property, but women, children, and other persons disempowered or noticeably diminished in influence and affluence (Connell, 2005b). Concomitant to these masculine prerequisites is the irresistible need to ensure the integrity of the individual sense of identity and the acquisition and maintenance of respect, a demand expected of all Others, yet signally important when interacting

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with other men (Seidler, 1994). Police officers, especially, learn early that other men will fight in an instant to safeguard their personal sense of identity as men and retain their perceptions of respect from other men, a fact that officers use to either mediate volatile circumstances, or, paradoxically, to facilitate the antagonistic encounters that, ironically, serve to preserve, augment, or bolster their own personal conceptions of manliness (Connell, 2005b; Jackson, 1990; Seidler, 1994). Possibly nowhere is this distressing fear of the loss of manliness more extreme than in the American South, and likely in no other occupation does it appear more pronounced than in rural, Southern policing. The Southern cop is a man regardless of gender or sex, and as a man, must stand a head above those men with whom he must compete on the battlefields of the public domain. By identifying and dissecting the fears that motivate Southern police officers to act as they do, the discerning researcher may not only help them divest themselves of these fears, presenting the possibility of renewed commitment to public service sincerely dedicated to the common good, she may be able to help individuals effect a psychological reconciliation between the excesses of the Southern cop's place and the "Southern treasures" that Kincheloe (1991) purported to find. While such reconciliation will not exculpate the South of its history of oppression, or acquit individual men or police officers for their transgressions, it can act to establish a modus vivendi that permits men to approach their masculinity responsibly, thus inoculating them from the social pathology of hypermasculinity, and positioning the South for a more progressive future.

CHAPTER III

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT—DON'T USE IT

Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.

Paulo Freire

…privilege is always a problem for people who don't have it and for people who do, because privilege is *always* in relation to others.

Allan G. Johnson

We take our measure of being from what surrounds us, and what surrounds us is always, to some extent, of our own making.

Robert Pogue Harrison

Domination is not that solid and global kind of domination that one person exercises over others, or one group over another, but the manifold forms of domination that can be exercised within society.

Michel Foucault

"You have the right to remain silent—use it!" is an old police joke that I probably should have heeded in my own life on many occasions; unfortunately, the irony of that particular witticism was lost on me for years. The meeting would be contentious, no doubt about it. The Chief was thoroughly pissed off, and I knew why—I had arrested the wrong people. He had received phone calls for several days from parents and other concerned citizens because of arrests I had recently made, and rather than confront me personally, he had called another meeting of all the officers. Any time that he called such a meeting everyone knew that he was angry about something; the question was always, what something this time? I knew, though.

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And so did most of my fellow officers. They were aware of the arrests that I had made and had warned me that I was messing up, assuring me that I would hear from the Chief about it. Still, to call an all staff meeting meant that he was seriously irate. I wondered what he had said to all the parents and others who had been keeping his phone hot. Did he apologize for my actions, did he concoct some type of plausible excuse? Not likely. If he followed his usual approach, he told them that I was inexperienced or maybe even idiotic and deftly deflected any responsibility. He did not like to deal with the citizenry, and he certainly would not have defended me or any other officer. Most likely, he assured each caller that I would be dealt with, something that he was prone to say but rarely actually followed up on, just waiting for the heat to let up. Placating the public was his stock response, not engaging in dialogue or actually attempting to resolve an issue in some productive way.

After we all filed into the courtroom where we had big meetings and got seated, the Chief walked in, frowning, with a clipboard in his hand and a smug look on his face, not making eye contact with anyone, and sat down at the judge's bench. He said that we used the courtroom for large meetings because it was convenient, but I always thought that glowering down on us from the judge's raised bench gave him confidence that he otherwise lacked. Like most bullies, he liked confronting people in crowds so that he felt insulated. He was probably right—at least from his perspective—since no one but me ever challenged him. As brave as most of my fellow police officers thought they were, none of them challenged authority of any type, which probably served to reaffirm their belief in their own inviolability as cops. Of course, most of them told whoppers about conversations that they had had with influential and powerful people, but you could tell they were lying every time; something about the way that the stories were incredible from the start and grew over time. After a while you could see deceit forming in their eyes before

they spoke; others you knew were lying because their lips were moving. I was the only one that really argued with authority, even though I was as afraid as the rest of the officers. I never knew why I felt compelled to argue with my seniors when I thought they were wrong, but I did notice early that it usually happened when I was arguing on someone's behalf or over a matter of principle, almost never on my own behalf, unless, of course, I was right about something and unfairly being criticized. If I knew I was legitimately caught, I usually just grinned and took what was coming. I never noticed any benefit from confronting authority, yet I could not manage to stop myself, and as I continued in my police career, I found myself becoming increasingly more vocal—about everything.

In this particular situation, I definitely did not consider myself wrong to any degree, yet the Chief obviously did, and I would learn later that many of my fellow officers secretly condemned me as well. Many of them had the annoying habit of agreeing with whomever they happened to be speaking to at any given time, as if the truth, and their opinions, varied with the context. Being idealistic and more than a little absolutist in my thinking, I never saw it that way. Facts were facts, reality was reality, and what was, was. It used to irk the hell out of me to hear that a so-called friend who had claimed to support my position was subsequently found condemning me to another or in another context. I always figured it was a fairly universal human failing but it still irritated me, and when a cop did it, it challenged all of my preconceptions about what a cop should be like. We were supposed to stick together, the Thin Blue Line and all that jazz. Over time I would find that the utility of that particular concept was variable as well.

After sitting down, the Chief just stared out at everyone for a few seconds, everyone but me, before he began to speak. That confirmed for me what the meeting was all about. Emboldened by the presence of other officers, many of whom he had worked with for decades,

he was feeling cocky. I was pretty good at impersonating people and would often do my impression of the Chief when he was trying to look tough, so I knew by heart virtually every mannerism we could expect. I knew that after looking tough for a few seconds and not speaking, he would allow himself a bemused smile, adjust his glasses, and feign a silent, condescending laugh meant to evince disbelief and contempt at our inexplicable stupidity. And there it was. A few more seconds of that and he returned to his serious demeanor, steeling himself before speaking.

The meeting started with a quick roll call, some discussion about why certain officers were not present and the dire consequences that awaited them for not appearing when directed to do so, and then on to routine business, all meant to give the Chief a few more minutes before he summoned the courage to say what was really angering him. Even in that forum, though, he rarely contested anyone head on, choosing instead to broach the matter at hand in an indirect way, usually with some general pronouncement. I knew that he would take that tack with me because for some reason he always appeared to be especially uncomfortable talking with me about anything controversial. I would have liked to believe that it was because I intimidated him, but that was not it. The Chief had been a big man before a heart condition caused a decline in his health—the swagger from years of self-confidence as a big man was still apparent. No, the reason he was reticent when speaking with me about anything serious was that he saw me as his conscience, his police and social conscience. I had my own demons to deal with as a cop, demons that only many years of experience and self-reflection could exorcize, but I did have a fundamental sense of indignation about some of the things we did as police officers, and the Chief did not like to have those subjects spoken of. He had many more years of reckless behavior and guilt to atone for than me, and having an upstart like me present his failings to him, and

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those of the officers that he commanded, was something he resented mightily, especially since the likelihood that he would ever summon the courage to expiate his own police sins was remote. So when he knew I, or any other officer, would muster the temerity to couch our argument in terms of ethics or right and wrong, it angered him viscerally; consequently, making general assertions directed at the crowd allowed for an oxymoronically non-confrontational confrontation that he would later remember as having been directed to the individual officer in question. I guess it made him feel better to think that he was bolder than he was (most cops are like that), and, after awhile, it went from being a fiction to having occurred just as he remembered it in his own mind—complete truth. Erica Jong once quipped that ambivalence is a wonderful tune to dance to, having a rhythm all its own. I suppose the idea works equally well for self-delusion.

Finally, the Chief put his pig up for auction, as some of the old folks say in the South about getting down to the heart of the matter, and made clear what was bothering him. He began by saying that some officers—me—had been making custodial arrests of teenagers loitering on business lots on the north side of town, and that he wanted it to stop immediately. He complained that his phone had not stopped ringing for a week and he expected the sergeants and lieutenants to do their jobs as supervisors and put a stop to it, and he alluded to swift and dire punishment for the officer foolish enough to defy him on the matter. From my perspective, the chief could just as well have thrown down the gauntlet or waved a red flag. I was never sure afterward if he was being intentionally provocative in order to draw me out, or if he had overplayed his hand in a pathetic game of macho brinksmanship. Either way, his opening gambit was sufficient to get the dispute started.

At the time, the main thoroughfare that bisected the north side of town was the most

popular hangout for adolescents and shiftless, over-aged young adults to socialize. I had never

had anything against the practice personally, having indulged myself as a youngster by hanging

out there, too, but as a police officer, my duty was clear. We had been admonished on many

occasions by the Chief and other senior officers for failing to keep the business lots cleared of

loiterers—a function meant to placate business owners at the expense of the rest of the public

who was unprotected while we were co-opted as private security for the affluent—and most

recently, I had been the one doing the clearing, a new experience for me since I had previously

worked the south side of town exclusively, a predominantly impoverished, African-American

enclave in an otherwise lily-white town. During my patrols of the south side, I daily arrested

people for loitering at the liquor store there, and had received nothing but praise for doing so. My

supervisors were happy because locking up loiterers supposedly meant fewer thefts, fights, and

drug dealing—a belief that I found through experience was only slightly accurate—so they were

more than pleased that I was keeping things cleaned up. The problem was that arresting someone

for loitering required a custodial arrest based on our departmental policy, no "catch-and-release"

as for a minor traffic offense; at least, that was the policy until I started arresting youth with

affluent and influential parents who had political and social connections in the area. Once the

White kids started getting locked up, we had a problem, and that's what the Chief was so

incensed about. In his view, custodial arrests for loitering were okay on the south side but

unnecessary on the north side. He did not say it was acceptable because they did not have access

to legal counsel and that he would not have to fend off a barrage of phone calls, but that's what

he meant. It was an open secret in our department that some people were more equal than others,

like in Orwell's (1946) *Animal Farm* or Rand's (1943) *The Fountainhead*, books that I had read

in my youth but had to become a cop to appreciate fully. I, on the other hand, took the contrarian position that loitering was loitering, and if a custodial arrest was merited for one, it was appropriate for all.

I actually contributed somewhat to the argument that ensued. One of my exasperating habits in those days (maybe still) was to provoke angry responses by asking ostensibly innocuous questions, as if merely seeking guidance or clarification. I did not originate the tactic, of course, and doubtless appropriated it from someone or somewhere else, if only inadvertently, but it definitely served admirably in the immediate case to get the argument started. Affecting an air of complete innocence, I asked the Chief if he could clarify something for me. There was an almost comical pause, and I could hear some snickering behind me, as he slowly turned his head toward me and asked what I was confused about. "Well, Chief, I just want to make sure that I understand you. So, loitering on the north side of town on the business lots is unlawful and can be handled with a citation, but loitering at the liquor store on the south side of town should be handled with a custodial arrest. I'm not sure that I understand the difference, Chief. Could you explain?" As it happened, the Chief was bald as a cue ball—a problem that, coincidently, would afflict me later in life, thus making my previous japery at the Chief's expense a rare regret with regard to him—and the first visible indication of his outrage was always the growing redness of his bald pate. In attempting to formulate a response to my impertinent question, it took him a few seconds, but his head flashed crimson in an instant, and once he summoned the ability to speak, he was so livid that his reply was almost inaudible. "Officer Jordan, you know damn well what I mean, and I expect you to do what you're told to!" I suppose I could have let the argument go at that point, content with his irate and ridiculous-looking response and with the chuckles from the other officers, but being challenged was always a quick way to anger me and cause me to

respond injudiciously. Maybe he knew that. In any case, I assured him in a stern, and probably impudent tone, that anyone I arrested for loitering would be "cuffed and stuffed," as the phrase went, or I would not arrest anyone at all. At that, the Chief essayed an unconvincing laugh of dismissal and tried to move on to another conveniently fabricated topic that I cannot recall. All that I could manage to think of was getting back to work so I could make more loitering arrests on the north side of town and test the Chief's, and my supervisors,' reactions.

For the record, I was no crusader, and was no braver or more daring than most of my fellow officers, but I was, perhaps, more discerning when it came to what motivated people and how far they could be pushed. What I knew that my peers apparently failed to appreciate was that even though a police agency might spurn a genuine commitment to equality for all and indulge in disparate treatment of people, it could never be openly avowed, but only discussed in hushed tones in private moments. The agency, and its representatives, chief of police, supervisors, staff, politicians, even the rank-and-file officers, had to toe the rhetorical line despite their actual beliefs. Was there equal application of the law in all cases resulting in justice and fairness with no consideration of social or economic status? You bet! Reasoned and logical assessment of given circumstances that renders an equally sound decision meant to further the ideals of public safety and protection of property? Of course! And anything that smacked of prejudice, bias, or differential treatment contrary to legal precepts was merely a matter of misunderstanding, an honest mistake, or an outright illusion. The Department was never wrong, and if it were, then that was a matter for correction within the Department itself. Anything else would, supposedly, erode public confidence by assailing our credibility. For me, however, the disjunction between espoused devotion to the principle of law and the haphazard and capricious way in which we exercised our authority was disillusioning and offensive, but mostly, it was a

useful bit of knowledge for contending with my superiors. They might be utterly infuriated over the positions that I would take, but they certainly could not say so publicly. No one likes to be confronted by the truth, and cops like it less than most.

Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to test the Chief's resolve in the matter. Coincidentally, I was sent back to the south side to remain for a good long time, effectively precluding the possibility for further conflict between the Chief and me—certainly on that issue anyway. As I went back on patrol, though, I could not do so with the same vigor of previous times. Arresting a hapless drunk at the liquor store no longer felt like harmless fun while simultaneously pursuing my duties as a conscientious police officer. I still made the arrest, but with nothing like the fervor of before. I told myself that it was not scruples that had tempered my perspective and left me unenthusiastic about doing my job. Maybe I was just getting bored with it all. When I first became a cop, I often worked extra shifts just for the excitement, preferring to work rather than socialize, and thinking that I had the greatest job in the world. I could not believe I got paid to do it; over the years, I would not be able to believe that I continued to take the money. What had once been incomparable excitement became a continuous series of days when I felt like a hypocrite and found it progressively harder to show up for work. After a few days off or a vacation, I could be as happy as I had ever been, yet when I pulled into the parking lot at the police station, a pall would descend like a mask, tincturing everything that I experienced. Police officers that I had viewed as nearly like family would eventually become little more than partners in crime, the crime of not acting honorably as police officers, public servants. And I would become more and more aware of the obvious nonchalance of other cops. Nothing seemed to faze them when it came to endless years of stultifying adherence to policies of injustice and intolerance. A six-pack of beer here, a new car or new relationship there, and life

went on as usual, with one arrest blending into another until everything became a kaleidoscope of unending complacency mingled with guilt and shame for continuing to work a job that I hated. Still, all of that would occur over the course of many years. You do not fall out of love easily or even consciously. It usually happens without one even knowing it.

<div align="center">*****</div>

This chapter delimits the theoretical and methodological approaches that I will use to pursue my research thesis, specifically critical social theory and critical autoethnography. As described previously, critical theory as a construct was established by the founders of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, in the early part of the twentieth century in reaction to what its disillusioned Marxist founders considered the abject failure of the proletarian revolution to materialize (Bronner, 2011). Theoretically adrift, the architects of what would become critical theory set themselves the ambitious goal of exploring the reasons for the revolution's absence, attempting to salvage anything that remained of the Marxist project that they had deemed the liberating theory for the masses of oppressed peoples (Geuss, 1981; Parker, 2012). Taking a pessimistic view of what remained—and the potential for correcting what they perceived to be a rapidly deteriorating social world, they ultimately found themselves asking profound questions without tendering usable answers (Held, 1980; Malpas & Wake, 2010; Rasmussen, 1996). Their omission of substantive actions based upon their theories became the salient criticism of their work, leaving many who reviewed their efforts to ponder the implications of such a starkly abstract theoretical project, and questioning the reason for undertaking such theorizing (Brookfield, 2005; Grumley, 2005; Tyson, 2006). The position taken by scholars and laity alike, emanating directly from the positivist tradition was to dismiss their work as sterile without a plan for social remediation. Essentially, the thinking was, why bother?

Paradoxically, the resurrected Socratic approach would prove critical theory's most enduring and appreciated quality (Agger, 2006; Held, 1980; Rush, 2004), and would contribute significantly to the effort to break the hold that scientific linearity held on theoretical output, eventually allowing for the revolution in thinking born of postmodernism, poststructuralism, and deconstructionism, among others (Agger, 1991b; Callinicos, 1985; Eagleton, 1985; Poster, 1989; Ryan, 1982; Stahl, El Beltagi, & McBride, 2005; Whitebook, 2004). As it would turn out, the questions that people were asking tended to be directed toward a predetermined objective, similar to Marx's historicity concerning the proletariat and class conflict. By removing the positivist shackles from the minds of twentieth century scholars and academics, critical theory can claim a large share of the credit for liberating oppressed minds, if not oppressed peoples. By the time of the second generation of critical theorists, typified if not engendered by the theorizing of Jürgen Habermas, critical theory had infiltrated fields as varied as art and literature (Fekete, 1978), politics and geography (Chambers, 2004; Linklater, 2001), news media (Hallin, 1985), and had established itself as the premier theoretical construct for pursuing renewed and revised approaches to studying the world (Swindal, 2010). And it is the immanent questioning nature of the critical theoretical approach—along with a healthy admixture of postmodernism, poststructuralism, and psychoanalysis—that offers the most promising theoretical advantages for this study, specifically as it is expressed through the vehicle of critical social theory, that aspect of critical theory that seeks the amelioration of social conditions through action (Bohman, 1999; Freire, 1970; White, 2004).

As the methodological implement of this research endeavor, I will employ critical autoethnography, encompassing autoethnographical and autobiographical approaches potentiated by critical theory itself, and used to mine the ore of my life to uncover illuminative gems that

will, I hope, redound to the benefit of anyone reviewing this study. Norquay (1990) reminds the scholar using an autobiographical approach to research to remember that it is not simple accumulation of knowledge that makes the approach productive, it is only autobiographical research inclined toward action that is useful, an adjuration that applies equally well to critical autoethnography, honors the Freirean (1970) ideal and the methods of Pinar (1988) and others (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988; Eisner, 1979; Pinar & Grumet, 1976) who have promoted self-examination as educative, and is the express intention of this work. Autoethnography offers the advantage of having a front row seat for viewing the culture examined by peering through the lens of the personal into the cultural (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Holt, 2003; Quicke, 2008; Reed-Danahay, 1997; Sparkes, 2000), making the data adduced firsthand knowledge produced by one who has been there. Incorporating the critical element permits the researcher to assess what is discovered through a lapidary perspective, requiring that everything uncovered be interrogated through self-dialogue with the past as it interacts with the present and helping to determine how it may obtrude into the future. If past is prologue, then disrupting deleterious aspects of sociality to procure equitable social arrangements for all, especially those historically marginalized by hegemonic powers, such as gays, Latinos, African-Americans, and women, is the most pressing concern of the ages, and using the critical autoethnographic approach to analyze the culture of Southern policing that currently serves to reproduce disadvantage and disenfranchisement makes this project particularly promising.

But as Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) stress, understanding the individual means appreciating the social through an examination of context, history, and interaction, an aspect of research best conducted through the medium of social psychoanalysis. Even anchorites and misanthropes carry their sociality with them, even to the highest mountain, the deepest recesses

of the wilderness, or the farthest confines of the individual psyche. Try as they might, their eremitic lifestyles are haunted by what has occurred to the time of their abandonment of the company of others and persist despite the most energetic or extreme measures taken to extinguish them. And failing to account for the dynamic interaction of the individual and the social ramifies to the detriment of both, as Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) pointedly reminds one: "Power manifests itself not through some explicit form of oppression, but via the implicit reproduction of the self" (p. 300), a contention that Ellsworth (1997, p. 42) supports, averring that exclusive attention to the social consigns social research to the category of the "impoverished." Pinar (2004) vigorously supports the need to understand the social and individual as concomitant endeavors. Noting Virginia Woolf's belief that "strong emotion must leave its trace" (cited in Pinar, 2004, p. 53), he writes that

> Strong emotion leaves traces, which is to say clues. What one does not remember, or, at least, remember immediately (and that 'immediately' can last for decades), is probably more important. That is why the periphery—of one's everyday ego, of the body politic—is so important. p. 53

Consequently, this study makes a concerted and explicit effort to understand my life experience in light of the social milieu that produced me, and in doing so, hopes to assist others in understanding how they can act on their own lives and mitigate their negative social conditions.

Critical Social Theory: The Unexamined Society is Not Worth Having

People have always questioned. Even before the rise of civilizations and social institutions, humans pondered motives, causes, and rationales. Why does one remain here rather than over the next ridge? What is the intent of the strange group that just appeared around the bend? How did I come to be? What is my clan mate thinking or intending? Why does one clan

member have privileges that I do not? How can I gain a strategic advantage over my fellows? Doubtless, the critical faculty is the cognitive mechanism that permitted people to emerge from their anxiety-filled and resource-limited existences as hunter-gatherers subsisting in small bands to establish social arrangements and civilizations that now provide for basic needs as well as indulge meandrous intellectual proclivities, thus potentiating inventive and creative predilections and resulting in even more advanced discoveries and innovations (Buss, 2008; Dunbar, & Barrett, & Lycett, 2009). For good or ill, curiosity and indomitable will to question have led to tremendous strides of human achievement; indeed, Bronner (2011) marks the inception of critical theory at least as far back as Socrates' execution for daring to inquire about the particulars of his social milieu and times. He even affirms that the charge against the namesake of Socratic questioning was at least partially true—he did corrupt the youth of Athens with his inquiries about the activities of the existing social and political order, a tendency that Bronner identifies as inherent to critical theory, regardless of origins or purposes (p. 1). Still, the critical theory that interests me in this study is of a much more recent vintage and begins with the Institute for Social Research, or Frankfurt School.

I will pursue my research by using the theoretical perspective of critical social theory as derived from the seminal thought of the Frankfurt School, and emphasizing the need to transcend pure theorization and enact substantive change upon my social world, adhering to Freire's (1970) dictum to theorize in the course of social action. In describing critical theory, Horkheimer (1972) was convinced that society needed to enact "a radical reconsideration…of the knowing individual as such" (p. 199), which is very similar to what the theorists of the early Frankfurt School of the 1930s believed (Morrow & Torres, 1999) and is still necessary (if not more so now) to question authority and the status quo in society, politics, law, and education (Ayers,

Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; Geuss, 1981; Young, 1990), if not society in toto. To avoid the perils of social reproduction (Apple, 1979; Giroux, 1983) and to ensure equity and parity for all (Brookfield, 2005; Geuss, 1981; Hoy & McCarthy, 1994) people must scrutinize social processes and agitate for change when inequities and injustices are evident or suspected. Conceptualizing review of educational, and all societal, processes as "critical" can prompt the enlightened citizen, educator, and student to refuse to accept unjust conditions (Barbules & Beck, 1999) and become unstintingly, even obsessively, devoted to challenging the will of the powerful.

Critical social theory is inherently interrogative, skeptical of received knowledge, and committed to revising societal processes that do not contribute toward making human interactions fair and just (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994; McLaren, 1997), making it an especially propitious theory for my study which seeks to actively adjure others to enact social change. Merriam (2001) wrote, "In critical inquiry the goal is to critique and challenge, to transform and empower" (p. 327), as pithy an encapsulation of critical theory as there is. Finally, my conceptualization of critical social theory will encompass the insightful thinking of postmodern and psychoanalytic scholars who posit the validity and utility of appreciating multiple perspectives and a plurality of voices and ideas when contemplating the contemporary liberatory project as well as the crucial need to appreciate the social by examining the individual and vice versa (Agger, 1992; Anyon, 1994; Best & Kellner, 1991; Cary, 2007; Grace, 1997; Kincheloe, 1995; Slattery, 1995; Ziegler, 1999). While the postmodern and psychoanalytic perspectives do not assume a prominent role in this study, failing to acknowledge their influence in my theorizing would neglect a substantial contribution to my understanding. Developing an appreciation for these perspectives has allowed me to fully comprehend the validity of multiple positions with regard to the world and phenomena, and that unconscious and unacknowledged

factors affect individual and social functioning (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991), and they have motivated me to accept that there may be more to the world than the way I, and Others, view it. Living in the world means living with the World.

The Frankfurt School Is In

Founded in 1923 at Frankfurt am Main, Germany, as a separate entity within the university there, the Institute for Social Research, later to be colloquially referred to as the Frankfurt School, began as a fundamental Marxist think tank intended to discover approaches to political and social reconstitution that could enlighten social practices and work to achieve equity (Agger, 2006; Held, 1980); in fact, the funding for the start up was provided by Herman Weil, a rich businessman, at the urging of his son, Felix, a self-professed "salon Bolshevik" (Bronner, 2011, p. 9). Not until 1930, however, would the School establish its defining theoretical stance that would gain it unparalleled esteem and relentlessly vociferous derision. In that year, Max Horkheimer was installed as the president of the Frankfurt School, and immediately began assembling what would become the inner circle of critical theorists who would establish the elemental ideas of the new undertaking (Geuss, 1981; Wiggershaus, 1994; Wolin, 2006). Central to this group in addition to Horkheimer were Theodor Adorno, Friedrich Pollock, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, and later, Erich Fromm, who would introduce a pronounced psychoanalytic perspective directly from Freud, an aspect of critical theory that remains underappreciated and misunderstood (Whitebook, 2004), and yet, is an essential constituent of the original, and many subsequent, schools of critical theory. Later still, inaugurating what would eventually be termed the "second generation" of critical theorists, Jürgen Habermas would add to the intellectual ferment by including a degree of individuality to the research focus and breaking the inertia that was the signal criticism of the original theorists (Bernstein, 1995; Calhoun, 1992;

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Grumley, 2005; Habermas, 1972), an approach not popular with the famed inner circle (Hanks, 2011; McCarthy, 1978). His influence would have profound impact upon the subsequent thinking of the leader of the "third generation"[1] of critical theorists and current president of the Frankfurt School, Axel Honneth (Alexander & Lara, 1996; Deranty, 2009; Honneth, 1986; Petherbridge, 2011; Strydom, 2011). Through the vicissitudes of theoretical confluence and divergence, personality conflicts and ideological chasms, and the relentless depredations of war and social upheaval that would present logistical challenges and result in personal tragedy, the aim of the Frankfurt School would remain the same: to ameliorate the social inequities of human interactions by informing contemporary civilizations with theoretical insights (Alford, 1988; Arato & Gebhardt, 1978; Duthel, 2010; Jay, 1973).

During the tumult of World War II and Hitler's internecine struggles to gratify his enormous ego needs through genocidal devastation (Rosenbaum, 1999), the Frankfurt School exiled itself to the U.S. and England, though not all would make it out. Benjamin, doggedly pursued by the Gestapo and perhaps harassed by his own thoughts[2] (Gilloch, 2001; McCole, 1993), would take his own life in a Paris train station restroom (Osborne, 1997), effectively exterminating one of the most fruitful strains of critical theory before it could fully develop (Rosen, 2004). In the 1950's, once the Fuhrer and his nefarious minions had been killed, captured, or began a marginal existence on the run, many of the critical theorists of the School would return to Frankfurt—though some remained expatriate—and once again begin pursuing the reclamation of society that they deemed all important (How, 2003; Hoy & McCarthy, 1994; Kellner, 1989). Having divested themselves of the practical inaction with which their critics had hounded them (Agger, 2006; Adams, 1971; Bronner & Kellner, 1989; McLaren & Giarelli, 1995), subsequent generations of Frankfurt School scholars would vacillate between innovation

and an irresistible return to beginnings, but the forward momentum of social progress would win

out (Levinson, Gross, Lick, & Hanks, 2011; Rush, 2004; Stirk, 2000).

What is Critical Theory? Dissecting the Chimera

Horkheimer (1937) coined the term "critical theory" in an essay that lamented the failure

of the predicted proletarian revolution[3] (Marx, 1845/1977), simultaneously naming the nascent

philosophy and theory and establishing the negative aspect that it would eventually have to

repudiate. From the outset, it is crucial that the reader of this study be aware that, although

critical theory has been applied appropriately, and profitably, to a variety of fields (Crotty, 2006),

the critical referred to here is distinctly critical social theory. To avoid confusion or the necessity

for mental gymnastics to facilitate comprehension, the terms "critical theory" and "critical social

theory (CST)" will be used interchangeably to signify CST. As Brookfield (2005) and others

confirm (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008), the concepts of criticality and critical theory are

multifarious, imbued by individual thinkers with meaning, and ultimately "reflects the ideology

and worldview of the user" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 11). In the aspect of critique, the idea of critical

theory has become integral to a number of scholastic endeavors, including art (Roblin, 1990;

Tyson, 2006), literature and cultural studies (Parker, 2011), politics (Agger, 2006), humanities

and social science (Malpas & Wake, 2010) and countless other pursuits, yet it is the scrutiny of

social processes, institutions, and governmental activities that are most often associated with

critical theory, and certainly with the theorizing of the Frankfurt School (Agger, 1992; Alford,

2001; Dadds, 2011; How, 2003; Levinson, 2011), and the variety of critique that concerns me in

this study. Having established the general focus of critical theory one would be tempted to

believe that defining it would be a relatively simple matter; however, in keeping with one of the

few consistently agreed upon tenets of all critical theory, everything is subject to review and

revision, including the definition of critical theory itself (Buchanan, 2010; Horkheimer, 1972; Payne, 1997), what Brookfield (2005, p. ix) calls "critical theory critiquing its own suppositions" and a practice not always appreciated. As Payne (1997) writes, critical theory "bravely, but perhaps quixotically, persists in confronting a recurring chain of skeptical epistemological questions" (p. 119). In keeping with this understanding, it is necessary to examine several variants of critical theory and CST to fully appreciate what is aimed at; however, as a social and philosophical discipline of thought, some commonalities that have emerged as applicable to the various strains of critical theory include employing the critical method to critique modernities; pursue social emancipation of oppressed peoples; examine the perceived pathologies of sociality and their adverse effects; contest commodification, reification, and fetishization that detract from the fulfillment of the lived life; and offer critiques of mass culture and its deficiencies (Agger, 2006; Bronner, 2011; Geuss, 1980; Held, 1980; Hoy & McCarthy, 1994; Malpas & Wake, 2010; Rush, 2004; Swindal, 2010; Wiggerhaus, 1994).

Returning to what may be the defining characteristic of critical theory, Kincheloe and McLaren (2008) remind readers that, in addition to the existence of multiple meanings for critical theories,

> the critical tradition is always changing and evolving…and attempts to avoid too much specificity, as there is room for disagreement among critical theorists. To lay out a set of fixed characteristics of the position is contrary to the desire of such theorists to avoid the production of blueprints of sociopolitical and epistemological beliefs.…Critical theory should not be treated as a universal grammar of revolutionary thought objectified and reduced to discrete formulaic pronouncements or strategies. pp. 403-404

Schwandt (2007) adds that critical theories employ the approach of "immanent critique" (p. 55) as a method for working within critical theoretical attributes in order to radicalize categories, identify inherent contradictions and inconsistencies, and determine and develop previously unrecognized possibilities. Rush (2004) agrees, holding that critical theories have "always been rather fluid, even by design, and it would be a mistake to attempt to treat even [their] early history univocally" (p. 7) and Bronner (2011) notes that such has always been the case with critical theory, "uniquely experimental in character, deeply skeptical of tradition and all absolute claims" (p. 1). How (2003) cites Marcuse (1964) as just one of the founders of critical theory who identify the "intrinsically speculative nature of reason" (p. 3) as one of the defining dimensions of this theoretical project. Ultimately, its penchant for critical self-reflection and searching scrutiny may be one of the few aspects of critical theory that stands as inarguable (Alford, 2001; Bronner, 2004; McLaren & Giarelli, 1995; Neuhouser, 2003; Pippin, 2004; Wexler, 1983; White, 2004).

Another feature of critical theory that has been deemed operative is mistrust—if not ostentatious contempt for—the positivist research paradigm (Bronner, 2011; Hoy & McCarthy, 1994; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008; McLaren & Giarelli, 1995). Partly a reaction to the failed Marxist project which embraced—if it did not uncritically accept—the positivist approach, suspicion of the traditional scientific method was also a result of the influence of what Kincheloe and McLaren (2008) call "the post-discourses" (p. 404) such as postmodernism, poststructuralism, and critical feminism. All of these epistemological approaches emphasize the individual and subjective nature of understanding worlds, making any totalizing project suspect and, possibly, altogether useless (Grace, 1997; Habermas, 1981; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995/2008), although not all critical theorists find positivist and critical paradigms as

inherently antagonistic (How, 2003). The effect of these multiple positions of critical theorists is to impress one with a sense of a theory that is structured enough to make critique, regardless of the research focus, central, while remaining flexible enough to incorporate various methods.

Bronner (2011) describes critical theory as predominantly a liberatory and emancipatory project intended to question competing theories and existing social structures for the purpose of unearthing injustice, inequities, and oppression. Eschewing established social institutions as incommensurate with freedom, he maintains that critical theorists have no truck with "perennial philosophy" (p. 1) and remain flexible in order to address changing historical and contextual circumstances that are crucial to the attaining of liberty and equality. Interdisciplinary and incorrigibly and unabashedly experimental, critical theorists are interested not only in what is but what could be. Conceived within the crucible of Marxist thought, critical theories keep their gaze on the particular while not ignoring the totality, after the tradition established by Kant. Still others underscore the inherently theoretical basis of the critical project relative to social science and philosophy (Rush, 2004), reiterating the impotence of universalizable principles and highlighting the innately interpretive dimension of these manifold approaches to understanding phenomena. "Critical theory attempts to rescue from idealism a conception of reason as unified in its practical and theoretical employment, coupled with a dialectical and materialist account of human flourishing," Rush (2004, p. 25) avers. Finally, a prominent feature of critical theory is its avowedly partisan stance. Kincheloe and McLaren (2008) opine that whereas "traditional researchers cling to the guardrail of neutrality, critical researchers frequently announce their partisanship in the struggle for a better world" (p. 406). Somewhat provocatively, Agger (2006) proclaims that "critical social theory is not ashamed of its political commitment" (p. 24) and Brookfield (2005) asserts that "one of the strongest hopes of critical theory is that consideration

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of its understandings will prompt social and political change" (p. 7). Although many critical

theory stalwarts have disavowed pragmatism as a guiding philosophy (Aronowitz, 1995;

Gramsci, 1972; Horkheimer, 1947/1995), critical theory as derived from the Frankfurt School is

unquestionably a liberatory endeavor (Bronner, 2011; How, 2003; Hoy & McCarthy, 1994;

Rasmussen, 1996; Schwandt, 2007).

Kincheloe (2008), in his extraordinarily accessible work on critical pedagogy, perhaps

offers the most useful conspectus of critical theory for this study. Seeing unmistakable

connections, if not inherent and inextricable commonalities, between critical theory and critical

pedagogy, after a brief but comprehensive excursus into the history of critical theory and its

storied development, Kincheloe begins by acknowledging the difficulties correspondent to

attempts to define the school, which, in his estimation, and mine, is actually an aggregation of

similar theories. In his view,

> Critical theory is a difficult animal to describe because (a) there are many critical
>
> theories, not just one; (b) the critical tradition is always changing and evolving; and (c)
>
> critical theory attempts to avoid too much specificity, as there is room for disagreement
>
> among critical theorists. To lay out a set of fixed characteristics of the position is contrary
>
> to the desire of such theorists to avoid the production of blueprints of sociopolitical and
>
> epistemological beliefs. p. 48

Holding true to the cardinal principles of critical theory, he acknowledges his subjective take on

the critical theory tradition, yet also credits the affirmative influence of the various

postdiscourses of the late twenty century that overhauled and refined critical theoretical

approaches. In the final analysis, Kincheloe (2008) describes critical theories as "always

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evolving, changing in light of both new theoretical insights and new problems and social circumstances" (p. 49).

With due regard for the multiformity that critical theories display, Kincheloe (2008) still discerns traits of all the theories that can be operative in them all, especially for the project of critical pedagogy that seeks to ameliorate social conditions through education designed and implemented for purposes of critical and social consciousness (Lima, 2007; Livingstone, 1987; McLaren, 1994; Steinberg, 2007). Of these, he highlights *critical enlightenment*, the theoretical and philosophical perspective that encourages examining competing power differentials between groups to determine who is benefitting at the expense of others; *critical emancipation* that results in the acquisition of power, or the recognition of the inherent power possessed (Foucault, 1977), by previously disempowered and oppressed peoples; the *rejection of economic determinism* which, in its strict Marxist conceptualization, constrained innovative thinking that has since accepted economics as just one source of power working against the dispossessed and unprivileged; the *impact of desire* which incorporates poststructuralist psychoanalytic methods and viewpoints to ensure that the importance of the individual psyche affecting social arrangements is not ignored and is fully appreciated for its potential to reveal social disparities; believing that critical theories should always be concerned not only with what is but what could be, Kincheloe lists the *concept of immanence* to emphasize Freire's conviction that critical theory is, in all its manifestations, a way of improving lives; *hegemony* also reigns as of superior importance among the constellation of factors contributing to effective and responsible critical theories, since power, and how it works to dominate and shape the individual and collective conscious is a dimension of criticality that cannot be ignored without disastrous effects; and hegemony cannot be understood usefully without it concomitant, *ideology*, which encompasses

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the cultural, ritualistic, and representational ways that hegemonic power elites maintain their treasured status as rulers and oppressors; *linguistic/discursive power* is crucial for furthering critical projects since language is never a "neutral and objective conduit" (p. 55) for describing the "real world" and its conditions and is always constrained by discursive rules that regulate speech and expression; the *relationships among culture, power, and domination* must be continually assessed for their aggregated effects, especially since culture is a contested field of knowledge production; the *centrality of interpretation* must be attended to for "in knowledge work there is only interpretation, no matter how vociferously many analysts may argue that facts speak for themselves" (p. 57); and, finally, he asserts monumental *role of cultural pedagogy in critical theory* since cultural production is a form of education that creates knowledge and is integral to shaping the individual identity. Clearly, critical theory, in all of its multifarious manifestations, offers a toolbox of useful theoretical implements to critique existing social structures and their products and to suggest possibly ameliorative theoretical solutions.

Stalked by a Marxist Apparition

Though the Frankfurt School was born of the Marxist project intended to facilitate the proletarian revolution that his "theory of historical stages" predicted (Marx & Engels, 1932/1970), the failure of the longed-for revolution to materialize precipitated an existential and theoretical ennui among Marx's heretofore faithful acolytes (Agger, 1991; Althusser, 1996; Kellner, 1978; Torrance, 1995). Dismayed by the evident ineffectiveness of a theoretical historical occurrence postulated but not realized and that they considered imminent and ineluctable, many Marxists simply turned to other philosophical and theoretical paradigms (Anyon, 1994; Balibar, 1994; Daly, 2010; Resnick & Wolff, 2006)—postmodernism, pragmatism, democratic socialism—but many others embraced the idea of neo-Marxist thought

in which the basic project, acting on social institutions to effectuate more equitable

circumstances and ensure social justice, remained intact, while his less useful ideas, such as

economic determinism, dialectical materialism, historicism, and the concepts of the base and

superstructure, were jettisoned (Giroux, 1985; Hall, 1986). Explicit in making the

Marxist/critical theory connection, Levinson et al. (2011) posit "a deep analysis of the structural

domination that capitalism begets is one of the common threads that bind most critical social

theorists. If our argument is correct, then Marx is certainly the most prominent and influential

forerunner in critical social theory" (p. 26). Some theorists believe that it is safe to describe the

modern critical theoretical approach as virtually devoid of strict Marxist influences, in spite of

some assertions that the Marxist influence still remains (Honneth & Baynes, 1993; Kellner,

1989; McLaren, 2002). Daly (2010) describes the historical relationship between critical theory

and Marx as an "ambiguous one" (p. 28) saying that although some thinkers have espied an

intrinsic coupling others have seen critical theory as a fundamentally postmodern paradigm that

is continually evolving. Notwithstanding origins and original positions, there appears to exist a

clear separation between Marx and current critical theorists (Bronner, 2011), who range the

epistemological and philosophical spectrum in any case (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008);

nevertheless, Daly (2010) accurately proclaims a thematic debt owed by critical theory to Marx

regardless of supposed or real differences. Perhaps Bronner (2011) gets closest to an accurate

assessment. Conceding the Marxist origins of critical theory, he points out that Frankfurt School

critical theorists

> were from the start dismissive of economic determinism, the stage theory of history, and
>
> any fatalistic belief in the 'inevitable' triumph of socialism. They were concerned less

with what Marx called the economic 'base' than the political and cultural 'superstructure' of society. Their Marxism was of a different variety. p. 2

He goes on to enumerate other differentiating factors, such as their preference for the critical method rather than systematic claims, Marx's concern with alienation and reification, his criticism of the Enlightenment, the importance of ideology, and commitment to resisting the degradation and devaluing of the individual. This "complex of themes" establishes the principle concerns of what has been called "Western Marxism" (p. 3).

Regardless of the disillusionment experienced by critical theorists, the divorce from Marxism sought by neo- and post-Marxists has not been easy or complete. The desire to retrieve that which was still valid from Marxist philosophy while discarding those aspects that were defunct or died aborning left contemporary critical theorists open to charges of archaic thinking on the milder end of a continuum of adverse criticism that contains blatant accusations of subversive behavior and the glorification of totalitarian traits of communism and despotism at the far end (Fukuyama, 1992). Especially prevalent during the dark ages of McCarthyism and the Cold War (Marcuse, 1958; McLaren & Giarelli, 1995), even today less discerning commentators still resurrect the bugbears of socialism and authoritarianism to dissuade such theorists and to beguile anyone courting the antithetical idea of engaging in autonomous trains of thought. Some modern critical theorists actually advocate a return to Marx (Žižek, 1989). Marx and contemporary critical theories may be officially divorced, yet the ghost of the great socialist continues to stalk his estranged theoretical progeny, exerting an inordinate influence over the thinking of those contemplating critical theory even if actual Marxist influences have been consigned to the far corners of modern critical theoretical perspectives. Doubtless, as the

progenitor of this far-reaching and provocative body of thought, Marx will remain an ever-present specter.

Many and Sundry Influences: Freud, Nietzsche, and Postmodernism
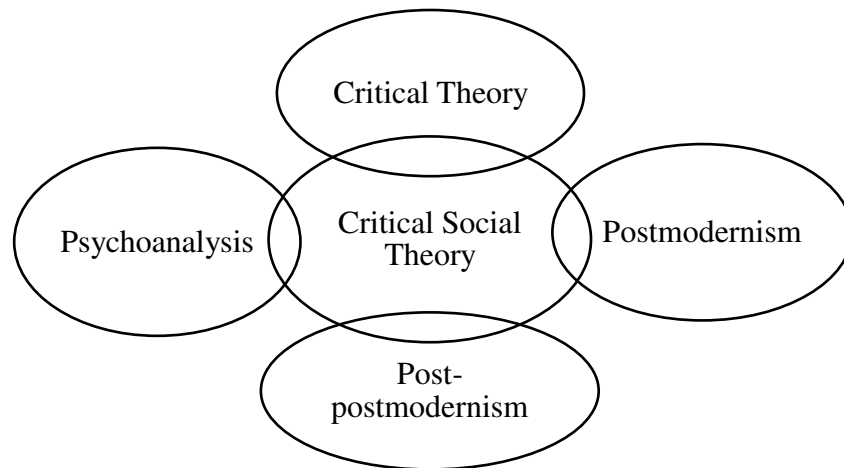
Figure 1. Many and sundry influences. Contemporary critical social theory is an amalgam of diverse theories and philosophies that contribute to liberatory thinking.

Critical theory and the Frankfurt School carry a legacy of "multiplicity in unity" (Bronner, 2011, p. 18). The inner circle originally assembled by Horkheimer and the intellectual ferment that it constituted established the school as the premier think tank for social theoretical experimentation (Bronner, 2002; Calhoun, 1995; How, 2003; Hoy & McCarthy, 1994). Each of these seminal thinkers of the twentieth century

> had his [sic] particular interests and unique intellectual strengths and weaknesses. But
> they all shared a commitment to the same cluster of themes and concerns…all of them
> were skeptical about establishmentarian modes of thinking. All of them sought to deal
> with new problems by introducing new categories. Critical theory in their hands was
> marked by intellectual daring and an experimental quality. It was for them, in the first
> instance, always a matter of method. Bronner, 2011, p. 18

Such observations establish quite clearly the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of critical theory and its Frankfurt School progenitors (Bronner, 2004), making a review of some of the major influences key to understanding this multifaceted theoretical perspective.

    "Sometimes, a cigar is just a cigar!" Critical theory was born of psychoanalysis, at least, as much as any of its other seminal influences (Bronner, 2011; Bronner & Kellner, 1989; Malpas & Wake, 2010; Rush, 2004), and arguably more so. Horkheimer (cited in Jay, 1973) emphasizes the point, saying, "We really are deeply indebted to Freud and his first collaborators. His thought is one of the *Bildungsmächte* [foundation stones] without which our own philosophy would not be what it is" (p. 102), a position that Whitebook (1995) affirms. He places the profound significance of the connection between Freudian thought and the Frankfurt School in historical perspective, noting that both were "products of the traumatic and fertile encounter between central European Jewry and the German Enlightenment" (p. 1). He further points out that the Frankfurt School made a deliberate, purposeful effort to position Freud on the same intellectual and social level with Hegel, Kant, and Nietzsche, purposefully seeking a synthesis between Freud and Marx (p. 2) in order to potentiate their critical social project.

    Modern life is rife with dysfunction, and psychoanalysis, developed in the very early twentieth century by Sigmund Freud, endeavors to effectively negotiate the vicissitudes of harried and anxiety-filled existences. To do so, the subject must first understand the unconscious psychic stimuli that impel maladjusted behaviors (Colman, 2006). The work of finding an effective way of dealing with life's challenges, on the individual level, can begin in earnest only when the traumatic experiences causing the dysfunction are revealed and scrutinized for their significance. The value of Freud's work was readily apparent to the theorists of the Frankfurt School, men who would later call themselves critical theorists (Horkheimer, 1937/1976). They

saw the stupendous implications of Freud's "talking cure" yet sought to pursue it on a larger

scale in conjunction with their critical, neo-Marxist, intellectual and social project, hoping to

effect monumental changes in society (Bronner, 2002; Held, 1980; How, 2003), a position that

simultaneously found support (Rush, 2004b), as it does today (personal communication, March

9, 2012, W. Pinar), and disapproval (Blake & Phelps, 1994), with the most salient criticism being

that the Frankfurt School offered no corrective for what they perceived to be society's

deficiencies (Bronner & Kellner, 1989; How, 2003), merely exposing the problems for scrutiny,

a position that many found impotent (Malpas & Wake, 2010; Rush, 2004c). Criticisms and

doubts notwithstanding, the theorists of the Frankfurt School forged ahead and established Freud,

along with Marx, Hegel, Kant, and Nietzsche, as one of their intellectual forebears (Bronner,

2011).

The Frankfurt School theorists considered Freud's work as crucial, if not completely

indispensable, to their scholarship (Brown, 1973; How, 2003; Madison, 2005; Malpas & Wake,

2010). When Eric Fromm began to disassociate from Freud, they deplored the break as "a

serious threat to the political and intellectual 'line' of the Frankfurt School" (McLaughlin, 1998,

p. 118), even citing Fromm's essay "The Social Determination of Psychoanalytic Theory" (1935)

as the opening salvo in the conflict between Fromm and the Frankfurt School's Freudian

positions (Wiggerhaus, 1994). Deeming the rigorous, radical critique of modern society as

crucial to the successful achievement of real freedom and social equity, they felt that his act

threatened the very crux of what they sought to do. Adorno and other critical theorists considered

his "revisionism" as leading away from their central focus (McLaughlin, 1998; Wiggerhaus,

1994). Despite Fromm's perceived apostasy, Freud and psychoanalysis would remain integral to

the pursuit of the critical theoretical project, a status that it retains today. Clearly, the germinal

importance of Freud and psychoanalysis to critical theory is inarguable (Whitebook, 2004), and

although the potential of the union has been seen by many as merely latent—pun intended—if

not completely dead (Brown, 1973; Dufresne, 2007; Kalin, 1974; Madison, 2005). Others

position psychoanalysis as a chief component of the critical theory that emerged from the

Frankfurt School (Weinstein, 2001) largely based on its emancipatory potential (How, 2003;

Marcuse, 1955/1987) and the requirement that critical theory once again become a "theory of

practice" (Bronner, 2011, p. 74).

What does not kill your theory makes it stronger. When contemplating theory, it is

important to remember that robust theories are always subject to revision, renewal, and

reconsideration. As Brown (2005) makes the case, "Theory is never 'accurate' or 'wrong'; it is

only more or less of an incitement to thought, imagination, desire, possibilities for renewal" (p.

80). With this qualification in mind, one can appreciate how the writings, theorizing, and

philosophizing of Friedrich Nietzsche have been influential across the epistemological spectrum,

and have "had a significant impact on…critical theory" (Sedgwick, 1997, p. 373). The original

Frankfurt School theorists found much to admire in Nietzsche, including his distrust if not open

contempt for the bourgeoisie, a recognition of human cruelty and the will to power as something

that must be acknowledged and tempered, a belief that striving for the totality of happiness was a

valid focus for social theorists, recognition of basic human instincts without the need to sacrifice

rational thought (Bronner, 2011; Wiggerhaus, 2001), and his utter contempt for extant

organizational and institutional structures (Malpas & Wake, 2010). His anti-Christian stance and

willingness to subsume the totality of his formative learning, cultural, and social traditions was

another aspect of his philosophizing that brought him renown in their theoretical and

philosophical circle. Almost no philosopher had attempted so resolutely, without regard for

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socio-historical trends, to negate and destroy his own origins and training. Indeed, Wiggerhaus (2001) notes that "Almost no philosopher so uncompromisingly and aggressively placed self-unfolding and enhanced life above considerations of personal gain and social success" (p. 144). They were additionally inspired by Nietzsche's "resurrection of subjectivity…and his searing criticisms of the cultural philistine" (Bronner, 2011, pp. 29-30), and, like Nietzsche, they had come to find the Western style of reason itself dubious (How, 2003). His conviction that expressions of everyday life were much more than simple objective knowledge come manifest but were actually developed through the idiosyncratic sense of self-identity (Pinar et al., 1995/2008) was another appealing feature of his work.

Coming to Nietzsche during the time when calumny of his supposed anti-Semitic and fascist leanings presumably identifiable in his works was rampant[4] (Love, 1987), the Frankfurt School thinkers endeavored to "rehabilitate" him (Ingram, 1986; Wiggerhaus, 2001) by decocting the socially and intellectually useful aspects of his thinking while rationalizing or disdaining those attributes of his theory that were distasteful. Later investigators would show that his reputation as an elitist and bigot was generally undeserved (Miller, 2012; Safranski & Frisch, 2003)—with the critical exceptions of his misogyny and belief in the efficacy and acceptability of eugenics[5] (Young, 2010)—allowing his theories and writings to reemerge into acceptable social and intellectual discourse (Crotty, 2006), although Adorno evidently accepted Nietzsche's elitism on face value, at least initially, and simply his way of underscoring that the social flock failed to realize its revolutionary potential for lack of a theoretical shepherd (Brunkhorst, 2004). Notwithstanding these troubling aspects of his life and works, and though he long ago lost a central place in critical theory, he remains a palpable, if residual, influence in that school of

thought (Buchanan, 2010; Crotty, 2006; Honneth & Baynes, 1993; Pinar et al., 1995/2008; Rush, 2004).

Nietzsche admonished people to avoid self-delusion as anathema to free inquiry, accepted the will to power and human cruelty as basic facts, and saw life as an inevasible and continual struggle (Roth, 1992), aspects of the human experience that the Frankfurt School coterie could appreciate if not enjoy. In their view, as in Nietzsche's, adhering to the Aurelian dictum to "know things for what they are" was part and parcel to initiating the process of effecting substantive social change (How, 2003). He also not only declared God "dead," he criticized God's ideological and philosophical replacements, science and religion (Agger, 2006; Ingram, 1986). While they remained disturbed but enlightened by dimensions of his thinking such as his assertion that there were no moral phenomena but only moral interpretations of phenomena, and his unabashed contention that "independence is for the very few" (Nietzsche, 1886/2002), they credited Nietzsche as a seminal influence in the formulation of their critical theories (Held, 1980; Tar, 1977). In possibly his most famous work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1885/2012), the Frankfurt theoretical clique could discern an impelling theme for their work when Nietzsche exhorted people to shuck the "slave morality" of Christianity and will the type of world that they desired. In Nietzsche, they found their muse with regard to social and political activism undergirded by theory. Nietzsche may have lost centrality of place in modern critical theory, yet his influence is discernible in its every facet, incurring a debt on the part of all critical theorists that may not be denied. He finds his way into some of the formative works of the School, including Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1937/1972) and Jürgen Habermas' *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985), and found himself allied with the inner circle—Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse—regarding their cultural criticisms

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(Bronner, 2011). As a pioneering influence for the practitioners of critical social theory, Nietzsche stands eternally as part of the bedrock of their theoretical substrate.

The "postmodern turn" in critical theory. Deacon (1997), in his thought-provoking treatise, named *Homo sapiens* the "symbolic species," emphasizing symbolic communication as not only the stereotypical fashion of interacting but as what impelled human evolution and its unique intelligence that has allowed people to gain control over the Earth; as he sees it, the defining characteristic is an "unparalleled cognitive ability" (p. 21) that allows for creativity, symbolization, and imagination. In this way, Deacon's ideas about human beings comport well with the post-disciplinary approach of cultural studies and its postmodern frame which examines human culture largely from the way that people use symbols to convey meaning, especially in the social realm, by using "language games" and "maps of meaning" to convey intentions, beliefs, and various other cognitions (Barker, 2008; Hartley, 2003; Pinker, 1997). MacDougall (2006, p. 51) holds that "film offers social research and cultural studies a useful alternative to expository prose," a position not the sole province of modern theorizing and central to cultural studies (Grossberg, 1996). From this stance, however, I submit that the importance of symbols and their meanings are relevant to both the critical and postmodern theoretical conceptions of how meaning is socially constructed, and, consequently, bears on every dimension of human communication and interaction.

Critical theory now represents an attempt to "bring truth and political engagement into alignment" (Payne, 1997, p. 118), an aspect true to the original focus of the Frankfurt School's conception of an interdisciplinary project meant to achieve the Enlightenment ideal of a civil society deriving from scientific research to realize Marx's ideas about social change (Rosenau, 1992). Critical theorists see power relations throughout society (Apple, 1999b; Foucault, 1977;

Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008) and strive to understand—and redirect—those relationships so as to cause genuine change in the world though the predominant criticism of these thinkers remains their supposed lack of a mechanism to provide the actual means for such change, a criticism that highlights a fundamental misconception of the focus of critical theory as well as perpetuating deficiencies from a bygone era in the history of critical theory scholars (Brookfield, 2005; Larsen & Wright, 1993). The initial stage of any substantial revision of social conditions begins with an idea, a dream, and a theoretically entrepreneurial spirit that offers direction to change. Without the idea clarified by crisp, reasoned thought, no amelioration of inequitable social conditions is possible. Someone must light the way.

Described by Miller (2010), postmodernism is not an "ism," implying comprehensiveness not displayed by postmodern commentary, as much as it is a discursive refutation of modernity, in which virtually every facet of human experience is seen as determinate and manageable through use of the positivist frame (p. 666), a position that Agger (2006) agrees with, saying that its detractors "wrongly portray it as an ism, when in fact one of the defining features of postmodern theory is its aversion to system, ideology, dogma" (p. 45). The postmodern view stipulates that there is no big "T" truth, and that all thoughtful perspectives are worthy of being entertained, and they accept Lyotard's (1984) concise declaration that postmodernism represents an "incredulity toward meta-narratives" (p. xxiv), or the repudiation of tidy and tendentious views of reality. One criticism of the postmodern mode of thinking and theorizing that continues to vex is that it disclaims metanarratives while actually constituting one, an accusation that has been rejected but not cogently or adequately confuted (Callinicos, 1990; Chomsky, 1997; Norris, 1990; Tester, 1993; Turner, 1990; Wilce, 2005).

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Though some contend that critical theory and postmodernism are distinct and incompatible theoretical perspectives, others find no such disparity (Apple, 1999; Giroux, 2004; King, 2005; Ziegler, 1999). In fact, some find the combination felicitous (Allen, 1999; Grace, 1997; Stahl, El Beltagi, & McBride, 2005), although the difficulty of establishing an effective empirical methodology remains a source of debate. For others, postmodernism provides critical theory with a point of departure for inclusion in a variety of disciplines including journalism (Stone & Spiegel, 1992), literature, drama, and art (Phillips, 1999), psychoanalysis (Bracher, 2000), and cinema (Harvey, 1989), as well as in many other aspects of contemporary culture, including marketing, business, and in the interpretation of law, culture, and religion in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Jameson, 1991; Magnusson, 2003), and not the least of which is educational research (Apple & Whitty, 1999; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Best & Kellner, 1991; Cary, 2007; Doll, 1993; Kincheloe, 1995). Boje, Fitzgibbons, and Steingard (1996) argue that critical postmodern theory is about the "play of differences of micropolitical movements and impulses of ecology, feminism, multiculturalism, and spirituality without any unifying demand for theoretical integration or methodological consistency" (p. 60), a position that certainly comports with the critical theoretical frame in its pursuit of social equality and equity that comprehends myriad positionalities and subjectivities (How, 2003; McCarthy, 1991). In contemporary academic thinking, many scholars have either discarded postmodern ideas for other stimulating theories (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2000), or have accepted the validity and integral aspect of postmodern suppositions for contemporary thinking, a position that most critical theorists appreciate (Agger, 1992; Anyon, 1994; Kellner, 1989) although not without some criticisms (Eagleton, 1996; Hill, McLaren, Cole, & Rikowski, 2001; Moya & Hames-Garcia, 2000).

Critical Autoethnography: Taking a Hard Look at Your Place
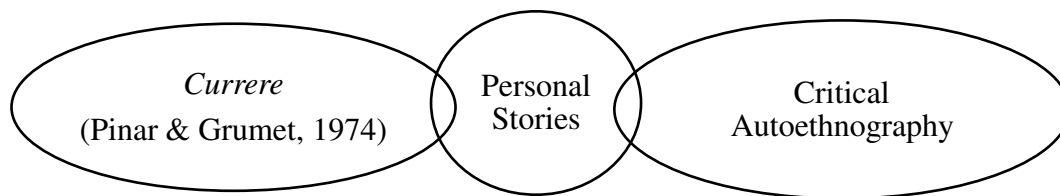
Figure 2. The explanatory value of the lived life.

As people and societies have despaired of finding answers to their most pressing social concerns in the positivist traditions of experimentation and dispassionate, objective examinations of social phenomena (Foucault, 1970; Habermas, 1972; Kuhn, 1962; Lyotard, 1984; Marx, 1845/1977), many researchers have turned inward, away from the often myopic focus on the macrosocial to the potentially elucidative terra incognita of the microsocial, the examination of individual experience for the purpose of informing social interactions (Agger, 1992; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008; Quicke, 2008; Shields, 2000; Smith & Wexler, 1995), as if in acceptance of Wolcott's (1999) dictum that "every view is *a* way of seeing, not *the* way" (p. 137). While such approaches are becoming increasingly fruitful avenues for scrutinizing sociality, even axiomatically so to some (Duncan, 2004), they are still often adversely and contentiously critiqued (Cannella & Lincoln, 2004; Holt, 2003; Muncey, 2005; Sparkes, 2002), even by those thoroughly immersed in the qualitative tradition (Crotty, 2006), and, despite some claims that the war between qualitative and quantitative researchers is over (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), occasional fusillades over the bow of one or the other research philosophy's ship is not

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uncommon. This bête noir of the qualitative research community is discovered lurking particularly often among the critical social theory enclave of researchers hoping to provide the fuel to liberate the oppressed societies of the world when the research focus is redirected from the pronouncedly social to the narrow focus of individual experience (Connerton, 1980; Horkheimer, 1937/1976). The basic argument proclaims that to enact social change one must train the lapidary lens of critical scrutiny firmly on social experience since that is where the useful data will be found (Geuss, 1981; Hanks, 2011; Jay, 1973; Tar, 1977), a stance that precludes and minimizes a cornucopia of research possibilities and leaves much fertile research ground laying fallow. A counterargument, taken from that which leveled strict Marxian thought, might be, with all the research aimed at the macrosocial, why do social inequities and injustices continue unabated and, perhaps, even having been exacerbated? Why has not the proletariat risen to unseat its overlords as Marx (1867) predicted? Following this argument, many have taken the Gestalt approach derived from psychological theorists, holding that to know the whole one must examine the constituents and vice versa (Smith, 1988). Though no one experience, or even a number of similar experiences, may provide the answers needed to address intractable social deficiencies, what they do provide are launching points for additional research, often more by engendering additional questions rather than answering existing ones. What becomes clear is that understanding social phenomena that contribute to inequality and deplorable social outcomes must account for the potentially profitable research field that is individual experience. By applying what is learned from the individual life, critical theorists, and qualitative researchers generally, may be able to finally achieve at least a modicum of the desideratum of critical social theories and curriculum studies: truly equitable societies. And since no methodology or method can be suffered to pass unexamined for its merit if genuine free societies are ever to exist, critical

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autoethnography and its congeners must be considered as potentially promising avenues of research.

Traditional autoethnography generally endeavors a more neutral perspective on the part of the researcher similar to the archetypal positivist stance that aspires to the objectivity of the physical sciences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), though recognizing the unavoidably tendentious nature of such research. In the realm of curriculum studies, both approaches assume a more directed perspective with regard to what is to be revealed, particularly in light of their typical desire to enlighten human interactions and the individual life (Jones, 2008; Pinar, 1988, 1994; Quicke, 2008; Schubert, 2010). My method, however, avoids the implicit criticality observed in the work of many autoethnographers and autobiographers by explicitly establishing a critical perspective. Consonant with the tenet of critical social theory that requires acting upon the social worlds (hooks, 1994; He & Phillion, 2008; Kellner, 2000; Shor, 1980/1987), I intend to place myself in the position of subject of cultural study and then examine my own experiences within the context of that culture, specifically the culture of the Southern White male police officer in a rural area. The potential disadvantages of such an approach are not inconsequential and include dealing with the impulse to protect a cherished social milieu and family and social relationships by scrutinizing them with a less than truly critical eye (Banks & Banks, 2000; Chang, 2005; Quicke, 2010). Such considerations are exceptionally pronounced when one considers the possible embarrassment associated with minutely examining one's own behavior and thoughts (Wall, 2008); nevertheless, rather than invalidating such research, what this entails is a more exacting approach to methods and a commitment to producing data that is worthwhile in a scholarly sense instead of indulging a narcissistic frenzy of self-adulation. Contrary to what many traditional positivist researchers have surmised—or taken as axiomatic and unassailable—

the most laudable advances in human knowledge have been achieved through the indulging of

conjecture and speculation assisted by the guide of research methodology (Kuhn, 1970) rather

than a rigid adherence to prescribed methods. In the modern age of technological and

informational exploration, this germinal idea has achieved the status of acknowledged basic

principle as opposed to the, sometimes still, relegation of qualitative and innovative research to

the realm of inexact and unsystematic methodology (Dilenschneider, 2010). Given that my sole

purpose for this study is to produce something useful and contributory to the field of curriculum

studies and the project of liberation of all people, my commitment to an unsentimental review of

my experiences is resolute and will eschew masochistic acts of self-recrimination as well as self-

aggrandizement. In my worldview, scholarship should be intended to enlighten others and

oneself, but inordinate preoccupation with the cognitive theatre of self predisposes one to

intellectual and emotional mediocrity.

Training the Critical Mirror at Self and Society

While autoethnography, a methodological process having emerged from its better known

progenitor in anthropology, ethnography (Patton, 2002), has become fairly well-known, if not

always accepted without demur (Thomas, 1993; Sparkes, 2002), the most recent addition to this

family of qualitative inquiries, critical autoethnography, remains obscure and is not infrequently

rebuffed in the social research community (Wall, 2008), even among those espousing qualitative

methods as inherently valid processes of research inquiry (Atkinson, 1997; De Vault, 1997;

Stivers, 1993). Only by encouraging researchers to use this powerful approach to explaining

social phenomena can people hope to see it meet its unlimited promise. Taking a psychoanalytic

perspective, Raskin (2011) affirms the value of self-reflection for broadening social

consciousness, writing that "exploring our personal narrative helps us to understand why we do

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what we do. Finding meaning in certain behaviors…is a valuable step in summoning the wherewithal to change them" (p. 55), a focus that Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) also extol. Unquestionably, if the focus is, in actuality, expanding the corpus of social knowledge, and the more exigent need to use that knowledge to ameliorate the conditions under which people live, they must avail themselves of this approach to qualitative inquiry. Summarily dismissing any methodology threatens to foreclose the illuminative possibilities of social research generally, and has especially perilous consequences if that knowledge is intended to ensure the efficacy of social institutions such as schools. Admittedly, a power relation identified by Lovell (2005) is at play in such research approaches as autobiography and autoethnography, one that, unaccounted for and unappreciated can subvert the positive attributes of these emerging and potentially efficacious research modalities as well as be used for iniquitous purposes by those aiming to distort research findings. Yet, by combining autoethnography, which offers glimpses of individual experience that can have relevance for social interactions, with the formidable power of critical social theory to assertively pursue changes in that social structure that fails to care for all of its members, critical autoethnography can be a redoubtable vehicle of inquiry for discovering those elements of social intercourse most promising for enacting substantive change. First, of course, the aspiring critical autoethnographer must know what critical autoethnography is.

A Darwinian Metaphor for Understanding the Methodology

In 1859, Charles Darwin posited a number of revolutionary ideas about the origins of life and success in existential competition in his monumental, *The Origin of Species*, a volume that was inarguably paradigm-shifting in the Kuhnian sense (Baum, 1999; Shermer, 2007). Seen by many as remarkably profound and illustrative across the intellectual spectrum (Dennett, 1995;

Quammen, 2006), it makes s fitting metaphor for the development of another "dangerous idea" (Dennett, 1995) that obtains in this study, the advent of non-traditional qualitative research paradigms such as critical autoethnography. Just one species of the burgeoning genus of autoethnographies, critical autoethnography's origins lay in the research strata associated with ethnography and its progeny (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Patton, 2002; Schwandt, 2007) though having speciated completely, it is decidedly distinct from ethnography itself (Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2006; Ellingson & Ellis, 2008).

Ethnography as a qualitative method was appropriated by the other social sciences from the field of anthropology (di Leonardo, 1998; Hayano, 1979; Patton, 2002) and has flourished as a research paradigm, even developing a critical variety of its own (Foley & Valenzuela, 2008; Thomas, 1993; Vandenberg & Hall, 2011). Autoethnography was generated from the fertile field of ethnography which concentrated on participant observation to illuminate the culture. Instead of taking the ethnographic approach, autoethnography employed the researcher as subject. Characterized in the 1970s as "insider ethnography" (Hayano, 1979), autoethnography was quickly perceived as something much different from ethnography (Anderson, 2006; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008). According to Patton (2002) "what distinguishes autoethnography from ethnography is self-awareness about and reporting of one's own experiences and introspections as a primary data source" (p. 86). Although Ellingson and Ellis (2008) describe two primary types of autoethnography, analytic and evocative, with the analytic approach directing its efforts toward understanding social phenomena by concentrating on theoretical perspectives and the evocative type focusing on "narrative presentations that open up conversations and evoke emotional responses" (p. 445), a variety of subspecies have emerged that allow for creative expression in collecting the exotic specimens that represent social lives (Ellis, 1997), including

performance autoethnography (Spry, 2001), organizational autoethnography (Parry & Boyle, 2007), and even collaborative autoethnography (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2001; Lapadat, 2009). The nascent methodology continues to spawn variations, occasionally causing terminological confusion. Autoethnography has been described as autobiographical ethnography, auto-observation, critical autobiography, ethnobiography, evocative narratives, indigenous ethnography, interpretive biography, literary ethnography, narrative ethnography, native ethnography, new ethnography, personal ethnography, postmodern ethnography, reflexive ethnography, self-ethnography, socioautobiography, and sociopoetics, to name just a few (Patton, 2002). Whatever the particular manifestation, commonalities are evident, rendering these methods as the progeny of one genus, in which critical autoethnography is included; in fact, given that many proponents of autoethnography find the critical aspect inseparable from autoethnography (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997; Goodall, 1998; Noblit, Flores, & Murillo, 2004; Spry, 2001) some even question if it is innately superfluous (Tullis Owen, McRae, Adams, & Vitale, 2009) and thus pointless to demarcate from autoethnography itself. Notwithstanding speculations about its legitimacy, the reader will see that critical autoethnography proffers a stance on the autoethnographic perspective that is not accounted for in the other methodological projects.

What is Autoethnography?

When people study history they study themselves; likewise, when they confront their history they confront themselves. This research and the dissertation that chronicles it is a confrontation between me and my life meant to extract information that offers some chance of improving social circumstances by deriving lessons from my own experience, a critical endeavor if ever there was one, and critical autoethnography is the method best designed for the purpose.

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Any useful definition of critical autoethnography, a term credited to Hayano (1979), must derive from an understanding of autoethnography, not least because autoethnography subsumes a form of criticality and political commentary within it (Denzin, 2000; Park-Fuller, 2000; Quicke, 2008), that could—and does—cause confusion for those attempting to comprehend critical autoethnography, yet, criticality itself is evident in myriad forms, making the need to differentiate varieties crucial for understanding; in fact, Richardson (2000) maintains that the integration of literature, art, and social science for enacting change is exactly the point of autoethnography. However it is conceptualized, critical autoethnography is, incontestably, an offshoot of autoethnography and contains within it the same elemental constituents of its parent social research methodology, including the examination of culture from the perspective of the lived life as analyzed by a participant in that culture. Perhaps the particular advantage of critical autoethnography for examining power as it acts upon lives is that adduced by Butler (1997), who stresses the paradoxical nature of confronting power for enlightenment. Deriving her concept from the works of Hegel, Freud, Althusser, Nietzsche, and Foucault, Butler underscores the psychic distress and bewilderment that can result from realizing that not only are people oppressed by power differentials in their social relations, these differences may constitute the very nature of individual subjectivity. For Butler, it is the operation of social power that anchors people's psyches in the world. Consequently, how does one deal with power when striving for equitable social arrangements? First, the operative power relations must be identified, a fact that makes critical autoethnography exceptionally useful. In a later work in which she incorporates the thinking of Theodor Adorno and Emanuel Levinas to examine how people can become moral individuals despite their immersion in the universal, Butler (2005) maintains that becoming morally responsible persons requires separation from the universal, describing "divergence" as

"the inaugural experience of morality" (p. 9). What Butlerian thinking emphasizes in the context

of critical autoethnography is its superlative value for initiating the difficult journey that is self-

awareness and the concomitant possibility of learning to act within subjectivity for the social

good.

In his superbly applicable reference work, Schwandt (2007) contends that

autoethnography is a way of writing that strives to unite the autoethnographic with the

autobiographic for the purpose of inviting the reader into the writer's story with the intent of

explicating some aspect of the writer's experience. To be effective, the autoethnographic account

must aim to "keep both the subject (knower) and object (that which is being examined) in

simultaneous view" (p. 16). For Schwandt, autoethnography is more evocative—keeping with

Ellingson and Ellis' (2008) definition of evocative autoethnography—than analytical, meant to

evoke and illustrate rather than make declarations or support factual contentions, a position that

finds resonance elsewhere in the field of social research (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Similarly, Patton

(2002) postulates that ethnography and autoethnography may be conceived as extreme ends of a

qualitative continuum that encompasses a vast array of methods. Vidich and Lyman (2000) assert

that early researchers using ethnography saw it as "the window through which the prehistoric

past could be seen, described, and understood" (p. 46) and Goodall (2000), describing

autoethnography as the "new ethnography," says that it involves writing "creative narratives

shaped out of a writer's personal experiences within a culture and addressed to academic and

public audiences" (p. 9). Ellis and Bochner (2006) explain that autoethnography is "an

autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness,

connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 739) and Wall (2008), an ardent proponent of the

form, sees it as "an intriguing and promising qualitative method that offers a way of giving voice

to personal experience for the purpose of extending sociological understanding" (p. 38), a description that is consonant with others (Sparkes, 2002). Despite the apparent consensus, there exist variant impressions of what autoethnography actually is. Frank (2000) argues that it is the telling of personal experience that disdains analysis and seeks a personal connection. Spry (2001) sees it as a "self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts" (p. 710) and has a definitive sociopolitical aspect, which Holman Jones (2008) believes "writes a world in a state of flux and movement—between story and context, writer and reader, crisis and denouement. It creates charged moments of clarity, connection, and change" (p. 207). Chang (2008) maintains that it is a research methodology that engages individual persons in cultural interpretation and analysis and Starr (2010) explicitly associates it with Freire's (1970) conception of *conscientization*, contending that autoethnography "which involves the individual becoming aware of one's position and creating a space to change the perception of the resultant reality" (p. 1). Perhaps the most redolent description of autoethnography comes in a question posed by Patton (2002): How does my own experience of this culture connect with and offer insights about this culture, situation, event, and/or way of life (p. 84)? Regardless of the conceptualization, the common features obviously involve using individual experience as a forum for making observations that have some application for appreciating social worlds.

The Autobiographical Component

One aspect of autoethnography that requires attention in order to clarify definitional concerns is the inherently autobiographical aspect of autoethnography. In her marvelous exposition of the Okefenokee Swamp, *Trembling Earth* (2005), Nelson maintains that "the best way to get to know a swamp is to wander around in it for a while" (p. 1), an assertion that could as plausibly be made for examining a life seeking to tease out its relevant cultural aspects.

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Autobiography presents a number of possible advantages for conducting qualitative research, not least in the fields of education and curriculum (Grumet, 1980; Pinar, 1974; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995/2008). As Grumet (1990) explains, "autobiography becomes a medium for both teaching and research because each entry expresses the particular peace its author has made between the individuality of his or her subjectivity and the intersubjective and public character of meaning" (p. 324). Although an autobiography may be wholly unrelated to autoethnography, the converse does not apply. Many researchers utilizing the autoethnographical research modality understand that the autobiographical is an unavoidable thread that runs throughout (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004; Maréchal, 2010; Patton, 2002). Autoethnography, by definition, is autobiographical (De Vault, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Holman Jones, 2008). By making the author of the study the subject of research, the author's personal story takes center stage, even though the objective is to distill cultural elements of the author's experience for the better understanding of the reader and the author herself (Humphreys, 2005). The singular aspect here is that acknowledging the autobiographical constituent that is endemic within autoethnography does not redirect the focus of the study to something self-serving or egocentric. Spry (2001) contends that "reflecting on the subjective self in context with others is the scholarly sagaciousness offered by autoethnography. Good autoethnography is not simply a confessional tale of self-renewal; it is a provocative weave of story and theory" (p. 713). Denzin (1992) asserts further that there is a contextual component that must account for the historical moment and that the story being told must critique that historical moment and examine its "discontents" (p. 25). Geertz (1973), famous in qualitative research circles for having specified the need for "thick description" in studying social phenomena qualitatively, conceptualizes autoethnography as less about the author and more about being an "I-witness:"

This issue, negotiating the passage from what one has been through "out there" to what

one says "back here," is not psychological in character. It is literary. It arises for anyone

who adopts what one may call…the I-witnessing approach to the construction of cultural

descriptions….To become a convincing "I-witness," one must first…become a

convincing "I." pp. 78-79

Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2010) are even more explicit, writing that

autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and

systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience.

This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and

treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. *A researcher uses*

tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography [emphasis

added]. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product. para. 40

Despite the fact that there is tremendous creative latitude found in autoethnographical texts (Ellis

& Bochner, 2000), written, performative, or other, and the reasonable possibility that it may be

more a philosophy than a distinct qualitative method (Wall, 2006), autoethnography is "an

autobiographical genre of writing and research" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) and remains firmly

steeped in the autobiographical genre, a fact that Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) surmise is key

for social analysis, a phenomenon that they adjudge as occurring covertly. Consequently,

prosecuting any study meant to improve social conditions requires mining the subjective

experience for gems of knowledge that may elucidate understanding of those conditions, the

indispensable prerequisite for effecting substantive change. Although, as Boler (1999) observes,

"the Socratic admonition to 'know thyself' may not lead to self-transformation," what she terms

"collective witnessing" (p. 178), always taking place in relation to others, thus positioning it to

act upon social conditions. Supporting her view, Pinar (2004), speaking to the tenets of curriculum theory in the wake of the Reconceptualization, opines that "self-knowledge and collective witnessing are complementary projects of self-mobilization for social reconstruction" (p. 37), an assertion that firmly establishes the need to examine the individual life in the context of the social environment to ensure equity and social justice, making critical autoethnography exceedingly well suited as a methodology for social research. In order to extract the cultural relevancies from my own experience and profitably extend them to the larger phenomenon of Southern rural policing, critical autoethnography, predicated upon the use of a strict academic approach, must be used.

So, What is "Critical Autoethnography?

As noted previously, some researchers and other commentators see differentiating autoethnography and critical autoethnography as pointless, with the fundamental objection being that the innately critical aspect of autoethnography makes the distinction unnecessary (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). This position, however, misses the point that criticality itself has gradations and varieties (Agger, 2006; How, 2003), and the critical theory intrinsic to autoethnography does not necessarily relate to the form of critical awareness sought in using critical autoethnography, although it may encompass both (Quicke, 2008). Assuredly, many autoethnographers have employed the critical approach now discussed, derived from the Frankfurt School, yet failing to expressly acknowledge the differences leaves readers, and future researchers, in the lurch to the extent that they must tease the various studies apart to garner the needed data, and parse the often commingled critical aspects for the ones most pertinent to their own studies, meta-analyses, and personal edification. Truly, a wealth of critical autoethnographic studies is obscured from the curious by the appellation "autoethnography." By explicitly announcing the critical social

dimension of the critical autoethnographic study, researchers can facilitate the research of others and save incalculable amounts of time for others. As a distinct variety of autoethnography, the critical approach places auditors on notice that what lies within is avowedly intended to enact change on the world that is derived from theory (Quicke, 2008), a Freirean perspective (Freire, 1970) that has been esteemed by socially and politically active researchers for decades.

In its most basic form, critical autoethnography attempts to answer the Deleuzian question, why do people desire that which oppresses them (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972)? More than self-indulgent introspection and narcissistic preoccupation with self, it seeks to illuminate the dark recesses of the social milieu (Watson, 2009) so that people can examine the love of power for what it is (Foucault, 1972, 1980) and endeavor to follow Freire in acting upon the inequities of society by "reading and writing our worlds" (Freire & Macedo, 1987). For Watson (2009), participant observation itself is inherently a critical form of autoethnography, providing people with a means of studying their own lives as events in history and mining them for the gems of enlightenment that register most because they are personal. Methodologically, it situates the individual life and attendant experiences in a position of reflexive analysis ensconced within discourse and utilizing various texts in the sense that Pinar et al. (1995) describe, including literal writing, physical and virtual, as well as identificatory and existential dimensions. As Quicke (2008) explains

The term 'critical' is used here in both an everyday and a more formal sense; the former to emphasize that what the reader can expect is not just a celebration of success or a self-promoting account of the 'good' work of a professional but one which contains much more ambiguity, self-doubt and even some self-condemnation. But the idea of 'critical' also refers to how actions taken measured up in terms of the moral and political

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ideals....In this sense, these accounts might be seen as a form of educational action

research for social justice. p. 3

Quicke's assessment finds supporters throughout the field of qualitative research and education

(Brookfield, 1995; Clough, 2002; Palmer, 1997; Richardson, 2000; Taylor, 2007).

Unequivocally, the assertion of this study is on par with Boyd's (1999) and intends purposefully

to use the critical autoethnographic approach to research "in support of an agenda for social

change and progressive values" (p. 379). The experiences of the individual life, analyzed for

their content relative to the world of social experience, and strained through the sieve of critical

interpretation for ideas relevant to social and political change, has unlimited potential for

stimulating substantive action by providing others information and inspiration.

Critical, Postmodern, Social Psychoanalytic Autoethnography?

Notwithstanding the qualifier "critical" in the term critical autoethnography, it is

uncontroversial to say that the methodology derives from the epistemological base of

postmodernism. Patton (2002) ascribes this to challenges to the neutrality and objectivity of the

observer manifest in the questions raised by postcolonialism and postmodernism at the beginning

of the twenty-first century, specifically pointing out postmodernism's probing of the idea of

detachment in social research. Some have postulated a critical postmodern approach to critical

praxis which requires researchers to readdress their own perspectives with regard to criticality

and research in light of the undeniable influence and insightful aspects of postmodern sentiments

(Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008; Sirotnik, 1991); specifically, all researchers in the qualitative

tradition must be open to scrutinizing that which is obvious (Slaughter, 1989). Emphasizing the

point, Kincheloe and McLaren (2008) proffer the opinion that

Oppositional and insurgent researchers as maieutic agents must not confuse their research

efforts with the textual suavities of an avant-garde academic posturing in which they are

awarded the sinecure of representation for the oppressed without actually having to return

to those working-class communities where their studies took place. Rather, they need to

locate their work in a transformative praxis that leads to the alleviation of suffering and

the overcoming of oppression. p. 427

What quickly becomes apparent is that, following in the Baconian tradition[6] of inclusive

scholarship, all social science researchers are eclectics now, if they are honoring the fundamental

traditions of genuine scholarship and absorbing what is useful and educative.

Still, autoethnography emerged from the postmodern approach to understanding

(Duncan, 2004; Starr, 2010; Wall, 2008), as did its progeny, critical autoethnography, an

eminently logical contention given the involved, multifarious concept that autoethnography

represents. Just as postmodernism values multiple viewpoints rather than valorizing grand

narratives and unitary truths, autoethnography has emerged as a research approach that

acknowledges the multitudinous nature of individual lives and experiences, an aspect that makes

room for personal voice and reflexivity (Mykhalovskiy, 1996; Tierney & Lincoln, 1997),

allowing for those who have traditionally been the marginalized Other, studied as specimens by

researchers outside of their idiosyncratic experience to finally express themselves (Russell,

1998), thus underscoring the liberatory and critical potential of this inclusive medium of social

research. Ellingson and Ellis (2008) view autoethnography as a social constructionist endeavor,

also consonant with the postmodern perspective, since it repudiates simple binaries between

researchers and research, as well conceding that subjectivity is part of, and perhaps integral to,

all research, certainly in the qualitative sphere. Reed-Danahay (1997) very pointedly establishes

the postmodernist substructure of autoethnography, saying that autoethnography "synthesizes both a postmodern ethnography…and a postmodern autobiography" (p. 2), not only confirming the postmodern nature of autoethnography but again reaffirming its autobiographical dimension.

While conceding it postmodern precursors without reservation, a plausible argument may also be made for the native criticality of autoethnography. Wall (2006), discussing her own experience with autoethnography, says as much, remarking that the indulgence of her curiosity about the subject led to

> a foray into postmodern philosophy and critical theory, reflexivity and voice, various vague approaches to autobiographical inquiry, validity and acceptability, defences and criticisms, and a wide range of published personal narratives, the typical product of autoethnography. I was confronted, challenged, moved, and changed by what I learned. Therefore, in keeping with the essence of autoethnography, I finally came to the realization that I could share my experience of learning about autoethnography and, in the text, co-mingle me and it. para. 1

Her account clearly signals that autoethnography potentiates the critical social theoretical approach to inquiry, even if not the unambiguously critical epistemology, a position easily discerned in the literature of others (Neuman, 1994; Pelias, 2003). Just as the Frankfurt School of critical theorists were taken to task for their unconcealed passivity and inaction with regard to their theoretical foci (Agger, 1992; Alford, 1988; Hanks, 2011; Wiggershaus, 1994), postmodernism often suffers under the same critical scrutiny for its failure to act upon the deficiencies in the social order that it identifies (Eagleton, 1996; Jameson, 1991). The value of critical social theory in the social context is that by bracketing individual experience and unpacking its potential for enlightening self and others, it provides a mechanism for social and

political change that is its self-professed purpose. Eschewing the passivity of its postmodern forebears, critical autoethnography stands ready as a vehicle for critical social theoretical research.

Critical Autoethnography: Criteria, Validity, Utility

Wiman (2012) concisely encapsulates the most often trotted out criticism of autoethnographical and autobiographical methods, concluding that "The temptation is to make an idol of our own experience….Experience means nothing if it does not mean beyond itself: *we* mean nothing unless and until our hard-won meanings are internalized and catalyzed within the lives of others" (p. 71). Most often, the controversy and most virulent criticism of autoethnography and, by association, its critical variant, surrounds the question of its utility as a qualitative methodology sufficiently rigorous to meet reasonable standards of social science (Duncan, 2004; Wall, 2008). Occasionally accused of "rampant subjectivism" (Crotty, 2006, p. 48), the crucial question becomes, is critical autoethnography a valid form of inquiry allowing it to contribute useful data and ideas to the world of social scientific research? Indisputably, it is, and will only grow in its utility as it is employed more widely and its results are given increased scrutiny and peer review. In the meantime, answering the question of its validity starts with a review of the criteria used to assess autoethnography, most of which applies equally to critical autoethnography.

In her superb exposition of what she calls the emerging art of autoethnography, Duncan (2004) enumerates some of the perceived shortcomings imputed to the modality, noting particularly that autoethnographic accounts can suffer from several shortcomings resulting in an unscholarly representation of the research experience. These shortcomings include overreliance on the potential of a personal writing style to evoke direct emotional responses in readers but

offer no deeper levels of reflection or analytic scholarship; lack of self-honesty and disclosure about the motivation for doing the research

> …failure on the part of the researcher to see the relationship between personal experience and broader theoretical concepts; and…inability to defend against reasoned critique while still making claims to knowledge. These criticisms of unscholarly writing might apply particularly to some of the more experimental forms of autoethnography in which the boundaries of scholarship are merged with artistic expression as a way of challenging the limitations of what is normally accepted as knowledge in academic contexts. p. 11

Along with Duncan's (2004) list, one can add the criticism of preconceived ideas that researchers bring to the autoethnographical project that are anathema to traditional research paradigms (Stivers, 1993; Wolcott, 1999), a tendentious outlook that constrains autoethnographic researchers to entertain only certain data as pertinent (Thomas, 1993), the repudiation of traditional concepts of objectivity, truth, and reason (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), a presumed lack of theoretical base (Sparkes, 2002), and the still developing criteria of judging this new species of qualitative research (De Vault, 1997) as well as a simple lack of respect by those active in the field and wedded to the traditional, positivist scientific paradigm (Holt, 2003; Muncey, 2005).

In order to ensure the validity of autoethnography, a number of suggestions have been proposed that can be applied to critical autoethnography as well. Some of the suggested criteria for evaluating the validity of autoethnography is standard fare in qualitative research, such as Ward's (1993) assertion that autoethnographic stories and their kind must make research design and analysis explicit and that research design must obviously fit the questions being asked, and Malterud's (2001) suggestion that traditional qualitative and ethnographic techniques, like triangulation, member checking, and the citation of disconfirming evidence, should be used and

explained when they are applicable to the research. More specifically, Richardson (2000), in delineating the process of "creative analytic practice ethnography," a term that incorporates the new qualitative research methods that involve writing about personal experience and subsumes autoethnography, proposes five criteria: substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impact, and expression of a reality. In essence, does the work advance social research in some creditable way; does the use of the research approach succeed through its aesthetics in reaching its audience; does the personal knowledge discovered by the researcher redound to make the researcher better informed; does it affect the reader to the point of some action, or engender new questions that may inspire additional research; and does it convey a credible sense of lived experience? What is most important, says Richardson, is that the work ensure "high and difficult standards" (p. 937) and avoids simple novelty. Following on the notion of generating more queries that may excite new research, renowned educational researcher Elliot Eisner (1996), confirms that one criterion for evaluating these new qualitative research methods is by evaluating the quality and number of questions raised. Duncan (2004) hews to a more traditional approach for evaluating autoethnography, maintaining that by demonstrating its usefulness to others, the work can avoid or rebuff criticisms of being self-serving. She notes that Eisner (1991), most often lauded for his explorations into the artistic possibilities in education and research (Eisner, 1985, 2002), considers the relative utility of qualitative studies as the best benchmark for assessing its worth, particularly by disabusing the bewildered of misconceptions and explaining abstruse concepts, by helping readers to anticipate future occurrences, and by acting as a guide for understanding, especially by highlighting phenomena that might escape notice yet have relevance for understanding the subject of study. Such criteria can act to validate

autoethnographic research as viable and lend it credence when under attack by other scholars who may not appreciate these emerging modalities.

In a critical vein, Holman Jones (2008) wants the researcher to take the autoethnographical conversation "into the next turn, crisis, and moment" (p. 234) in furtherance of Denzin's (2000) idea of moving the work "without hesitation or encumbrance from the personal to the political" (p. 261). The criteria that she establishes enjoins autoethnographers to *recognize the power of the in-between*, thus creating space for possibilities; *stage impossible encounters* that challenge the reader to think and ponder; *contextualize giving testimony and witnessing* so as to develop doorways for others to enter through the relation of personal experience to the broader social world; *create disturbances* that harness the power of provocation, raising questions and implicating other thinkers and researchers; and *make texts of an explicit nature* that are purposive in moving readers toward engaging their social, cultural, and political worlds (Holman Jones, 2008, p. 235). According to Holman Jones, these are the challenges that present themselves to anyone who aspires to pursue writing as research.

Denzin (1992, p. 200) states that any method of the writing genre in research must be so well written that it is "capable of being respected by critics of literature as well as social scientists," a criterion that Spry (2001) also acknowledges. In proffering what makes for effective autoethnography, she wisely advises that the writing be expressive and technically proficient, and she cites several theorists who posit emotionally engaging writing that is critically self-reflective of the sociopolitical interactivity of the writer as other indispensable aspects of good autoethnography (Behar, 1997; Ellis, 1997; Ronai, 1992). Lincoln and Guba (1985) enumerate five criteria that they considered essential to any autoethnographic account: *fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity,* and *tactical authenticity*.

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Fairness requires that potential stakeholders be identified through research that is sufficiently

transparent to allow for the resolution of competing and disputed claims; ontological authenticity

exists to the extent that the researcher is able to realize some useful benefit from having obtained

new data about their own experience; educative authenticity accounts for the degree to which the

study augments the understanding of readers and their enhanced ability to engage with those

outside of their area of experience; catalytic authenticity judges the degree of action on the part

of readers that is stimulated and is similar to Lather's (1991) concept of catalytic validity for

social research; finally, tactical authenticity examines the level of actual empowerment that the

reader feels after contemplating the work, and the perceived ability to act on their social world.

In addition to these criteria, Lincoln and Guba (1985) also prescribe authenticity in terms of

methodological and aesthetic rigor. Clearly, autoethnography is not a research methodology that

allows for laissez-faire or permissiveness in its approach to studying social phenomena. While it

certainly holds the door open to a variety of valid methodologies, it demands that utility, validity,

and specifiable criteria be the price of admission.

   Data collection methods. In collecting data for this study, I will mine the wealth of my

own life for experiences that bear upon the subject, specifically, what influences are contributory

and potentially causative toward engendering the hypermasculine sense that I have contended

with all of my life. While the possibility of genetic and predispositional attributes will not be

ignored, they will not be awarded prominence of place. Rather, my contention is that the

influences of my Southern White male rearing are paramount and, ultimately, the most likely to

be explicative of my struggle to emerge from that stifling social context to strive to become a

person devoted to true social justice rather than becoming an increasingly conservative and

socially illiberal police chief executive, a fate regrettably predominant among my peers

(Hennessey, 1998; Isenberg, 2009), and generally common in the South overall (Bullock & Rozell, 2009), and which portends inequitable outcomes for the socially disadvantaged, particularly women and African-Americans. By drawing upon my own formative and profoundly influential experiences, I will tease the details from this welter of knowledge to find those that not only tend to explain my intellectual and social development, but will meticulously parse those that offer the most promise for providing encouragement to others who may be amenable to dramatically altering their received ideologies and opinions, especially those in the police profession.

For several years of my municipal police officer experience I kept meticulous journals, perhaps with the romantic notion that my memoirs might someday make interesting reading, but also as a cathartic act meant to expunge the built up excitement and nervous energy that I often carried home with me.[7] A disclaimer is warranted here, however: availing myself of verifiable physical evidence is in no way an obeisance to positivism nor an apologia for the principal approach to this decidedly qualitative study. Any documentation examined in this research is intended expressly for the purpose of furthering my desire to offer a rich description of the profession and culture with which I am familiar. Still, the existence of documentation chronicling my experiences will doubtless lend an enhanced sense of understanding to this project.

Data analysis and representation. By critically examining the constituents of my own experience as a Southern White male police officer and the hypermasculine imperative that so heavily influences Southern police officers generally, I will identify themes that are causative and explanatory of this phenomenon as well as potential correctives that may encourage practitioners of modern police work to reframe their perspectives on social matters to include the

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tenets of social justice and equity. By unpacking the inherent power differentials of Southern

society and how they work to marginalize specific elements of the population, I will delineate the

ways that these power differentials may be reconfigured to achieve parity in social relations. My

data will be presented in the form of personal stories and anecdotes that contain the raw material

for the potential social enlightenment of myself and others, particularly those in my erstwhile

profession of policing. Having collected these potential themes and correctives, I will discuss

them and offer insightful review of their meanings and origins. I am convinced that taking a

firsthand perspective motivated by the desire to make a substantive contribution to social equity

will prove fruitful and will present other social researchers with productive areas for further

research.

One aspect of autoethnographical inquiry that is much debated is the distinction between

autoethnography and autobiography, with some asserting an identifiable difference (Patton,

2002) and others little or none at all (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The literature, however, is

unequivocal in demonstrating that, although they are distinct, autoethnography encompasses an

autobiographical element while, conversely, autobiography may have no hint of

autoethnography. The autobiographical researcher may utilize that particular methodology for a

variety of reasons such as to enlighten themselves personally and may barely touch upon cultural

elements, preferring instead to retain a focus on their experiences. Autoethnographers, however,

always concentrate their foci on the cultural aspects of their lives and experiences for the purpose

of elucidating those attributes of culture that bear upon some social phenomena of interest. Even

though using themselves as research subjects, autoethnographers expressly intend to contribute

something explanatory to the area of sociality under study.

In one sense, autoethnography is legitimately subject to charges of narcissism. After all, what reasonably intelligent scholar with a bent for research and penchant for writing could resist the urge to write about such a fascinating subject as oneself? Truly, such an endeavor is an omphaloskeptic feast resisted easily only by the seriously disciplined individual. Like a wild beast that may be trained for some useful purpose though never really tamed, autoethnographic research is never completely under the researcher's control, making continual vigilance to assess its worth mandatory, and only the mature, devoted researcher can control the beast for the time necessary to realize its incalculable benefits as a research modality. The inherent difficultly of training the authorial gaze inward is exemplified by Crews (1978/1995) in his masterpiece of introspection farmed through the examination of place, *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place*:

> I would someday have to write about it all, but not in the convenient and comfortable metaphors of fiction….It would have to be done naked, without the disguising distance of the third person pronoun. Only the use of *I* [author's italics], lovely and terrifying word, would get me to the place where I needed to go. p. 25

Still, notwithstanding the attendant haunting anxieties and laborious effort—some would say titanic struggle—required to accomplish the autobiographical or autoethnographic narrative, the cost is worthwhile when the benefits derived from the unique position of the researcher ensconced in the context of study is fully appreciated. Only a commitment to academic rigor, methodological fealty, and the effective use of processes like peer review can ensure that anything approximating the Holy Grail of positivism, objectivity, is reached. But it is worth pointing out that qualitative researchers must not use positivist tenets as a guiding ideal. Doing so may well nullify the value of qualitative inquiry altogether (Patton, 2002). Abetting the validity and utility of qualitative methods generally, and autoethnography particularly, is the

epistemological revolution wrought by the postmodern perspective and its sequelae which offer the advantage of an appreciation for multiple realities, plurality of perspectives, multiplicitous metanarratives as opposed to grand narratives that constrain thought, truths rather than Truth, and a healthy skepticism toward anything described as "definitive" or "factual." In the intellectual and scholastic ferment that has resulted from the Darwinian provocation, the Freudian emancipation, the advent of critical theory, the postmodern turn, and the curriculum reconceptualization, the contemporary educational and curricular researcher can unbridle the imagination and see where it leads, and no imagination delights in any locale more than in the land of its own experience.

Another potential theme for debate among researchers regarding autoethnography is definitional and pertains to differences, real, perceived, or unceremoniously disputed, between autoethnography and critical autoethnography. Some identify a clear difference between the two, denominating critical autoethnography as the more radical, and therefore, pragmatic, of the methodologies; still others discern no difference, correctly positing an inherently critical element in autoethnography, thus rendering the critical variety superfluous as a discrete methodological concept. In the interest of a more balanced approach to this debate, it is profitable for the inquirer to remember that both autoethnography and critical autoethnography are still in their nascent stages compared to research methods of more extensive pedigree; factually, critical autoethnography is of so recent a vintage that many otherwise capable researchers are likely to be completely ignorant of it altogether. Admittedly, the literature on critical autoethnography is sparse and offers little to clarify this incipient dispute about its fundamentals; nevertheless, the provenance of all research methods, can be located somewhere in time (most uniquely

pinpointed in the history of research methodologies), and the fact that the conversation is worthy of having indicates that at least some researchers are finding it worthwhile to employ.

My view is unambiguous: although autoethnography does, indeed, subsume critical elements within its meaning, the criticality it includes is usually limited to the type expected when conducting a course of self-reflection for the purpose of enlightening oneself, or others, as to the meaning of the individual experience, and suggests nothing about the larger implications of the research for scrutinizing and acting upon the world of those experiences. The unmistakable value of critical autoethnography, for this study and all others, is that it not only mandates self-reflection as a research approach, it avowedly applies the method of criticality to the individual life with the aim of revealing data that can be useful as a way of acting upon the social world, utilizing effectively the Freirean injunction to theorize while enacting substantive change (Freire, 1970). This study follows in that now hallowed tradition, seeking first to understand so that what is discovered can be presented to the world for whatever utility it may provide in mitigating the inequities of unjust societies.

Collecting Specimens: What Does Critical Autoethnography Look Like?

Really appreciating something, whether physical entity or cutting-edge qualitative research concept, requires examining a few specimens; unfortunately, "few specimens" aptly encapsulates the state of affairs when referring to critical autoethnography, at least, as far as locating those overtly identified as such. As mentioned previously, however, the species is much more prevalent than one would at first assume, merely hidden by the cryptic covering of ill-defined terminology in many cases. Notwithstanding the difficulties associated with capturing critical autoethnographies so identified, one can examine some that are devoutly "critical" and many others that fail to confess their critical bases. In any case, peering through the microscope

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at the animal in the flesh can only serve to reify the concept and encourage a fuller appreciation for it as a valid research modality.

In their study of personal development set in Mozambique, de F. Afonso & Taylor (2009) gather data and analyze de F. Afonso's growth as a science teacher sensitive to the culture in which she practiced. Utilizing multiple narrative processes, including recording interviews with her colleague, Peter Taylor, de F. Afonso explores her research experience as a critical ethnographer after experiencing a critical event involving one of her young students. Having been prompted by a question from Peter, she articulates her objectives as wanting to use her own autoethnographic experience as a way of encouraging other teachers to examine their own lifeworlds in the furtherance of appreciating their own sociohistorical contexts, possibly contributing to an enhanced sense of social justice. Also, by "engaging in meta-level discourse about my original narratives I intend to turn this text more toward a dialogical (rather than a monological) recount of that story. It is my ambition that this way of writing will stimulate the reader's critical cultural awareness of their own teaching practice" (p. 274). In the process, she identifies Burdell & Swadener's (1999) use of personal narratives in response to the "colonizing or 'othering' discourse" (p. 22) in postcolonial societies as operative. In a show of autoethnographic virtuosity, she even glosses her interview responses with observations about her experience of the interview itself. Comfortable that she has achieved her objectives, she closes the study with the question: *How much am I encouraging my students to reflect critically upon their own practices as students and as teachers?* (p. 281). This study stands as an excellent example of the potential that critical autoethnography has for self-awareness, regardless of social position, and even underscores the lexical confusion associated with the terminology, given that

de F. Afonso often uses "critical autoethnography" (p. 273) and "autoethnography" (p. 274) interchangeably.

In her innovative study of critical pedagogy, Horan (2004) chose critical autoethnography as the ideal modality for allowing her to examine and critique the totality of her teaching experience as a White, middle-class pedagogue in a predominantly minority school. Having identified multiple anxieties and uncertainties that contributed to her trepidation as a teacher, she successfully used the critical autoethnographic approach to elucidate her personal journey and emerge as a more thoughtful and perceptive practitioner capable of employing self-critical and socially critical lenses to assess the utility of her practice and the relative efficacy of critical pedagogy. The critical frame used allowed her to recognize the continued presence of masculinist and White elitist tendencies still extant in her educational venue, and her complicity in perpetuating the status quo. In the end, even her despair at having failed to make the substantial changes and improvements that she hoped for were educational, permitting her to appreciate the value of critical reflection and to be able to pass the perspective on to her students and fellow teachers. In this case, critical autoethnography provided a means of enlightening multiple aspects of the educational and social environment.

Demonstrating the universal applicability of the critical autoethnographic research modality, Rhee (2002) examines the phenomenon of Korean "traveling women," writing that "the study traces how we have been navigating multivalently narrated histories, cultural forms, and relations of Korea and the U.S. to make sense of our transnational localities" (p. ii). This ambitious study attempts to use critical autoethnography to illuminate subjects in multiple social positions, and even more impressive, subjects who must successfully negotiate alternating positionality. In addition to affirming Hall's (1990) thesis that people in such circumstances are

acutely subject to the "play" (and interplay) of culture, history, and power, the researcher

additionally identifies the need for her and those like her to find support and informative

dialogue among themselves, efficaciously utilizing the areas of "in-betweenness" in which they

find themselves, what she calls open "eye/I" after Kondo (1990). The support found allows these

socially challenged persons to accept themselves without aspiring to impossible ideals foisted by

either culture, the U.S. or Korea, and to find multiple ways of validating each other's existence.

Finally, having developed the critical perspective to good effect, she recognizes the futility of

trying to transcend culture, gender, nationhood, and other aspects of institutionalized everyday

life (p. 158). All people are lifelong captives of the social milieu from which they spring

regardless of where they go or what they become.

Returning to Quicke's (2008) self-study of his experiences as an English psychologist

working with school children with special educational needs—read identified as "behaviorally

disordered"—and the stories that he relates reflecting his experience with these children, one

discovers an innovative research methodology, critical autoethnography, infiltrating the

traditionally positivist world of psychology. Candidly describing himself as a critically reflective

practitioner, Quicke maintains that his professional work is not ideologically neutral but, in fact,

involves "a commitment to a particular set of values and understandings of the 'world'" (p. 1),

thus fulfilling one of the fundamental requirements of critical inquiry, that it be based in praxis

and act upon the world to ensure a just and equitable society (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994; Kincheloe

& McLaren, 2008). His "stories," he cautions, were not collected with research in mind but as a

practicing psychologist, and only after reflection did he recognize the power differentials that

were inherent in the relationships between students and practitioners, a situation that clearly

called for critical reflection. His conclusion was that inclusion was a crucial concept for all

children, not just those with "special needs," and that all children were deserving of education. In his research, he realized that power was always operative, making knowledge "subject to critique from different socially and culturally located perspectives" (p. 3). Through the use of critical autoethnography, and drawing upon his own unique experience, he was able to reveal insights that held the potential for informing the practice of others and eventuating in better outcomes for children in real educational settings, thus successfully combining theory and praxis, the Freirean ideal (Freire, 1973).

In *It's My Story!,* a critical autoethnography that does not explicitly identify itself as such but avowedly claims critical race theory as its theoretical frame, Chávez (2009) brilliantly examines her own experiences as a chicana student who proved an "anomaly in higher education" (p. 1) since she persevered despite the odds that would have understandably predicted an unsuccessful educational outcome for her. Nevertheless, she persisted into the upper levels of graduate education in spite of acquiring English as a second language, having received her elementary and secondary education in underfunded, under-resourced public schools in an economically depressed and underprivileged area of the Los Angeles suburbs, and having been pulled through the metaphorical educational pipeline that relegated children of her station to the realm of the invisible with respect to pedagogical investment. Regarding her choice of theory, CRT, she proclaims it not a matter of choice at all but simply inevitable given her social position and sense of place, yet an inevitability that will result in novel discoveries as a result of "new alternatives in thinking about the voices that have been excluded in the academy" (p. 9). Explaining her use of autoethnography in her research methodology, Chávez asserts that she found herself unable to write with the accustomed academic distance of the traditional researcher, always finding her own views and values interpolated into the text. And, although she

respects the validity of traditional methods and their continued need, she believes that "the actions and behaviors of our everyday lives—the instances that serve to inform theory—become obscured among the academic discourse that only a few are privileged to generate and understand" (p. 11). By employing the critical approach of CRT married with autoethnography, she hopes to enlighten those toiling in the realm of racial disadvantage and educational endeavor and awaken critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). For Chávez (2009), her critical review of her own experiences confirmed that, though she was often lonely in her educational struggles, she was never alone, having many fellow travelers in the Latina community, and that, in the journey of education, not only students are taught, but "we (re)educate ourselves" (p. 218), a decidedly Freirean (1970) notion that precedes him in general outline at least to Socrates. This revealing study not only serves as an excellent example of how a critical autoethnography may be conducted, by lighting the way for future generations of marginalized and dispossessed minority students and socially responsible educators, it exhibits all the finer aspects of critical education and pedagogy (Apple, 1997; Castells, Flecha, Freire, Giroux, Macedo, & Willis, 1999; Kellner, 2000).

The positivist methods of research spawned by the Enlightenment resulted, unquestionably, in monumental advances for human societies. Improvements in medicine, technology, industry, as well as horticulture and animal husbandry based on experimental techniques all provided more secure and stable civilizations that have allowed for even more significant progress in the world of pure knowledge—where would Darwin's theories be now without Mendel's classic experiments?[8]—have produced effects in human existence that continue to redound to the credit of the "hard sciences." Yet, the apotheosis of the experimental method as the sole valid approach to understanding for years thwarted other methods that would

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eventually provide equally, if not more, fruitful research into what is arguably the most important research of all—human societies and how people conduct them. Until the advent of qualitative methods and their appreciation as legitimate research modalities, multiple areas of the human experience lay unexplained, and misunderstood. Now, with these methods at their disposal, people can truly begin to disabuse themselves and their posterity of the misconceptions and afflictions of ignorance that have held them in thrall. Critical autoethnography offers just such a method, one that carries the promise of social liberation through a more thorough understanding of the oppressive features of contemporary societies that elevate some and marginalize others. By employing this explicative research medium broadly, relating the stories of real lives entrenched in real cultures, one can partner the dispassionately clinical approach of classical experimental methods with a more flexible inquiry that can illuminate the recesses of human biographies and the in-between spaces.

By combining the professedly praxis-oriented approach of critical social theory with the culture-probing apparatus of autoethnography, critical autoethnography trains its theoretical and methodological lens at the lived lives of modern humanity, a research aspect that is bound to offer insights into some of the most profound sociological conundrums and generate discerning questions that will foster even more exciting research. The world of research possibilities is endless and bountiful, making innovative, effective research methodologies not only acceptable, but sorely needed, especially when directed toward studies that seek to enhance shared understandings of education and curriculum. Few areas of human endeavor are as significant and in need of sound explication, and few offer as much potential to alleviate suffering and ensure the equitable process of communal living in an increasingly perilous and uncertain world. Ultimately, by heeding Freire's (1970) injunction to act in the process of theorizing, humans may

yet actually achieve the desired egalitarian social arrangements that so often suffuse rhetoric, making real what has thus far eluded understanding.

Without minimizing the promise of the critical autoethnographic method, one must always keep in mind that it is an ongoing, continually revised project that disdains totalizing theories and must episodically be readdressed to remain useful. Just as Heraclitus' cautionary injunction stipulates, one cannot step twice into the same river nor can one take a snapshot of a culture exhibited through the study of a single life and then rest on one's laurels, satisfied that one has made some permanent, constructive inroad that will eternally illuminate. As Elbaz (1987) explains, "the beginning coincides with the end and the end with the beginning which is the end—for autobiography (like fiction) is an act of ceaseless renewal: the story is never 'told' finally, exhaustively, completely" (p. 13), and just as it is with *currere*, so it is with critical autoethnography, life change is constant, so self-reflexive study must be correspondingly begun anew. Like the parti-colored mosaic of a Southern quilt, life and culture are not cut from whole cloth, but represent an aggregation of many wonderfully disparate elements that join to provide warmth and community. The critical autoethnographic study of a life can nourish, yet nourishment is needed every day.

CHAPTER IV

PENUMBRAL OKEFENOKEE AND THE BLUE POLYESTER CURRICULUM

The serpent tempted me, and I did eat.

Genesis 3:13

Anyone who approaches these Olympians with a different religion in his heart, seeking elevated morals, even sanctity, ethereal spirituality, charity and mercy, will quickly be forced to turn his back on them, discouraged and disappointed.

Friedrich Nietzsche

There are moments when one has to choose between living one's own life fully, entirely, completely or dragging out some false, shallow, degrading, existence that the world in its hypocrisy demands.

Oscar Wilde

Mama, take this badge off of me,

I can't use it anymore.…

Mama, put my guns in the ground,

I can't shoot them anymore.

That long black cloud is comin' down

I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door.

Bob Dylan

Things just seem to happen on Sunday evenings in the South. The work week is over, the morning church session is done, the sumptuous post-worship meal has been consumed, and the evening session of pious observance has yet to begin. People are out and about, feeling social, cavorting with friends and family, reminiscing about times past and speculating about times yet

to come. Make it summer, add a nice breeze to intermittently alleviate the sweltering heat of an August evening and you have the makings of excitement, especially if you are a cop on patrol in the impoverished sections of a small, rural Georgia town. Poor folks in and around government subsidized housing do not luxuriate in opulent McMansions basking in the cool air of 3-ton air conditioning units or lounging on resplendent furniture plush enough to accommodate small villages. They do not kick back to flip through the hundreds of channels on satellite TV or surf the web on prohibitively expensive laptop computers and tablets, occasionally slipping into the kitchen for readymade treats that will be half-wasted. Instead, on summer evenings, they congregate, socialize, and express their views among themselves, knowing that no one outside their social circle cares what they think or what they want. They gossip about the latest drama transpiring in the neighborhood, who is in jail and who was just killed. They speculate about what will happen to various youth, all struggling against adversity and disadvantage exacerbated or mitigated by multiplicitous innate dispositional and societally generated factors. They lament tragedies and failures and gush over successes, small or significant, seeking some respite from lives all too replete with insurmountable challenges, crushing poverty, virtually nonexistent chances for improvement, and futures implacably progressing toward monotonous days, weeks, and years of stultifying, unrelieved boredom. Socializing on a nice, summer day is one of the few outlets they have to relieve their social, economic, and political marginalization, and yet, even this minor relief is not theirs indefeasibly, for this is the patrol zone of the Southern cop.

Virtually always White, male, young, and reckless, the officers who patrol such social environs are tasked with one charge: keep things quiet by restraining any impulse by the citizenry toward excess that could disrupt the peace. Gambling, drugs, sex, booze, arguing, any manifestation of violence, even excessively loud music must be quelled for the public good. The

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mixture of unrelieved heat, plentiful firearms, easy access to drugs, sexual competition, and the social volatility that these details add to the generality of social dispossession is a perfect recipe for violent outbursts that could quickly get out of hand. The youthful cop gets the assignment because he wants excitement while the older, more mature and pragmatic cop does not. The reality is, the assignment is ostensibly to keep the peace but the desire is to capitalize on whatever drama may erupt and have some fun. Seldom does the police consciousness alight on the idea that the "drama" is epiphenomenal to real lives, lives that are mired in desperation and the knowledge that being a second class citizen in the United States may not be de jure acceptable or consistent with sacred democratic shibboleths and rhetoric (Miller, 1970), but is nonetheless a reality for millions. That is where the Southern cop plays.

One particular Sunday evening, I was the cop playing in the 'hood, waiting for something to happen to alleviate the monotony and disrupt the status quo. I was not picky, anything exciting would have sufficed: robbery, fight, DUI. Just about anything would have done for my purposes. I had already made several traffic stops that had yielded little of interest, even though I had only been on patrol for an hour or so, and knew that the real fun usually started a little later after everyone had had a chance to get good and liquored up on cheap booze or high on cocaine. Once those prerequisites were in place, animosities, old, new, or imagined, would surface and contribute to an explosive social mix. The concomitant results would depend upon the catalyst: unrequited love, outstanding debts, familial discord, traffic accident, or, the most promising by far, another sortie into reestablishing the balance of power for the illicit drug trade. That was the most promising. Drug dealers fighting each other always made for great excitement with few worries about political difficulties or social condemnation afterwards. Drug dealing was something everyone could disapprove of vehemently without fear of contention, even the local

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White establishment who fronted the money for the dope. No one wanted to come out against efforts to curtail the drug trade or interdict violators—it just did not play well with the press or with the national pseudo-ethos. Yep. Once the substances started to flow and creep, anything was possible.

A lot about police work is sheer luck (more than most cops want to admit) and being in the right—or wrong—place at the right—or wrong—time, and on that evening, luck favored me. As I eased along through James Village, one of the local government subsidized housing projects on the south side of town, affectionately known by local cops as "the Zone" because of the regularity of the most violent and dramatic occurrences demanding police intervention that happened there, I suddenly received the call that would ultimately produce all the excitement I could deal with. The dispatcher announced that a shooting had just happened in James Village and that the shooter had jumped into a small sedan with two others and fled onto a nearby street. Since travel on the main thoroughfare running through the housing project was one-way, I knew that I could quickly narrow down the location of the vehicle by cutting through the Village. As I flew down the narrow street that constituted James Village Lane, panicked residents scrambled off the roadway to avoid being struck by my patrol car, mothers snatching babies out of harm's way and young thugs indignantly—but expeditiously—ceding the way. Howls of fear and anger reached my ears as I exited the village and turned due south, knowing that the culprit would likely be looking for somewhere to quickly melt into the social surroundings, if he had not done so already. Once I emerged onto the street from James Village, I slowed to a crawl so that I could observe what was happening. Like most cops, early on I had made the mistake of flying around aimlessly hoping to run into trouble, not knowing that, like most hunting, trouble will

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find you when you least expect. I quickly learned that the way to catch the quarry was to proceed slowly and follow the known trail so as not to miss vital clues.

As I moved slowly along the street, I suddenly saw a sedan fitting the exact description of the alleged perpetrator's vehicle (cops prefer to speak in terms of perpetrators, victims, offenders, violators, and subjects rather than people—it sounds more professional), coming toward me fast. The driver reached the nearest turn before I did, and seeing my vehicle, immediately and abruptly turned and accelerated. I could not believe it—a chase! Nothing excites the average peace officer like a car chase, and so early into the shift! I activated my emergency lights and siren, floored the accelerator, and pursued with glee and righteous fury. As the fleeing driver barreled through the stop sign at the end of the goat path the city called a "street," I sought to make up distance by cutting through a yard, a move that put me right behind him. His 4-cylinder mid-size car was no match for the 8-cylinder powerhouse that was my Ford Crown Victoria, so I was able to place myself just a few car lengths behind him. Not smart for a variety of reasons, such as potential collisions and gunfire, but effective when you wanted to press the fleeing driver into making mistakes or giving up (which people desperate enough to flee by vehicle almost never did willingly). Having gained a position of advantage, right away I realized that the driver had no intention of surrendering as he pushed the little car harder.

As we emerged from the south side of town which had limited vehicular traffic at that time on a Sunday evening, we both careened onto the town's main thoroughfare, bursting forth into the heavy traffic like party crashers irrupting into a room. I got the impression that he gave no thought to the vehicles he would encounter, and I know I did not, so we both continued the chase as fast as we could go, with cars peeling off the roadway, slamming to screeching halts, and abruptly and expertly choosing different routes. The looks of mingled surprise, confusion,

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and fear only accentuated the excitement for me. What more sober-minded and uninitiated people fail to understand about a car chase is that it is not a reasoned, mechanical law enforcement technique meant to apprehend the criminal suspect; it is predator and prey, a primal relationship between the one who wants to get away and the pursuer who is possessed of a maniacal passion to capture and subdue the Other. What matters most is success, success at all costs, and conscious cognition virtually ceases during the pursuit as tunnel vision sets in. And that's what all police work is about: catching prey. The putative ancillary benefits of the chase such as solving crimes, making victims whole, safeguarding the interests of society, ensuring the viability of lawfully conducted social interactions, and protecting the weak from the strong are fine ideals, yet pale in comparison to satisfying the instinctual, visceral urge to stand victorious on the field of battle and the hunting plain. It is an evolutionary thing, really. Shame it has to endanger the public so.

On the open road, both of us had the opportunity to maximize our vehicles' potentials for speed; his not too impressive, mine, robust and inescapable. Pushing the little car to the limits of its engine's capacity, he sailed across the bridge separating the city in which I worked and the next town at 100 mph, with me in hot pursuit, hot because it was an active, uninterrupted chase, and because I was hot to catch his ass. How we traversed that bridge without causing an accident, I cannot attest to this day. Cars were everywhere, their drivers poking along without seeming aim, just enjoying a Sunday drive or anticipating a quiet evening of spirituality and a late supper. As it happens, there are few things to do in a small Georgia town on a Sunday except enjoy family and friends, have a good meal, or visit the local Wal-Mart, the choice that seems to contribute most to thick traffic. The suspect and I weaved in and out of traffic like skiers

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slaloming down a snowy hill, each seeking to gain some advantage and narrowly missing collisions with stunned and bewildered drivers.

Making it out of my jurisdiction, I'm sure the suspect driver thought that I would discontinue the chase, as most people understand little about hot pursuit doctrine[1] in police work and what it allows an officer to do. If he expected relief, however, he was very much disappointed as I remained glued to his bumper. Evidently realizing that I would not relent, he began to drive on the wrong side of the roadway, forcing cars to precipitously leave the highway and seek safety on the shoulders and sidewalks of the small town's streets. Others would freeze in panic as they attempted to process the madness that they saw before them, a phenomenon of police and criminal life that they rarely, if ever, encountered. It would make for good talk later around the supper table or local buffet, but at the time of occurrence, it could not have been anything more than a startling and brief glimpse into the more dangerous aspects of legally sanctioned police authority.

By then, cops from my police department, the local sheriff's office, the Georgia State Patrol, and myriad other small, local police agencies had joined the chase, eager to assist and be in on the capture. There was even a Georgia State Patrol helicopter involved, observing the action from a vantage that most cops never get to experience. For me, though, none of them existed. The fleeing criminal was mine, all mine, and I would be the one to take him in, no matter what. Happy to let others come along for the ride, I knew that I would make the coup and reap the acclaim. I would always reflect after a chase on how I never seemed frightened or worried about the inherent dangers associated with high-speed pursuits, but I did not. Not once. The excitement of the chase was such that I became single-minded, conscious of little except the prey shamelessly attempting to elude me, a possibility that was as incomprehensible as it was

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impermissible. Besides, with all the hardware that we cops employed in the chase, escape was unlikely and danger seemed remote, at least to me. What others experienced in the way of danger was too real and eminently predictable, even if it did not factor into my thinking.

We screamed through the small adjacent town in a matter of a minute and turned onto a two-lane state highway headed into the surrounding country. Businesses gave way to fields and farms as we streaked through the rural areas that made up most of the local surroundings. The reduced traffic was appreciated, even if the previous dangers did not concern me inordinately. Fewer cars meant less criticism later from concerned citizens, zealous politicians, or self-interested police administrators, not that such considerations weighed heavily in my thoughts. This was a felony chase, after all, an aggravated assault that could well become a murder case as far as I was concerned. This shooter had to be caught, subdued, and presented to the mighty justice of a civilized people, and it was my job to get him there. The fact that I enjoyed the pursuit like no other activity that I had ever engaged in, with the possible exception of sex, was irrelevant. The perpetrator had to be brought before the gimlet eye of the best system of juris prudence devised by mankind, and I was going to do my duty.

The chase continued at speeds well over 100 mph down small, curving country roads, past bucolic Southern scenes. Cows, horses, goats, and other livestock grazed contently, seldom even looking up, studiously ignoring the drama unfolding before them. Locals would cast a quick upward glance as they were disrupted from their reveries as if to say "What the …?" and only to be left wondering as we speeded by in a flash. I felt a measure of regret for them, confined to their small, pedestrian existences while I experienced the thrill of adrenaline-suffused living. I smiled knowingly, thinking that they just did not know what they were missing. I had been reared in similar circumstances, and certainly appreciated the advantages of the quiet,

unchallenging, rural lifestyle. But once I had experienced excitement on the scale of police work, there could be no going back to the farm, so I thought. Life would later convince me otherwise, leaving me to ponder the recklessness and misspent nature of my youthful potential, yet, in the ferment of an active pursuit, nothing but catching my prey mattered.

No chase goes without a hitch, something always goes wrong. With the exception of some brief attempt at escape in which the suspect fairly quickly surrenders or meets with an obstruction or other impediment that makes the risk too great, chases nearly always result in some misfortune for someone. If not terrified bystanders who may suffer the emotional and cognitive effects of fear for days, months, or more, then damaged property, possibly even shattered lives, are easy to predict. If nothing else, the rending of the social fabric that eventuates is enough to say that car chases are always damaging since they leave someone wondering just how civilized we really are if such activities remain necessary, and if such risks are worthwhile. Truly, something always goes wrong in a car chase, usually at their conclusion, and this one was no different.

In the deep woods, on a lonely road with blind curves and small dirt roads merging with the old asphalt of the state highway, the suspect tried, unsuccessfully, to make an abrupt right turn, missing it completely. During the pursuit, he had constantly zigzagged across the roadway, pressed his brakes in an obvious attempt to intimidate me, feigned turns and stops only to accelerate again, exhausting all efforts to shake me from his tail. In his final effort, he attempted the right-hand turn at what had to be 70 or 80 mph, succeeding only in crashing into a ditch about 20 yards beyond where he intended to turn. In the last few miles of the chase, I suspected that he would make a serious mistake somewhere, so I had positioned myself several car lengths back in order to react to what might happen. As he collided with the unforgiving ditch, my last

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view of the vehicle was of it launched high into the air facing the opposite direction from which it had been travelling. Still going between 90 and 100 mph, all that I could do was slam my brakes and screech to a halt 150 feet farther on. When I stopped, I immediately leapt from my patrol car expecting to give chase on foot, the usual outcome of the termination of a car chase, but as I ran toward his now still vehicle and saw other officers doing so, I knew that something was terribly wrong.

Reaching the car, I found the driver, a 17-year-old African-American male that I knew, crying inconsolably, with the mangled head of his passenger in his lap. The body that he caressed and implored to come back to life was a young African-American female, whom I would later learn was his 15-year-old niece. During the vehicle's brief flight, she was ejected through an open window and the car landed squarely onto her head, crushing it into a grisly pulp. Her lifeless eyes bulged grotesquely, each in a different direction. Her teeth jutted at odd angles and blood spurted from many wounds like little bright crimson fountains. Her young adolescent face was nearly unrecognizable, with her hair and features broken and blood-soaked. Technically alive—she was aspirating, not unusual with severe head trauma—she would die a few minutes later. The young life that had only recently been enjoying a hot, summer, Sunday afternoon socializing with her friends and family was now an exanimate mass of tissue and unrealized potential. Further heightening the poignancy of the moment was the fact that she was noticeably pregnant. Thin, with lanky arms and legs, her pregnant bulge extended forth from her young body almost as if it were an add-on, an afterthought placed on a nubile young life. Only fifteen, her life had barely started and was swiftly, and astonishingly, brought to an end, and her unborn baby's would never begin in earnest at all.

As I tried to calm the driver, a kid I knew as Chippy, a young miscreant drug dealer that I had chased on foot before and actually warned against the risks of such behavior, I looked up to see dozens of police officers, EMTs, and a multitude of other people and vehicles around us. What had been a desolate country road a few minutes before, was now a welter of activity, with people and vehicles everywhere. Some in attendance were merely gawkers enjoying the spectacle, others had work to do and went about their business. What I did not notice was any compassion. EMTs did their job expertly but dispassionately, cops chatted and laughed, congratulating themselves on the successful termination of the pursuit, others told jokes or discussed the latest snazzy car or firearm. It was quite a circus. Meanwhile, I watched a teenage girl die a gruesome death without knowing why she was even there. I remember that I felt compassion for her and the driver who had caused all this, yet there was no feeling of responsibility. After all, I had done my job, had not I? Later, medical staff at the local hospital would confirm that the girl had been pregnant, and when they removed a small sack from her vagina, what they initially thought was a spontaneously aborted fetus turned out to be a bag of crack cocaine that she had hidden during the pursuit. I had wondered why she was squirming around so much at 100 miles per hour.

After the furor over the chase died down, I immediately went back to work and after completing a mountain of paperwork associated with the attendant investigation (that's police work—a few minutes excitement and a seeming lifetime of paperwork and court appearances), went on to other events that night. Periodically throughout the evening, other officers and I discussed the chase, focusing, of course, on its excitement-value, not on its sociological implications; otherwise, it became just one of a series of brief, exciting events that would stand out as memorable in a 21-year police career. I never felt any sense of guilt or remorse, believing

the genuine sense of compassion that I experienced to be sufficient to continue in my belief that I was a worthwhile person rather than an enforcement automaton for a social institution that professed commitment to the finer aspects of American society, i.e., truth, liberty, and justice for all. Such revelations would come later with a self-imposed course of education that would broaden my perspective and allow me to see the world from multiple viewpoints. When I did so, I came to realize that in the pursuit of "justice," a young girl, 15, died, and any potential in her was extinguished with her. Not, of course, that she would likely have distinguished herself. Her deficits and disadvantages were socially constructed and her life pretty much preordained. And I thought about the young driver, a drug dealer since he was 12. His life was functionally over. The legal stigma would follow him forever. Again, not that he would have amounted to much.

So, why did the chase happen? On practical grounds, I mean, not sociological or philosophical bases. Pure coincidence. The shooter in his attempt to flee the scene had jumped into the vehicle that I chased and someone reported it. The driver was his cousin, and wanted to help him get away. He exited the car just a few seconds later and ran, leaving the driver to continue enjoying his afternoon and the nice weather, selling dope and taking the air. When I tried to pull him over, he assumed that I was after him for the huge bag of crack that he possessed, not associating my actions with the shooting at all. In the end, the man shot was fine, having been shot in the buttocks. Painful, but not ordinarily lethal. At the time, shooting someone in the buttocks was en vogue since it did not result in death and skirted the law by precluding the proffering of an attempted murder charge.[2] The ass-shot victim would not prosecute and the shooter went to commit a murder a few years later, providing me with yet another convenient excuse for the mayhem that resulted. Of course, I successfully prosecuted the driver on multiple counts, including vehicular homicide for the death of the girl and feticide for

her unborn child. This event would reverberate in my thinking for years—still does—and lead me, as much as any of hundreds of such occurrences, to wonder what lay behind my actions as a police officer. Why did I do what I did, day after day, and what purpose did it serve?

It would take years and a concerted effort on my part to gain an appreciation for the circumstances that had contributed to the "thug life" subculture that has become so popular among African-American youth and their ersatz imitators in White youthful societies. My explorations into what counts for American cultural history would require that I look beyond the façade of a contiguous, grand narrative (Lyotard, 1984) of U.S. commonality and actively seek the little noticed, and often intentionally concealed, realities of a diverse culture with multiple perspectives and accounts for what comprises the "American experience." To gain insight into what I perceived as my place in the world, I would have to read alternative and radical histories that documented different, and disparate, appreciations for what is seen as the building of a great nation, and I would have to learn to understand that history as encompassing multiplicitous and occasionally diffuse smaller idiosyncratic narratives meant to account for the individual and group experience of a historied country and its storied peoples. And I would need to accept that metanarratives, those monolithic, invincible myths and presumably unassailable explanations for why we have the best of all possible social and political constitutions, are just pipe dreams and castles in the air. All such thinking would happen much later, though, when I elected to assume an intellectual position of humility and openness and expand my horizons to include alternative expectations and views. At the time, all that I felt was the excitement of the chase and capture, the exultation of emerging triumphant in the primordial competition for supremacy in manhood, and a brief, tentative compassion for the loss of life and potential. Only later would I accept that what had been lost, what would never return, was within my area of personal concern, and that

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the losses, irrevocable and tragic, could have been prevented. Only after serious study would I come to appreciate that the injurious legacies of slavery and social disadvantage persist unless acted upon, that the effects of hypermasculinity are unerringly pernicious, and that only the motivated individual, acting on the knowledge that theory eventuating in social action can produce, can potentiate real change. The ideals of social justice rang hollow at the time, if I was conscious of them at all, but I would learn that they need not remain unrealized objectives. After arduous and thoughtful study, after genuinely considering the views of emergent new peoples and perspectives, after internalizing the realities of an evolutionary world often containing monumentally antithetic and virulently opposed factions, I would come to realize that people are just people, and that one person's inconsequential bit of discarded trivia may well be the illuminative gem of social consciousness. Most of all, I would learn that the profession of policing and its practitioners, typically directed toward sustaining the social, political, and economic status quo, need not passively accept that inane, reproductive status. I would learn that policing and police officers could be dedicated to somewhat that is good, and that social institutions developed and poised to maintain inequality and social class for the good of elites could be redirected as real powers for social amelioration. I would learn all of these things, but that would come much later.

O Blackwater…

The opening vignette describes a dramatic and revelatory episode in my police career, yet, like everyone else, I did not arrive at that place in my life having sprung preformed, making a sampling of my hypermasculine education from various stages of my experience crucial for illuminating this research. By examining several influential aspects of my development from my youth through adulthood, this chapter will build chronologically toward explaining the opening

story and beyond, a progression that will, hopefully, distill the most relevant aspects of a life that is now devoted to escaping the hypermasculine constituents that have limited my pursuit of a responsible manhood and have contributed to a more egotistic expression of self. What these experiences expose, I believe, is the perennial struggle among young men to escape the oedipal tensions that actuate so much of young American men's lives, my efforts to burst forth from the constraining influences of a positivist upbringing and my adoption of a critical social stance toward life that encompasses enlightening tenets of postmodernist, post-structuralist, psychoanalytic, and, unavoidably, post-postmodern philosophies.

In his classic bildungsroman, *David Copperfield,* Charles Dickens' eponymous protagonist begins his narrative with the famous chapter title, "I am born." Proceeding chronologically in his exposition of a troubled life that eventuates in a felicitous, and predictably Dickensian, happy ending, with David having thoroughly vetted his own life and experiences, and having decocted the essence of his experience for simplistically useful results, David lives the remainder of his once tragic existence in peace and serenity. A beautiful conceit, yet hardly conducive to substantive change in the real world of lives affected by history, context, and, most appositely, place. For Dickens and his litany of delightful characters, place was inconsequential, just a setting for the development of stories and plots, mere backdrop for the intricate lives that populated his fiction. But for sentient humans, place is far from color and a matrix for enacting lives. In very real terms, place is what people are (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991), and, in the most substantial of terms, place predetermines the roads that they travel and the other places that they experience (Gray, 2002). And when place and experience of place are factored into social interactions and societal realities, people quickly learn that place may well be determinative of how their lives play out, and what degree of equity and social justice they encounter. While place

as a concept may act as a literary expedient for writers of fiction, place for real people is a paramount concern that must be identified, examined, reflected upon, and contended with in order to understand individual lives and that of Others. And in this study, place, not birth, is the beginning, and eventually, the end.

In my life, the beginning is the Okefenokee Swamp. Comprising 438,000 acres of peat bogs and shallow water courses in southeast Georgia, the Okefenokee issues forth into the St. Mary's and the storied Suwanee Rivers that slowly meander toward the southwest until they debouche into the Gulf of Mexico (Gosselink & Mitsch, 1986). Only 1,500 years old, a holdover from the Pleistocene epoch when the area was an estuary, the Okefenokee is a transitory place, expected to turn into temperate forest in the next several thousand years as the land solidifies and the water finally drains away (Folkerts, 2002), or, depending upon the accuracy of climatological projections taking account of climate change, into a sub-tropical demesne (Nelson, 2005) that may offer a reprieve to vulnerable species like the American alligator, the iconic symbol of the Swamp and its enduring mysteries. Whatever the "Land of the Trembling Earth"[3] finally becomes, it is the becoming that is relevant in this research since the changeable, complex ecosystem that is North America's largest backwater swampland serves evocatively as a metaphor for my life as it could for most lives. People's lives begin situated in a place, sometimes multiple places, that repeatedly—some might say "repetitively"—converge and become synthesized into the idiosyncratic recurring moment, the "what people are" at a given time, a process corollary to *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). Just as the Okefenokee wetlands slowly but unyieldingly transition from shallow pools to tenuous peat bogs, and, finally, firm ground that supports the solid structures of agriculture and human encroachment, eventually become forested land, the individual life is in continual transformation, synthesizing new

information and experience constantly, yet maintaining a given identity for an instant only before becoming something new almost immediately.

Describing the Okefenokee, Nelson (2005) observed that people often saw in the mythical swamp what they desired to see rather than what actually existed there, and she philosophized about the ambivalent feelings that the great expanse of boggy wilderness evoked in those who contemplated it, saying that "those who encountered the swamp often noted their dual feelings of admiration and fear. It was so easy to get lost in this morass, to feel alone and abandoned, despite the beauty all around" (p. 3). She maintains that "the Okefenokee is a twilight place—an ecosystem that is both dark and bright, water and land, beautiful and dangerous. It is a place of overlap, of blurred lines, and of ambiguity." Further characterizing it as an "edge space" typified by abundance, transition, and immense diversity, the Okefenokee holds the "promise of alteration" and is a place of "twilight duality" possessed of a history of discord and insularity that has, ironically, challenged its isolationist inhabitants to perpetually seek new ways of persevering in its marginal environs, thus assuring growth, personal and communal, whether desired or not. Speaking of the many Okefenokee peoples over the millennia, Nelson argues that

> The swamp provoked people to develop a constellation of competing ideas rooted in beliefs about land use and value and shot through with convictions about race, gender, and class distinctions. These ideas and beliefs determined a particular pattern of action that communities took within swamplands, and thus shaped local cultures. p. 3

Calling this cultural shaping "ecolocalism," she sees the resulting collectivities—the Okefenokee does not support permanent communities within its unceasingly shifting confines—as formed by encounters among many factions, including Native American, African American, and European

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American constituencies. Since "successful manipulation of the Okefenokee was ultimately untenable" (p. 4) for most groups, Nelson perceives a cyclical process where the desire to exert dominion over the intractable swamp led to frustrated desires that engendered new desires that would, predictably, lead to more frustration. The result was frequent and unrelenting conflicts between different groups seeking to possess that which could not be owned.

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1873) called the Okefenokee a "glorious, bewildering impropriety" (p. 138), presumably because of its mingled splendor and danger, a beguiling, intoxicating mix that bewitches even those who are predetermined to find nothing redeeming about the great wetland (Kemble, 1835/2000). Expanding on Stowe's comment, Nelson (2005) explains that

> The fluctuations, circulations, and confrontations embedded in the swamp muck reveal an American historical narrative that is not a neat, organized (and thus, appealing) trajectory. Instead, it is messy, befuddling, and often difficult to pin down. It is, in short, the muck of history. p. 6

But Stowe's bewildering impropriety and Nelson's muck of history serve admirably as a combined metaphor to depict the disorganization, ambiguities, ambivalences, anxieties, successes, fears, and resolute aspirations and inextinguishable hopes of individual lives. The complexity of the Okefenokee ecosystem and Nelson's concept of ecolocalism provide fine lens through which to examine the messiness of individuals seeking to gain some purchase in assessing their lives and their experiences in the unending quest to obtain an accurate perspective of what it means to be a person, and how the knowledge gained can be employed to improve circumstances, social and individualistic. Just as the Okefenokee swamper treads the watery expanse of the trembling earth gingerly, assuring the next footfall is placed with exacting care,

and yet, still gets bogged down in the morass, all individuals must be circumspect when pondering their own life experience, and must be certain to inspect what has occurred before, their current reality, and what their future might hold; nonetheless, while remaining wary for the pitfalls that might ensnare them, the psychic swamper engaged in a directed project of self-analysis and personal accounting must also attend to the beauty along the way, determined not to be so overcome with fear, or so complacent in embracing conformity, that the Cherokee rose, the meandering lianas, or even the antediluvian alligator, the iconic symbol of the Okefenokee, is left unappreciated for their sublimity. Like these common elements of the great swamp of the southeast, minor successes and petit travails confer upon people experience that subsidizes their efforts to become what they will be. And like the Okefenokee, they must accept that their internal and psychic state is ecolocal as well, never finished and always still becoming. Eventually, the Okefenokee will be something thoroughly different than what it is today, just as it is far removed from what it was five thousand years ago, and, like that changeable, daunting swampland, people remain in a state of becoming.

The Discourse of Ass Whippin'

I was baptized in violence. From my biological father's brutal beatings of me and my little brother, to waking in the middle of the night hearing—or seeing—my mother beaten by him as he raged in a drunken fit, to fights, hunting, and challenges of right and respect, I learned early that the way to get what you want in the world is to impress one's will by force or the implication of force. Manipulation was a clear alternative, but physical violence seemed to impress most. It impressed the hell out of me and my brother, anyway. Of all the manifestations of power, restraint may impress most, but Thucydides did not live in South Georgia. Vicious beatings were so frequent that they serve as some of my earliest memories, from the time my

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brother and I went swimming when we were told not to, to the time we were beaten for walking across a man's property, and when you are a little White trash boy, congenitally prone to mischief (Crews, 1978; Nelson, 2005; Wray & Newitz, 1997), the opportunities for a father to administer such punishment are plentiful. The irony of the abuse was that we did not know it was abuse. We had grown up with it and assumed that all children were disciplined similarly, so I was amazed to find that such was not the case. I remember a conversation in 4th grade with a local boy who described the number of licks that he had received for a certain offense. I retorted, "Licks? Man, my daddy beats us until he's tired!" which was no falsehood. As long as I can remember, my father wore a wide, thick, black belt, and that was the implement of his form of justice. The instant an offense was discovered, his face became suffused with rage, his piercing eyes stabbing through me, and he began to remove that awful belt as he verbally thrashed us. By the time the actual physical beating came it was often anti-climactic, the verbal castigation having been so terrifying, but it always hurt exquisitely, and the loss of my father's affection that it implied was more hurtful still.

In those days, my brother and I idolized the man, beatings and abuse notwithstanding, so disappointing him was heartbreaking; yet, somehow we just could not seem to stay out of trouble. When my father was not beating us, he took my brother and me hunting, fishing, just about everywhere. We took drives in the woods and on the edges of the Swamp, we went with him to the hardware store where he worked, you name it. He often took us to the theatre to see the latest Hollywood production, and we would always have a meal at the drug store across from the theatre, which we loved, because we got to sit on the stools at the counter and look at the soda fountain. Mama would dress me and my brother similarly so that we almost looked like twins. Mike came along very shortly after me, so we were very similar in size and could almost

have passed for twins. After a meal that always consisted of a burger, fries, and Holy Water (Coca-Cola®),[4] we would cross the street and watch the flick. For some reason, Daddy always wanted to go in a few minutes late and watch the first few minutes at the repeat showing immediately afterward, something he never explained to me and Mike. As a precocious child with more intellect than common sense, a fact that caused me no end of trouble, I always assumed that it had something to do with his childhood experiences. I knew that the only time he got to see a movie was when he and his brothers made the long trek into town from the woods, so I imagine that they were often late for the beginning. Who knows? Daddy was not exactly the expressive type. Of course, we always wanted to stay for the next showing but he always said "No." We never understood that, either, but his word was law, so we would trudge home, disappointed for a couple of minutes but content overall.

The last attempt at a beating that my father made with me occurred when I was thirteen. My best friend and I had gotten drunk and were in the front yard making circles on his motorcycle, not only destroying the grass but making a lot noise doing so. After a particularly bad fall that, in our inebriated state, we thought was hilarious, I looked up to see my father standing silhouetted in the moonlight, his belt dangling in his right hand. A big man, slightly over six-foot and 200 lbs., he made an imposing picture as he stared at me silently. Regaining my feet, I mumbled something absurd like "Hey, Daddy," and tried to brush the wet grass off myself. I knew that he was infuriated more than usual because he was not yelling and his jaw looked like it might explode by the way that it was sternly set, and by the way he was grinding his teeth. Never looking at my friend, he commanded him to go home—why he allowed a thirteen year-old to drive drunk on a motorcycle at night I'll never know, but DUI was not a big thing to most people in those days—and calmly directed me into the house.

My father had a routine for most beatings unless he was so enraged that he could not contain his fury long enough to follow it, an infrequent happening but something that occurred occasionally after exceptionally outrageous offenses. After the glaring, ferocious rebuke, and ritualistic removing of the belt, I would be taken by a wrist and the wild, indiscriminate, and sometimes poorly aimed, strokes of the belt would fall. Typically, after the first few strikes, I would be pushed face down onto the bed and beaten as he rained imprecations down upon me and exacted assurances that I would never err in a similar manner. The inquisitional questioning style was a dimension of the beating fraught with danger itself since in the midst of the pain and terror of the whipping it was not unusual for me to give an incorrect answer that simply added fuel to his rage. Truly, it is hard to think clearly while you are brutalized by someone you love. Once his righteous anger and indignation had dissipated from receiving the requisite amount of screaming and promises to be good in the future, he would slowly replace his belt, philosophizing about the importance of effective correction as he threaded each loop of his pants. Whippings were always for one's own good, though internalizing the concept at the time was difficult. On that night, however, my father's routine was disrupted permanently.

Daddy tried to follow his self-prescribed course for whippings that night, but things went south—no pun intended—from the start. At that time I was already nearly six-foot tall myself, and had a nascent beard sprouting on my face. My features had solidified so that I was a younger version of my father, with firm jaw and the beginnings of the thick frame and penetrative gaze that he possessed. As he tried to grab my wrist, he had difficulty getting a grip, and once he did, when the first few strokes of that belt landed and did not impel me to immediately fall across my bed he pushed me onto it, a move that he found was not as easily accomplished as in the past. As he administered a few more strokes of the belt, without effect, I turned to face him and sat up on

the bed. He looked as if he had been shot. My response to the pathetic attempt to beat me was not made in defiance. At that time, I still loved my father and would not have been intentionally disrespectful. I turned to face him because the absurdity of the situation was too much to accept. Of course, being hit with a belt still hurt, but the pain was not unbearable as it had been earlier, and, most important, my emerging sense of masculinity, inculcated for thirteen years, made enduring pain much easier, and important for demonstrating my newfound status. I think that in my mind I wanted to engage him in a dialogue to discuss the silliness of trying to whip someone as big as me, an eminently practical approach I thought. That's not how the ensuing conversation went.

What I saw in my father's face that night was the expected rage mingled with something new: fear. Not fear of physical harm, an emotion that had long been extinguished in him, I believe. The stories that I had of my father being involved in violent encounters, and the few that he shared with me, indicated pretty definitively that he was no longer concerned about such trivialities. The fear that I detected that night was the fear of loss, loss of power over me. As he stared at me, I could see that he was no longer seeing me as his son, a person that he had controlled (actually, dominated) for thirteen years, but as a rival, someone capable of offering a challenge to his supremacy as the head of the house. Terms like "agency" (Barker, 2005) and concepts like the ubiquity of power (Foucault, 1977) were not in my cognizance then; still, an intuitive awareness of the shift in power and my ability to have some effect on the exchange of power and its attendant relationships was immediately formed. My father feared me. I knew at that moment that I could contend with people more powerful then I. What followed, though, taught me another lifelong lesson.

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Regaining his composure after the initial shock of being faced with a child who was no longer afraid of whippings, my father's gaze bore down on me more piercingly than ever before as he raised his right hand in a malevolent fist and began to speak. His words were as serious as they were chilling. "You think you're too big for a whippin'? Then you can have some of this," he threatened, displaying his big fist. I offered a feeble protest meant to assure him that I was not contesting his authority, but my efforts were very clearly wasted, so I desisted. As he walked out of my bedroom still fuming, I realized that what had just happened was not about a child finding his incipient masculinity and pushing the bounds of the parent/child relationship, it was about respect and identity, central concepts to the Southern male (Nesbett & Cohen, 1996), and especially Southern White trash males (Bragg, 2001; Crews, 1978; Wray & Newitz, 1997), a class to which my father belonged irretrievably despite his pretensions otherwise. He no longer lived in the Okefenokee and its purlieus but he was as stuck in its psychological mire as if he was still traversing its trembling earth, and his need for respect and a secure masculine identity had never been stronger. He had a college degree, a good job, and more money than anyone in his family had ever enjoyed, but the man who poked along barefooted in overalls down South Georgia dirt roads bisecting the legendary Okefenokee Swamp as a small child was still there, desperate to maintain his sense of masculinity and unwilling to tolerate any usurpation of that identity, and certainly not from his own son. Later explorations would confirm for me some of my suspicions—Freud would prove very helpful in this regard—and allow me to process more logically an incident that initially caused great emotional strife.

That night was the beginning of many such encounters between me and my father. Most often they would be precipitated by increasing bouts of drunkenness on his part, the instant cause usually being one of my attempts to protect my mother from his frequent threats of abuse. While

it was not unusual for us to face off with fists clenched, we never actually came to blows, a fact that my own sense of Southern hypermasculinity caused me regrets for many years. My mother was a fine person and deserved better than he provided. Pounding him would have been satisfying in so many ways, as retribution for the abuse the entire family had suffered for so many years, and for his failure to offer affection and guidance that my brother and I needed so much as we got older. As he had pursued his own interests over the years of my youth, my father had noticed us less and less, and rarely spent any time with us or showed concern for our needs. I have often remarked that I was not sure what hurt most, the whippings or the neglect. He bequeathed us a legacy that included an appreciation for learning, books, history, and modernity, while simultaneously instilling us with a desire to know our place in the world, our Southern place that emanated from the Okefenokee and South Georgia, yet he also catechized violence as an effective, legitimate means of resolving problems, and, in the case of my brother and me, that violence was, indeed, the mark of a man, particularly a South Georgia man. As afraid as I was of my father, I had many times stood up to him in defense of my mother, risking physical harm but taking pride in my willingness to do what I deemed proper, a fact that I believed even my father must have respected on some level. After all, real men stand up for others, and I was positioned to become a real man.

Where the Men Are Men and the Livestock Are Nervous

Certain aspects of Southern culture seem to validate masculinity and those same aspects in their exaggerated forms are typical of Southern hypermasculinity. In my experience of the South, what makes "a man a man" always centers on, or returns to, physical prowess, including the ability to hold one's liquor, demonstrated first by drinking excessively whenever possible, womanizing, which simply means bedding anything female that you can, and combat skills, the

ability to fight with marked proficiency. One gets one's manly man's club card in the South just for indulging in these manly pursuits, but gains renown and the most respect for being really good at them, particularly fighting. In many cases, fighting for one's rights was not only the surest of real justice available, it also authenticated a man's independence and individual identity, crucial qualities according to the pioneer ethos of the South (Alther, 2012; Nesbett & Cohen, 1996). Not fighting, actually, is not a permissible option; at least, not if you want to avoid being practice for other boys as they developed their ass-whippin' skills, and risk a fate worse than death as an adult Southern male. Failure to participate in what Alther (2012) calls the "ethos of overwrought machismo" (p. 220) was almost guaranteed to subject a man to opprobrium, ridicule, and unrelenting calumny. As Crews (1978) confirms, failing to settle serious matters oneself was to court disaster and a life as the whipping boy of one's place:

> …the sheriff was the man who tried to keep the peace, but if you had any real trouble, you did not go to him for help to make it right. You made it right yourself or else become known…as a man who was defenseless….If that ever happened, you would ne brutalized and savaged endlessly because of it. Men killed other men oftentimes not because there had been some offense that merited death, but simply because there had been an offense, any offense. As many men have been killed over bird dogs and fence lines in South Georgia as anything else. p. 10

Fighting was critical to the hypermasculine education, and one did not even have to be very good at it, just consistently willing. There was no shame in losing, but irremediable shame in lying down. I knew several boys while growing up who hated fighting and became quite talented in feigning unconsciousness on being hit by another boy. Even that was a developed skill, though. If one allowed oneself to be knocked out on the first punch too many times one risked the ruse

being discovered, which guaranteed a relentless series of sho' nuff ass-kickings by everyone and his little sister, so it was always better for the actors to take a couple of good punches while wearing a mask of false bravado, then allow themselves to be pummeled to the ground. Once there, the boyhood rules of combat usually required that the victor cease the assault, a condition often dispensed with in later life as fights progressively involved more serious matters. As boys though, as long as you did not back away from a fight, seemed suitably ferocious in your efforts, and agreed that some slights fairly demanded a violent reply, you were always dusted off and complimented by the other boys, even the one who kicked your ass. And, bonus, any of your teeth that got knocked out were yours to keep as souvenirs!

The most interesting part of what often assumed a ritualistic aspect of fighting were the taunts and dares that ordinarily precipitated the row. Usually, some small insult or petty offense was sufficient to initiate the proceedings, but actual blows were usually only exchanged after much pugnacious posturing and a series of mutual aspersions allowed the combatants to screw up the necessary courage to actually exchange fisticuffs. Occasionally, the rancor would dissipate and the matter would end anti-climatically, such as the two trading final insults and assuring each other that next time would be different. Usually the relief was palpable with both fighters, though the spectators would always seem sorely disappointed and often thoroughly derided both boys for being the most arrant cowards and pussies. Castigating each other as metaphorically possessing the genital accoutrement of a woman was the most prevalent insult, but it always confused the hell out of me—I never understood why that was such an insult, especially since we would all spend virtually all of our lives trying to gain access to that particular region. I just did not get it; nevertheless, fighting was a rite of passage and something that had to be done or risk being classified with the cowards and queers, a status that, in the

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South, relegated one to the extreme periphery of sociality. Better to take a few licks occasionally and nurse your wounds.

Of all the reasons for fighting, however, the one that mystified me most was fighting over girls. That, I truly did not understand, yet, as we grew into adolescence and young manhood, citing it as a reason to fight someone became increasingly common. Defaming someone's mama or mother surrogate I got. For Southern boys, regardless of race or ethnicity, Mama was the one that really counted in life, especially since daddies were usually off spending the rent money on gambling or boozing, so disrespecting somebody's mama was serious business and an activity universally disapproved of. And having someone impugn your bravery was another acceptable reason for beating the piss out of somebody. Certainly, allowing another boy to disparage one's masculinity was replete with real-world dangers, since a reputation for cowardice could initiate an endless series of beatings from other boys. But of all the reasons ascertainable for pounding on another guy, fighting over girls seemed the most foolish. From my perspective, a girl should know who she wants to be with and go in that direction, making fighting over her more than a little stupid. Intuitively, though, I knew it must have some serious, sociological importance or we would not be so adamant about doing it. Any doubts that I had about the propriety of spilling blood and losing teeth over girls was kept very much to myself. In most cases, self-expression was limited to talking with one's fists.

To say that fighting was a critical factor in my curriculum of Southern hypermasculinity would be to minimize the effect that socially approved violence had on my psyche. It was not just that I fought, every man I knew did. What concerned me about my experience of fighting was that I both hated and loved fighting. A peaceful person by temperament, something happened when I fought. Always reluctant to fight as a child, by the time I was an adult, I

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accepted violent interaction as a perfectly acceptable way to resolve issues, picayune or

significant. What caused me the most concern was that, once committed to combat, something

alien overcame my rational faculties. In the vernacular, some describe what I experienced as "the

gloves coming off." In my case, the gloves were never on. Fighting was for survival to me, no

matter the subject of contention. The point was to win. When I fought, malice reigned and the

sole objective was to cause as much damage to my opponent as possible. Once the fighting

began, reason was nonexistent, as if a thick red pall descended over my mind. Pity, compassion,

solicitude for the other person evaporated, and the only concern was to pummel the other man

until he was incapable of harming me or, primary in importance, was rendered unable to

challenge me as a man. Proving that I was better than him on the scale of hypermasculine

distinction was all that mattered. Still, once the rage subsided and there was time for reflection—

and regret—I deplored my own behavior. Not from some sense of compunction or benevolence

toward the object of my wrath, but because I felt like a failure. Having once again allowed my

detested cultural influences to direct my behavior, behavior that I wished to be guided by rational

thought and intelligence, was always cause for subsequent self-reproach. Yet, even with my

regrets and almost reflexive self-abasement after violent encounters, I continued my behavior

almost unthinkingly. That is the insidious nature of regret. It almost never lasts long enough to

dissuade one from recurrent sin.

     I have often heard people speak of epiphanies, those moments of acute clarity and

supreme understanding that lead to lifelong changes in behavior and thinking. I have never

experienced one. Instead, I see my entire life as an extended epiphany with periods of stasis, like

cold molasses in the winter, and times of more accelerated development that result in noticeable

and beneficial realizations, similar to the punctuated equilibrium[5] (Eldredge & Gould, 1972)

postulated in evolutionary science. Each day I have become a little different, a little more aware of myself and my place, a little more concerned about what surrounds me and the Others in my midst and on the periphery of my experience. Still, there have been times that stand out as exceedingly educative incidents, learning moments they are occasionally called, experiences that contribute more directly and forcefully to change and are disproportionately contributive to an altered life. One such incident redirected my thinking about physical violence and, ironically, helped me to be a better police officer than I might have been. As with so many such occurrences, the long-term benefits would not be realized for years, but the seed of change was planted securely in the fallow soil of my evolving psyche.

I had not been out of the US Navy long and was living with my cousin in a double-wide mobile home on the side of a mountain in Keener's Gap, Alabama. Near Gadsden, I had familial roots there, having spent wonderful summers with my aunt and uncle and their seven children. My mother's sister, my aunt was like a second mother, always nurturing when needed, disciplinary when needed, and, in all cases, providing for me as if I were her own child. The concept of "other mothering" (Hill Collins, 2000; Marshall, 1959; Troester, 1984) was years from my knowledge as a recognizable concept, but an intuitive understanding was present early on. My uncle was just as caring, never differentiating between me and his own kids. Whether it was time to sit down at the long table and eat a hearty meal or line up for collective whippings when we were intolerably mischievous, everything that they did was out of necessity to ensure our safety and care. I always respected that. On leaving the Navy and being directionless after twenty-five years of being determined to achieve, something, I did not know where to turn or where to go. Suddenly without a job and embroiled in a less than amicable marital separation

that I very much hoped was going to lead to a divorce, I returned to my roots or, at least, one of the rhizomatous branches of my cultural experience.

Living with my cousin and in one of the wild and reckless environments of my youth was an abrupt change from my immediate previous experience, and would prove as ill-advised as it would revelatory in many ways. In the Navy, I had purpose, expertise, and was responsible and respected for my abilities. The military had given me an economic base from which to contend with life as well as offering a sense of purpose and enhanced self-esteem. I was no linger a White trash boy from South Georgia, I was a highly trained, disciplined warrior devoted to safeguarding the ideals of liberty and American society. For many poor Southern men, the US military services were one of the few ways to escape poverty and establish some base for future security (Crews, 1978; Bragg, 2001) and many of Southern men availed themselves of the opportunity, especially since there were few other options. Only years later would I recognize the reproductive purpose, intended or not, of serving in the military and its status as an ideological and repressive state apparatus (Althusser, 1971). Regardless of what I now know about the military and my complicity in fomenting and sustaining imperialist projects, as a wanton, feral child of the South, I needed the discipline and focus that the experience provided, and still take pride in my willingness to sacrifice for my country. I just wish my country were a little more deserving of the commitment that I and other veterans demonstrated. Notwithstanding later concerns, on leaving the military, I was adrift emotionally and geographically, so returning to a familiar place, even one fraught with potentially life-altering temptations, was the only thing that made sense.

Mostly, we partied. Booze and babes, as it were, always seeking the next high and the next sexual conquest, and insouciantly disregarding any consequences. I did work. A little

roofing, assisting my uncle with his horses and other farm-related activities, and unemployment

compensation provided just enough income to feed myself and purchase the next bottle or the

needed funds to seduce the next woman. Outwardly, I feigned unbridled joy and satisfaction;

inwardly, I lamented my return to a lifestyle that promised nothing but hollow sensual enjoyment

until death, a fate common to many White trash Southerners who fail to liberate themselves from

abject poverty and the substance abuse that it breeds (Wray & Newitz, 1997b). Parties lasted all

night and occurred frequently, with all weekends devoted to debauchery and dissipation.

Inevitably, fighting was a predictable part of the life, and was not uncommon anyway, drunk or

sober, angry or just bored. For some time I did not have to indulge in displays of martial

competence. My size and reputation were sufficient to discourage most with a grievance toward

me, and, being a mediator by nature, I most often found myself in the role of peacemaker. But

some slights demand retribution and satisfaction, particularly when a man's reputation and self-

concept are on the line. That's how I experienced the fight that would convince me that life could

be different, even for Southern boys. And, of course, it was over a girl.

In that part of the Southern world—as in so many others—meeting a woman who could

satisfy sexual and emotional needs was less a matter of simply finding her than negotiating the

intricacies of Southern rural sexual politics (Hauerwas, 2010). Nubile girls were zealously sought

after and changes in their relational and sexual status were hotly contested as a matter of course.

Few women over the age of eighteen were single, and despite divorces and other break-ups, they

did not remain lonely for long, making infidelity one of the most expeditious and effective ways

of transitioning from one partner to another. Being young, virile, and insatiably horny, I was

quickly caught up in the hillbilly soap opera that passed for dating in the Alabama hills. I had

had some close calls, husbands and boyfriends returning home early from work or hunting (talk

about a situation rife for a sad outcome), and tried to be scrupulous in my philandering, avoiding missteps and faux pas when at all possible, but my indiscretions finally caught up with me in a dramatic and irreversible way, personified in the form of a petite blond with a perfect smile.

Her boyfriend was a truck driver who spent long weeks out of town. He was almost thirty and she was eighteen, making his absence and her boredom, along with inexperience and a youthful sense of intrigue and adventure, a volatile mix that would engulf us all. Receiving a call from one of my female cousins with whom she was friendly and who had no scruples about petitioning on her behalf, I embarked on a weeklong excursion of sensual delights the likes of which I had not experienced in a long time. To my credit, I asked about her boyfriend. Lying, she explained that they had ended the relationship so no complications were expected. The reality, however, was that her boyfriend could have been in the next room for all I really cared. The de facto code of fidelity to another man's sexual rights to a woman extends only to the asking, not to the answer, making a convenient lie as serviceable as the truth in such circumstances.

What did bother me, though, was that I had met her boyfriend at a poker party and found him to be a pretty nice guy. Big and burly, he seemed more the avuncular, dependable type than a threat of any sort. Having met and decided that we liked each other, we began to use that threadbare and facile phrase for identifying the casual relationship, "friend," a single word complication that made matters even worse. Having accepted his friendship, no matter how tenuous or perfunctory, I had entered into a sacred male covenant: Thou shalt not sleep with my woman. Admittedly, it was a hollow agreement for most of us. The reality is that most of the men in my social set would have jumped into bed with the wife or girlfriend of any other man in the circle and hoped, like I did, just not to get caught. As Bragg (2001, p. 53) has noted, we Southerners are known for a marvelous selective morality that permits many things that might

otherwise be proscribed, and as regards sexual access to women, the offending male generally adjudges infidelity as a venial sin on his part, even if it is suffused with venality when considering the involved woman's indiscretion. If you are the violated male, however, having slept with his woman, his sacred and sacrosanct possession, you may as well have pissed on Ronald Reagan's grave while discussing the merits of socialism and talking about his mama. Sexual prowess for Southern men is possibly the most important factor undergirding the hypermasculine imperative that drives them to extremes of behavior, with fighting, fast cars, and other stereotypically masculine pursuits being mere adjuncts to proving manhood (Ngrassia, 2010). Just as in the animal world, sexual access to females drives men generally, and Southern poor men, often with little other than their families to showcase their value as men, seem to indulge their animalistic proclivities in this regard to an aberrant degree even compared to men of other regions (Crews, 1978; Bragg, 2001). The only real difference is that animals just do it—men need justifications, reasons, and the semblance of rules. And having broken one of the provisional and not too stringent rules, I was subject to rebuke when my error was discovered, which, of course, it was.

The first sign of trouble was as straightforward as it was disheartening. The young maid's significant other called me and asked very pointedly if I had screwed his girl. My immediate impulse, dictated by millions of years of evolution that impels all men discovered to have strayed, was to deny the accusation, but on learning that she had provided all the details necessary to make the case airtight, my perverse sense of Southern male honor required a candid admission of guilt. Abetting the urge was the fact that I genuinely liked the guy. Gregarious and unfeignedly hospitable, I felt that I owed him an apology and explanation, and not over the

phone. Refraining from a full confession, but saying that I would like to speak in person, I asked that we meet. He agreed, and we set up a time later that day at his friend's residence.

The intention, of course, was to offer him the opportunity for restitution—and retribution—in the form of physical combat, a prospect fraught with exceedingly dangerous possibilities. After all, these were mountain folk, people who had lived by an antiquated yet still operative code of lex talionis,[6] an eye for an eye in the frighteningly biblical sense of the expression, and making anything up to and including someone's death a real possibility. As previously stated, I found fighting over women from a very young age to be not only stupid but completely asinine. My view was, a person, man or woman, should know who they want to be with and have at it, leaving acts like ritual combat over another person just plain silly. Despite my misgivings, however, local culture and regional lore left me in the minority position, so that at least offering to fight the aggrieved male was mandated from a sociological perspective, and, having elected to live in that social milieu again, I had to comply with societal expectations in the matter or, at least I thought I did.

In such circumstances, protocol specified that each party take a second to ensure that the elegantly choreographed session of biting, eye-gouging and general ass-kicking proceeded with some degree of what passed in the Alabama hills for martial decorum. Taking backup was not something that had to be approved prior to the meeting; it was just expected. On the trucker's part, I knew that he would have his close friend with him, a bear of a man about my age and weighing nearly three hundred pounds. Renowned as the best scrapper in the area, a claim often heard yet seldom sustained, it was easy to believe that he could defend his reputation. If I had seen him carry a car engine it would not have surprised me. Given what I anticipated about my opponent's choice of backup, I carefully selected my own, and my immediate choice was a guy

we called Mountain for reasons that do not need lengthy explanation. Suffice it to say, he acquired that sobriquet not as an ironic joke, like naming a huge man "Tiny," but because he could well have been the geological formation incarnate. Beefy and capable—as well as a little thick between the ears—I knew that he could watch my back and was amenable to some gentle persuasion should I need to direct him. His mere presence would convey a sense of warning to anyone bent on chicanery, so having him there would, hopefully, allow me to concentrate on the matter at hand. There was just one minor problem.

As it turned out, I had slept with Mountain's wife. Although he was obviously unaware of my insult against his Southern male honor (as far as I knew) it still made for a sticky situation. Again, he seemed like a nice guy, so I was carrying some guilt about having transgressed against him, and now asking him to accompany me as a potential defender against another man's allies while I fought him because I had offended his relationship just seemed like a cruel and intentionally affronting joke. Nevertheless, I was stuck. I had to have someone, and not knowing any of these men very well, I did the best I could. I could have chosen one of my cousins, but the only two available for such sordid carryings on could not fight very well, and might just as likely have been flirting with one of the other guys wives or girlfriends themselves, perhaps taking a perfectly messed up situation and exacerbating it to uncontrollable proportions. So, with some trepidation, me and Mountain went up on the ridge to talk about the most unprincipled behavior a Southern man can engage in—sleeping with another man's woman (and getting caught).

When I arrived at the single-wide mobile home that was to be the proving ground, I became even more disheartened. Not because a fight ensued—it did not—but because I left feeling guiltier than when I had arrived. Like I said, the trucker was a good 'ol boy as we call them in the South. Friendly, generous, fun-loving, and jovial, with never a cross word to anyone

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that did not deserve it. Before arriving, I had decided that the ethical approach was to come clean, admit my sin, and attempt to absolve it and palliate its effects by offering to give him a chance to pound my head in, which was, in itself, a major obstacle to resolution. I could not just give in. Doing so would have been not only a violation of the Southern code of mutual combat, an irremissible violation in itself, it would have hurt, and willingly enduring a beating just was not acceptable to my desire for self-preservation. Further complicating the matter was that because I happened to like the guy, accessing that bestial inner rage needed to win was going to be difficult since I had betrayed him and given him insult. It was a sticky wicket, but, again, wasted concern on that particular day as he was so forlorn and apologetic himself that it was nearly embarrassing. All in all, he pretty much blamed himself, saying that his job kept him out of town and his girlfriend, much younger than him, was left lonely and bored. I could not believe my luck! I still felt bad for the guy but was more than a little relieved that neither us would be losing teeth or eyes that day. As I apologized again for what had happened, I shook his hand and insisted that we establish that the matter was settled. If not, I stipulated, and he felt the need for payback, it should be then or the matter was irrevocably closed. He assured me that all was over and we parted. Act II was to follow.

A few weeks later, I got a call from him. He had thought about the matter and decided that we had to thrash things out, figuratively and literally. I had half expected—if one can "half expect"—that the problem would reemerge, so I was not exactly shocked, and, truth be told, I think I needed some closure to the matter as well. Knowing that I would not be able to put on my best performance, I knew that I would take some knocks and possibly leave some skin and teeth in the backwoods where we agreed to meet, but one thing I absolutely could not do was capitulate. In the wrong or not, doing my best to win was not only a matter of survival, it was

part of the ideology of Southern male interaction, an integral and indissociable part of the curriculum of Southern hypermasculinity. Not doing my best would have been an insult to my foe and Southern manhood, and, more practically, would have marked me as an easy target for other men bent on proving their own masculinity by engaging me, a danger that Southern rural men can ill-afford (Bragg, 2001; Crews, 1976; Hayes & Lee, 2005). I was six feet, two inches tall and 215 pounds. Having a small waste and low body fat, I appeared bigger and heavier than I actually was. My physical attributes combined with my reputation as a weightlifter and amateur martial artist meant that defeating me in a fight would augment the reputation of other local men, an eventuality that would have left me continually fighting to defend myself and never knowing who was friend or enemy. Indeed, there were many complications that demanded that I not only win but do so in as dramatic a fashion as possible, so, fighting a man that I was loath to engage due to guilt and regret was preordained to be beset with conceivably insurmountable difficulties.

Another confounding factor was my backup situation. After the previous meeting with the trucker, my second, Mountain, had called a few hours later, and in the blunt and matter-of-fact way of the tough Southern male getting to the heart of the matter, had asked if I had been sleeping with his wife. Feigning indignation, something that I should have developed some appreciable expertise in by that point, I demanded to know who the contemptible person was who had aspersed my good name. When he replied that his wife had divulged our various assignations, I stuttered for a second, but instantly began a diatribe on the fallibility of relationships and how, oftentimes, neglected women will manufacture such dramatic occurrences in order to regain their spouse's attention and love. Whether he actually believed me (not being the brightest bulb on the Christmas tree it *was* possible) or simply wanted to believe what he was hearing, a trait not uncommon to heartbroken men, he accepted my explanation and never

brought it up afterward. Evidently, his wife subsequently recanted and disavowed her previous confession, making things between us, at least ostensibly, good. Still, the idea of asking him to second me in a fight over similar circumstances made no sense at all, so I was left with few options.

Eventually, I asked my two cousins to assist me. Both of them had hearts as big as all outdoors and were always sincerely committed to my welfare; however, their ability to protect my interests were more abstract than manifest, and needed to be assessed on a more conceptual than reality-based scale. Neither of them was blessed with an excess of brain cells, and decades of self-destruction in the form of substances of infinite variety had certainly contributed to a lessening of what cerebral faculties they did possess, so I was working from a deficit backup-wise from the beginning. The problem was that I had seen them both fight on many occasions, and counting how many fights they had respectively won would have taken no more than a single hand. In fact, they typically fought each other more than anyone else, and a more pitiable sight you might never live to see. Their scraps usually devolved into sessions of rolling around talking shit to each other rather than causing any real damage. Good for family relations, but an inauspicious fact for their potential service to me as seconds. In the end, I had little choice, though. Many Southerners use Guinea fowl as early warning systems on the property[7] without expecting them to offer any real defense. Maybe my cousins could be at least as useful. As it happened, however, I had an ace-in-the-hole. My cousin Pam.

Pam weighed somewhere in the neighborhood of eighty-five or ninety pounds, making a stiff wind more than an inconvenience. She could be as sweet as the day is long and was a devoted and caring mother, even to her older siblings and cousins like me. Attractive and svelte, she could carry herself on the same level with any lady ever seen, and was a feminine as she was

charming. But she did possess one slight flaw that could be exploited in the immediate case for my benefit. She was mean as hell. To say that a Southerner is simultaneously caring, loving, compassionate, devoted, Christianly, and mean is no big disparity. When you grow up hard, developing a little meanness can be a real advantage. For Pam, being the next to the youngest of seven made being a little mean a veritably requisite survival tactic. Picked on early and often (I, myself, was given to calling her "Pamela Gene the Cross-eyed Queen," a moniker of unattested origin but unerringly useful in pissing her off), Pam had early in life developed a sense of outrage and cultivated a thoroughgoing attitude of disdain that she could pull out like a gun. Ready to fight man or beast at a moment's notice, or none at all, as skinny as she was, she could be a holy terror when aroused. Best of all, for some reason, despite my early injustices toward her, she had acquired deep love and affection for me, feelings that I returned equally if not greater in kind, but always with a sheepish hint of implied apology for my youthful mischief where she was concerned. Yet now, without my being aware of it beforehand, Pam's refined and focused meanness would pay off for me.

Pam was angry at me for the whole affair with the trucker's girlfriend. Due to some past insult, she and the girl hated each other, and, further confusing the matter, their interactions had not benefited from renewed acquaintance. The girl, not at all dumb and knowing what Pam was capable of, had managed to steer clear of her for a long time. Advocacy by third parties had proved unavailing in reconciling the previous friends, and to make matters worse, Pam's dislike had only grown in intensity. When she learned that I had been seeing the girl clandestinely, she refused to speak to me for several days until a fair amount of begging and protestations of ungovernable hormones prevailed and I reentered her good graces. Of course, she razzed me for years about the matter, and does so to this day. But after her actions on the night of my fight with

the truck driver, a little good-natured banter about my willingness to put my whacker just about anywhere is a small price to pay in recompense.

The agreed upon location for the throw down was far back in the woods where no Johnny Law or other well-meaning but unwelcomed of the more graceful elements of contemporary society could interfere with the ruckus. The night was expected to be clear with a full moon, conditions that not only facilitated the event but provided an additional element of gravity to it. Many country folk find full moons to be auguries of everything from children's births to the right way to win lotteries so the existence of one that evening seemed to bode positively for a good dustup. My contingent arrived at the spot first—an intentional act on my part, as I wanted to scout the scene; not all country boys are stupid and some of us have smarts real good—and awaited the arrival of the other party. In addition to my two male cousins who were backing me up, two of my female cousins including Pam, a few of their friends that I barely knew, and the last minute accompaniment of a good friend of mine who got late notice of the fight but seemed gleeful at the prospect and cheerfully offered his services as additional support if needed, and his wife, I was alone. A few minutes after arriving, though, a virtual caravan began streaming into the area.

Evidently, the trucker was pretty confident of winning as he appeared to have invited everyone that he knew to witness his triumph. Car after packed car pulled up and disgorged dozens of people, few of whom I knew, and only a very few that my people would later say they recognized. Not initially seeing my prospective adversary, I turned momentarily to answer a question asked by someone behind me, and when I turned back, I perceived a large fist being driven forcefully toward my face. With no time to react evasively, the full force of that first punch drove into my noggin like a sledgehammer, pushing me back a step and causing

momentary disorientation. It is funny what you notice in such situations and what I recall most vividly about the entire encounter was one of my front teeth launched through the night air like a gleaming piece of Chiclets® gum, spinning like a top and quickly lost in the gathering dark of that sweltering summer night. In retrospect, losing that tooth may have been a godsend, because from that point all sense of concern for the trucker's feelings evaporated like spilled Coke® on sizzling Georgia asphalt. After that, the rage emanated from a wellspring of determination deep inside my brain and I was committed to one thing: beating the hell out of that man.

After that first decisive punch, the trucker did what I, and any other thinking fighter would have done, and capitalized on his advantage by going with me as I stepped back and throwing his weight on. The combined force of the strike and two-hundred and fifty pounds of Alabama truck driver caused me to fall backward onto the ground, carrying him with me. On top of me, he began to rain blows down onto my face, most of which I was able to block with little difficulty by covering up and parrying their direction. At first, being pinned to the ground, a position that I had found myself in many times before, caused me no great concern. As a youth, I had learned much from countless numbers of fights, and one of the first things that I stumbled upon was how to escape from a top mount by bridging and thrusting to dislodge an opponent. It had worked many times before, so I fully expected it to work again; however, on landing on my back, I immediately realized that the area we were fighting on was a major problem. Not noticeable while standing around on it, the soil had obviously once been a cultivated field that had been allowed to lay fallow. Surrounded by pine trees for possibly generations, the accumulated pine needles had made a nice substrate for walking but under pressure the disturbed ground gave way to soft dirt and old harrow lines, making disintegrating little ridges that were impossible to gain any purchase against. I tried several times to extricate myself from my

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vulnerable position, only to find disappointment each time. Had my opponent had more experience and little training, the situation might well have stayed dire and ended with a different life or no life at all for me.

As luck would have it, he lacked the mindset to maintain his advantage and, as I became more desperate, his mounted position became increasingly less secure. Continuing to pummel me with blows, he became overconfident and incautious, doubtless crediting his strikes with greater effect than they were actually having. As he continued to press what he thought was a tactical advantage, his legs spread wider apart and his top mount became more and more unsecure. Finally, as he leaned too far forward to try and hit my covered face, leaving himself off balance, I bridged and toppled him. The advantage that I had was not allowing panic to overwhelm me and preparing myself to exploit the opportunity that I predicted would come. As he fell onto his side, I rapidly gained a secure mount atop him and started driving straight, full-force punches into his face. He futilely tried to cover up but his inexperience served again as I was able to land the majority of my blows through and around his defenses and batter his face. After what had to be just a few seconds that seemed like half an hour, he stopped moving, and, notwithstanding my all-consuming rage, I ceased hitting him and got up, a mistake that would cost us both.

As I turned to vent my spleen against him, his friends, and generations of his family long-dead, I felt him grab my ankle, and as I turned to reengage him, I fell to the ground. Fortunately, I fell several feet away from him, and quickly scrambling to recover, I sailed toward him with renewed malevolence. From my perspective, he had been defeated soundly but honestly, having made a good show for himself and having been left, hopefully, with little real damage, so when he foolishly recommenced the fight, my anger overwhelmed me and I determined to put a definitive and brutal end to the affair. Once I was within striking distance, I found him on all

fours and, grabbing his far side, I drove an explosive knee into his left side, intending to break his ribs. When the blow landed, I felt a sharp pain in my kneecap which told me that I had missed my intended target and possibly caused myself irreparable damage. Although I had missed my aim, the blow was effective enough to send him rolling away from me with a groan of anguished pain, so I knew that I had done some measurable hurt. As I took a microsecond to shake off my own discomfort, he started rising to his feet, something that I could not allow. Steeping over from where I stood, I placed a side thrust kick using my heel into his face as he was up on one knee. Falling over backwards with an audible thud, and with his arms splayed straight back behind him, his lack of movement convinced me that he was unconscious, again emboldening me to look to the assembled crowd for anyone else who might want to resolve real or imagined differences. Once again, my mistake was almost very costly.

Hearing a yell from my small coterie of supporters, I wheeled about to meet his rush head on. This time we clashed like two amorous bulls attempting to establish mating rites, which, in a very real way, we were, with no punches or kicks, just wrestling for advantage. He was strong, but I knew that if I could disengage long enough to establish a striking distance or gain a leverage advantage, I could stop him for good. In just a few seconds, he stepped back just enough to allow me room to move and I seized the opening without delay. Slipping behind him, I placed a chokehold around his neck, and, in about fifteen seconds, he fell to his knees. He was gasping for air and still attempting to rise to his feet, when I pulled his head backward by his hair and, with a firm grip in his sweat-drenched locks I drove my right elbow down as forcefully as I could into his face, striking his nose and right eye. Flopping over unconscious, he lay there and I stepped away. This time, I knew he was done.

As I started to bellow my victory for everyone to appreciate, a blood-curdling scream from one of my girl cousins alerted me to more danger. Turning toward the opposite direction from where they stood, I managed to get a great view of an axe handle sailing toward my face. Too late to do anything, including curse, I suffered the brunt of that first blow across my face. The surprising thing was that I do not remember any pain, just a feeling of disgust and outrage. The guy wielding the axe handle was the feared and celebrated fighting friend of the trucker. Supposed to be unbeatable and willing to fight anyone anytime, what I saw that night was an unmistakable expression of fear and desperation. Even as I battled him and his axe handle, I enjoyed a sense of pride knowing that he was afraid of me, and, in an environment where men absolutely could not admit being afraid, his fright was unconcealed; perhaps small consolation as I was severely beaten with an axe handle, but a victory nonetheless.

I tried several times to take that potentially lethal weapon away from him, but my exhaustion and his untaxed three hundred pounds would not allow it. At one point, I successfully scooped the axe handle and, possibly flattering myself here, I nearly extracted it from his grasp. In the end, though, the odds were against me, my entourage was bellowing loud and clear that it was time to leave, and, discretion being the better and more sensible part of valor, I stepped back and inched my way toward my car. As I slowly backed away, I taunted him mercilessly and acknowledged the fear that I saw in his eyes, a foolhardy gesture in such circumstances. His fear was quickly overtaken by a resuscitated sense of his own need to reaffirm his masculine credentials. Insufficiently, it turned out, to reengage me directly, but enough to attack my car as we started to leave. Encouraged by the sight of us pulling away, he lobbed several blows with the axe handle, destroying my rear glass and a side window. As we sped away toward the only narrow road granting egress from the battlefield, I saw his figure gradually fading in the dark as

he chased us extending his wooden equalizer high above his head. Again, sometimes it is odd what you notice at such moments. Bruised and battered, with blood spattered liberally over my naked upper body and coating my blue jeans, I remember thinking quite distinctly that the axe handle he used looked brand new. Consequently, I had to give him some credit for being classy enough to buy it just for me.

It was during the post-fight storytelling and anecdotes that I learned how my cousin Pam had helped me, maybe in a life-preserving way, that night. Many people think that fighting for absurd reasons or over non-existent or pre-textual slights is a fundamentally Southern male preoccupation. A complete and utter fallacy. Some Southern women, especially in light of the postmodern tendency to erode artificial and nonsensical gender boundaries, are just as likely, if not more so, to open a can of "whip ass" as those stately Southern gentlemen of folklore and patent fact (Cobb, 1999; Nesbett & Cohen, 1996; Walker, 1982). Part of the family lore is how my step-father recalls sadly and fondly how his mother ended her abusive marriage to an unregenerate alcoholic by getting his attention one night with a Louisville Slugger. One head-jolting whack and she successfully convinced him that there were many places in the world that he could live that would be much more salutary to his health. Persuaded that he would find better fortune elsewhere, he left and never returned. Factually, that tendency may have saved my life during that particular row. I got the story from one of my male cousins, who, possibly hoping to discourage me from inquiring as to his activities while I was embroiled mano-a-mano since it turns out he was making time with a young spectator rather than covering my back, related the incident with no lack of pride and some obvious astonishment. As it turns out, my quondam love interest, the truck driver's young fiancée ('fiancée' is a Southern locution borrowed from the French and means 'the person I'm screwing at the moment'), aroused to a new sense of loyalty

on seeing her mate and meal ticket battered by someone who had cast her aside, tried to intervene by striking me over the melon with a crowbar. My fiercely loyal cousin Pam, out of zealous devotion to me and, no doubt, delighting in the opportunity to discharge her pent up animosity for the girl, with fearless celerity disarmed her arch nemesis and proceeded to beat the bejesus out of her. As gratified as I was to know that at least someone was actually doing their job vouchsafing my interest, my pride took a minor hit as it appeared that some of the crowd had actually stopped watching my heated contest and had begun observing the ass-whipping that Pam laid down. Still, I was grateful. That crowbar could have wreaked havoc with the part of my hair.

After the glad-handing and mutual congratulations ceased and copious amounts of alcohol were imbibed, I found myself looking in the bathroom mirror, reflecting on the night's events and their aftermath. As I stared at the florid red streak creasing my face, an artifact of the first blow with the axe handle and something that I was praying would disappear at some point soon, I pondered my future and if I even had one. I had briefly escaped the pull of my White trash Southern upbringing but the minute the stress was on and I had nowhere to go, I had returned to the life with a vehemence and commitment that threatened to destroy my possibilities. I wondered if that was what I really wanted from life, the recurrent melodrama of hillbilly living, a return to the swampy confines of my youth, or something more, something as yet undefined, perhaps because indefinable. I thought about the fight itself and how my structured and conditioned male ego, rather than parse the details for insights that might have suggested more intelligent ways of pursuing life, left me only quibbling over trivialities and tangential aspects of the encounter. By employing an axe handle, hitting me while I was distracted, and making me engage multiple opponents, they had committed inexcusable breaches

of Southern male hypermasculine etiquette. Why in the hell did such ridiculous matters preoccupy me? Was I really that preconditioned in my thinking? The hubris and elitist mentality that I had developed over the years, believing that I was somehow above and beyond my rearing, evaporated like an ephemeral morning fog.

A few days after the fight, I received word that the trucker had been hospitalized with several broken ribs, a broken nose, and with one eye nearly blinded. Embarrassed, he had alluded to seeking charges against me, a suggestion that brought immediate and unequivocal reproach from his peers as another violation of the unwritten code of male hypermasculinity. One handles one's business like a man, not by availing oneself of the law. That day, I looked around me and said aloud to myself, "Who can I trust?" After ruminating over the possible answers for a few minutes, I entered the mobile home that I shared with my cousin, packed my meager belongings, and headed east for my parents house in Georgia. Traveling non-stop, I continued to consider my options, and envisaging nothing reassuring, I drove looking for home.

"Forget All That Bullshit You Learned at Police Academy!"

When Sgt. Dill gruffly directed me to follow him into the Day Room, I immediately expected the worst. Wordlessly motioning for me to have a seat on one of the couches in the room—both of them looked as if they had been obtained from street side junk piles, a reality later confirmed for one of them—Sgt. Dill slumped into an old swivel chair in front of a World War II-era desk that was probably received as excess from the Federal government. Later, I would wish that I had taken a photo of the scribbles on that desktop as they doubtless spoke volumes about the history of the police department and its generations of officers. As the Sarge mindlessly added his own impromptu gloss to the relic, I realized that whatever he had to say was of the most serious gravity, so I steeled myself for the rebuke that I expected. In such cases,

smart cops quickly run through the list of their latest screw ups, hoping to manufacture a plausible excuse or believable explanation, but in my case, having just returned from the police academy, I frantically searched the trove of my remembrance, exhausting possibilities yet coming up with nothing. As I mentally groped for something to prepare me for the ass-chewing I was about to receive, the old sergeant cleared his throat conspicuously and began to speak. He would pontificate about many things over the coming years, yet little of his quasi-sagacious ramblings would register to the degree that his words that night did.

"Look here, son," Sarge began, enhancing the effect of his severe countenance by narrowing his still bright eyes set in his leathery, wizened face, "I understand that you just got back from mandate [State of Georgia police academy, so-called because it is mandated by State law], and I'm sure that you think you have it all figured out. I know that those folks taught you a lot of nice-sounding techniques about how to be a good cop and do this job effectively, but your *real* police academy begins tonight, right now." To further emphasize the gravitas, he shifted his weight in the chair, removed his eye glasses with the dinner plate-sized lenses, and laid them on the desk. The years had not been kind to Sgt. Dill. Nearly bald, he kept the one obstinate sprig of hair on top of his head in a little curlicue in the middle of his pate, a sad attempt to convince himself that he still had hair. Decades of smoking and heavy drinking had left him addled, with a wrinkled, droopy face that spoke voluminously about his experience and a misspent youth. His sloppy uniform and necktie, used too often as a napkin, made him a potentially humorous character (guessing what he had recently, or not so recently, eaten by scrutinizing the smeared contents of his tie was always great fun) but he was not one to be taken lightly. Suffering from dunlap disease—his belly done lapped over his belt—all in all he made a pretty pitiful spectacle. Still, he roared like a lion and was more than a little mean, so most of us took him pretty

seriously. When he raised his right index finger and pointed it in my direction, I knew that I needed to pay strict attention.

He continued. "First thing, forget all that bullshit you learned in police academy. All that stuff might be fine for school, but out here in the street, you learn what really counts. Looking out for your fellow officers, doin' whatever it takes to make it home every day, and keepin' your mouth shut about police business are the most important things to remember. Do not go around causing a bunch of work for everybody," which meant enforcing the law involved a lot of paperwork that the supervisors would have to review and certify, so do not do it anymore than necessary, and arresting the wrong people meant dealing with complaints, the wrong people being anyone of means who might object to a fellow cop's actions, "just do what has to be done, keep things quiet, and don't get caught gettin' laid. If you ain't got enough sense to get your ashes hauled without gettin' caught, don't expect me to save your ass!" I was not naïve, so hearing the same things that the other officers had already attempted to inculcate was not surprising. I had worked as a police officer for months before going to police academy, so the norms of police behavior, at least in our department and those with which I was familiar, were not unknown to me. Hearing them stated as unofficial, codified policy, however, somehow seemed a little bizarre, especially coming from a supervisor. Generally, such things were known tacitly and passed on with a wink, not as explicitly posited expectations. To say that I added another specimen to my stock of quickly mounting disillusionments about police work would be a decided understatement. It is funny what you can get used to, though, particularly when you want to fit in. I tried not to betray the sense of astonishment that I felt, instead mustering a serious look and nodding my head in acknowledgement of what was expected. My reticence and agreeing nod assured him that I was onboard. And I was. I did not understand everything, why

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things were the way they were rather than the way that I had idealized them, but I was a big boy, well-acquainted with how the world really worked, so I would rapidly acclimate to the new realization of police culture. Nonetheless, I would ruminate about that conversation for years.

Sgt. Dill chuckled abruptly as he slowly worked his way out of his chair like a turtle trying to right himself after being overturned. As he gained his footing, he adjusted his gun belt, pulling up his sagging pants and groaning like he was in some sort of chronic pain or acute pleasure. Cocking his arms akimbo, hands on each hip, he made one more remark meant to accentuate the profundity of the moment. "You're a fine police officer. The guys think the world of you and they tell me you're already the best backup around and can be counted on to do what's right." Softening his craggy careworn face with a slight smile, he walked toward the door with a short, quiet stride that belied his palpable girth. Stopping beside me, he patted me on the shoulder reassuringly and said, "You'll be all right." With that, he slipped out the door and into the night, not to serve and to protect, but to have coffee and a patty melt at a local café.

After the Sarge left, I went back on patrol and drove around my zone aimlessly, pondering what he had said, and considering how things are never like you imagine them to be. Growing up watching TV shows like *Adam 12* and *Dragnet*, I was convinced that cops were stoic, imperturbable, ethical, ever-vigilant and always on the job. They never sold out, and if they did, they suffered the righteous wrath of a profession that knew how to discipline its own. In most cases, the immediate and unflinching reprehension evident in their fellows' eyes was sufficient to wither the heart of the most deviant of their members. Cops sacrificed for others, gave no ground, and asked no quarter. Defending the weak and vulnerable and always doing what was legally, morally, and ethically right, their characters were irreproachable and their probity unchallengeable. Good cops wanted nothing more than to honor their profession and

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demonstrate that they deserved the respect allotted them by their public. Just being a cop, a disciplined, conscientious, trustworthy member of the world's most noble profession was adequate reward. So I was taught by my culture. Who knew that what they really wanted was quiet so that they could enjoy coffee with their patty melt?

As I considered what I had heard, I realized that the police academy had not been much more consistent with my preconceptions. In the Academy, we were presented with a compendious version of the latest in police techniques, principles, and practices taught by esteemed members in the police field and associated disciplines. Only five weeks long, I suppose I should not have expected too much, and at the time I did not. But I remember the distinct feeling that something seemed pro forma, perfunctory, and just incomplete. In retrospect, I realize that what was missing were topics like criminological theory, social justice, and anything remotely resembling philosophy of law. We received training on police ethics—about an hour's worth—but I do not recall being impressed or leaving with any genuine understanding about what "police ethics" meant. Mostly, police academy was a version in outline of what I would experience as a cop in the field: specious rhetoric intended to dissemble the realities of police work. As disdainful as Sgt. Dill had been of the police academy and its unrealistic tenets, the two were not far apart in their expectations. Police academy was a block that I had to check so that I could begin my real education and training in police practice, and my formal introduction to the rhetoric of policing that proffers sound reasoning and noble purpose but misses the spirit of the profession in many cases, a rhetoric that takes eager young cops and begins turning them into institutional automatons daily reproducing the societal status quo. Contemplating what the Sarge had said during the remainder of my shift, I quickly accepted that my formal police education

had begun and that the street, my fellow officers, and the gritty realities of policing would be my real teachers.

"You Have to Like to Fight…"

As I rode with the curmudgeonly old lieutenant that first day, he invested a lot of his energy in what I am sure he considered a sort of unofficial and impromptu form of rookie hazing, enumerating the infinite dangers that can harm a cop. Noting the prevalence of assaults by the criminal element—whoever they were—he also cited traffic accidents and bizarre occurrences of all types. Clearly meant to test my mettle, I was tempted to tell him that his efforts were a waste of, what was becoming for him in his advanced years, precious energy, and assure him that I could deal with whatever came along. Having long been immersed in hypermasculine posturing in many disparate venues, and confident that I was as a capable as the next guy, I found the whole ad hoc process of trying to scare me more than a little humorous, but, a lesson I learned early about surviving in my hypermasculine worlds was that, regardless of the circumstances or the man involved, indiscreetly scoffing at such posturing was always a bad idea, and in the world of cops, I learned almost immediately that a little well-placed humility was invaluable when trying to fit in. So, as the lieutenant droned on, I respectfully nodded and affirmed the importance of what he said.

Stopping to talk to a man that he knew at a local business, I received a bit of folk wisdom from the older cop that resonates in my memory even now, and, will doubtless be there for my lifetime. Introducing me to the man and explaining that I was a rookie that he was chauffeuring, he casually but self-consciously remarked, "More 'an apt we'll get his ass into a fight today," he cackled as he chewed his signature Swisher Sweet® and nodded in my direction. Both of the older men had a good laugh at the comment, and I offered the obligatory, "Let's go!" to affirm

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my commitment to joining the fray whenever necessary. Enthusiastic confirmation was required in such circumstances to ensure that all men in the vicinity understood that one's thinking was sufficiently awash in testosterone and that one enjoyed fighting as an avocation as much as a vocation. Failure to capitalize on such chest-thumping moments was tantamount to admitting that you might not appreciate the value of inflicting harm to another man, a result potentially lethal to a young man's police career. Better to guffaw and valorize violent impulses with the fellows than offer rational platitudes about fighting only when necessary. Young men must find their way through their masculine development but old men always draw the map.

As we pulled back onto patrol, the lieutenant waxed philosophic and gave me the sagacious advice that I have never forgotten. "Jerdon," he began in his slow, deliberate drawl, "if you want to be a good cop, you got to like to do two things." Pointing with his cigar and gnarly finger, he looked at me with tremendous gravity and said, "You got to like to fight and you got to like to fuck." In other circumstances, I might have been distracted by his pronouncing my name wrong, but the unintentional profundity of his remark held my interest. Tempted to protest that my upbringing stipulated those very ideas as the criteria for successful masculinity, I simply responded with an unoriginal platitude myself. "I'm in good shape then, L.T. They're my two favorite hobbies," I boasted. Chuckling again just audibly, he replied, "Well, we'll see." From that moment, though, I made a point of assessing his dictum as I went about my police career, and found, no surprise, that as a cop, you did, indeed, have to engage in fighting and fucking, or become a confirmed and competent liar about liking them. For us, anything service-related, escorts, checking alarms, getting cats or possums out of trees, was just time away from the world of real policing which must include some aspect of combat or sex. Oftentimes, as is true with many hypermasculine endeavors, we were able to combine realization of the two objectives by

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ostentatiously demonstrating martial skills in the presence of women. Of course, the pressure in such circumstances was great. If an officer got his ass kicked, or required too much assistance, his virility stock could plummet, making it a wise approach to act in the dark and recite the details in the light.

Pop Goes Jamie

You never forget the first time that you see someone's brains blown out. Truthfully, you never forget any of the times that you see someone with their brains blown out, but the first time engrains memories and educes thoughts that work to make you philosophic about subsequent such experiences. Patrolling one fall evening on the south side of town, I received a dispatch call from 911 of "shots fired," a call that engenders both excitement and anxiety for police officers since you never know what type of situation you are going into but you cannot wait to find out. This particular call was in a government subsidized housing project that was infamous for its prevalence of violence and drug dealing, but the shots were reported as having come from within an apartment, slightly unusual for drug activity as most of those shootings occurred outside, but consistent with domestic violence incidents. Heightening my concern was the paucity of details available about the call. All that dispatch could say was that several calls had come in reporting a single shot fired in one of the apartments and nothing more. When I arrived, everything looked completely normal in and around the end apartment, something that, as a young police officer, I had already learned meant little. In this case, it would prove an informative lesson about human resiliency in the face of repeated trauma and the insensitivity that can develop when death and mayhem are part and parcel of people's daily lives.

As I cautiously approached the door to the apartment, I saw a male standing in the doorway. He casually motioned toward the interior of the apartment, saying "He's in here" with

a detached air that would, a few seconds later, feel almost eerie. Entering the building, I saw another man face down on the floor of the living room—or what passed for a living room if a roughly sixteen-by-sixteen foot space can qualify as such—and to the far side near the small kitchen. On the right side of his head was a small mark that had the telltale marks of a bullet entrance wound, and nearly covering the entire expanse of the living room was a pool of blood coagulated nearly a half-inch think. Small pieces of brain tissue were peppered on the floor a few feet from his head and a .38 revolver was laying in the blood pool a few feet from him. In addition to the man who had spoken, occupying the apartment was a young female, who said nothing as she puttered around the house, and a small child that appeared to be about two years old and was happily seated on a loveseat watching a cartoon on the television set positioned across the blood pool in a far corner. What struck me most poignantly was that none of the three seemed particularly interested in what was happening, and, in fact, seemed a little blasé about the whole matter. The man joined the child in watching the cartoon, laughing occasionally, and the woman continued to carry clothes baskets about the apartment, moving from room to room.

Somewhat taken aback and a little confused, I nevertheless affected my most authoritative demeanor and barked out a series of questions meant to simultaneously establish my "command presence"[8] and show that I was now in charge of the situation. I could have just as well been attempting to assert control over a group of statues. The man and the woman complied immediately, answering my questions and taking my directions in stride, but it was truly a case of meeting the letter of the law while disdaining the spirit. My queries were met with perfunctory and desultory responses that in no way betrayed the least hint of concern or excitement. The combination of having an exsanguinated person on the floor with a bullet hole in his head, indifferent witnesses, and waiting on an ambulance that seemed to be propelled by

hamster power rather than an internal combustion engine was more than a little irritating. Compounding the effect was the fact that humans like to have their excitement mirrored by others experiencing the same situation, and not seeing such to be the case, I was feeling a little self-conscious, wondering if maybe I was overreacting. But it was more than that, too. When I had asked the man in the apartment who the man on the floor was, he immediately replied "Jamie," implying at least a passing familiarity with the victim and he confirmed that the gunshot wound was self-inflicted, making the apparent suicide of someone that he knew a presumptively upsetting event. Still, nothing from him. No emotion, no evident concern, no nothing.

After a few minutes, backup officers arrived as did an ambulance. Taking control and feeling much more confident since I now had a sympathetic audience for my display of TV-induced police professionalism, I warned each person who entered to steer clear of the continually expanding blood pool, now nearly covering the living room floor. The areas of the tile floor not masked by Jamie's blood were so small that only a section on one side about two feet in width remained, making movement around the body precarious and fraught with potentially grotesque results of the Hollywood horror film type. I kept thinking that if anyone fell into that pool of blood they might go insane, but I need not have worried. The initial officers backing me up and the emergency medical technicians (EMTs) who responded were veterans of such incidents and went about their jobs as dispassionately as the apartment's occupants who had witnessed the shooting. No missteps occurred and no one screamed out in repulsed horror, making me feel a little ashamed of my own thoughts. As the old and experienced detective arrived to investigate the case, everything was going quietly, if mechanistically, along. That would change.

As I assisted the detective and listened to him interview each of the adult witnesses, I was further astonished at the indifference displayed by them. The EMTs asked loudly if anyone knew the injured man (injured because his brain stem and medulla oblongata were still working making his breathing, technically, still work; for all intents and purposes, he was dead once he pulled the trigger). The detective, a friendly but crusty old veteran cop who may have begun his police career on horseback, looked at the younger man that he was about to interview and asked curtly if he knew the man on the floor. Acknowledging that he did, the EMTs asked that he kneel down and speak to Jamie as he might respond to a familiar voice. If the young man's nonchalance in the face of such a dramatic event was puzzling to me, what he did when asked to kneel down and offer support to his fatally injured friend was positively macabre. Before the detective approached to speak to him, the man had been heating a bowl of SpaghettiOs® in the microwave, his appetite obviously unaffected by what he was witnessing. Having retrieved the now warm snack, as he spoke with the detective he munched on his tomato sauce saturated repast as he answered questions. When the EMTs enlisted his help, he simply kneeled down where he was in the kitchen doorway, asked what he should say, and, as he spoke with Jamie less than two feet away, he gobbled down the contents of the bowl. As most cops do in such circumstances, I cast oblique glances toward the others in the room to gauge their reactions. Seeing nothing on their faces that suggested concern or astonishment, I pretended to be equally nonplused and demonstrated the same sangfroid. For the record, though, I have not eaten a bowl of SpaghettiOs® since and have no intention of doing so.

About the time that the ghoulish consumption of cheap pasta had begun, the rookie walked in. Having less than a year's experience myself, that jocularly pejorative moniker could have applied to me as well, but for some reason, the other officers did not seem to see me that

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way. True, I had suffered through a very brief version of the hazing that accompanies initiation into the field of police work, yet somehow, whether due to my immediate and enthusiastic immersion in the experiences of the police world or because I was naturally gifted at the braggadocio and bluster associated with the successful development of an esteemed police reputation, I was spared any initiation rituals that were especially humiliating and my "rookie period" was blessedly short. Not so for most cops and certainly not for the ones who boasted too loudly of their abilities and prowess. The new cop in the instant case was a nice guy and was already fully accepted, but he did have a tendency to discount the effect of experiences that we all knew were anxiety-provoking, a predilection that, along with his visceral reaction to the shooting scene, would prove his undoing.

Rookie cops are given the shit details whenever possible, and Jamie's suicide attempt was no exception. It might not have been so bad but the combination of a curmudgeonly old detective and an obviously green-about-the-gills rookie cop spelled disaster for the rookie from the start. As soon as he walked in, he was clearly struck by the pathos of the situation, an effect exacerbated no doubt by the gore and the apathy of those involved, cops as well as witnesses, and the detective seized upon his noticeable distress. Calling the rookie over to assist him, which required that the rookie negotiate the blood pool without contacting it and possibly slipping, the detective handed him a pencil and directed him to start searching through the thickly coagulated blood to find the bullet. The mother had snatched up her toddler and was waiting in another room to be interviewed, and Jamie had been removed by the EMTs and was on his way to Savannah in a futile attempt to treat him (he died en route) so there was no danger of interfering with his care, making the scene a perfect arena for a little newbie hazing. Dutifully doing as bid, the rookie squatted down and began peeling back the mat of coagulated blood that had only a few minutes

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before been coursing through the veins of a young man with his whole life ahead of him. As the rookie went about his task, we all smiled at each other, silently betting when the young cop would lose his most recent meal and add his contribution to the repugnant mass of tissue on the floor. As he meticulously dissected the blood pool with his extemporaneous implement he alternated colors and struggled valiantly to avoid puking, and to his credit, he never did, a fact that, praiseworthy as it was, did nothing to detract from the other cops enjoyment of his evident discomfort. For my part, I feigned amusement, acquiescing to the garish act of hazing just as dutifully as the rookie prosecuted his work, but my sympathy was with him, and I was rooting for him not to get sick. Still struck by the surreal nature of what I had seen, I wanted nothing more than to go back on patrol and exit the grisly scene.

Afterward, I explained to the young police officer how he had been duped for the other officers' callous entertainment. He could not find the bullet, and after a few minutes, the old detective had pity on him and suspended the search, but the reason he could not find the bullet was the real source of the officers' merriment. The detective and the rest of the police officers present, me included, knew that the bullet was lodged somewhere in a wall and could not possibly have been in the blood pool once the trajectory and the explosive force of an expelled .38 round were accounted for, making the search nothing more than a practical joke at the searching officer's expense. The rookie claimed that he knew that the bullet would not be found in the blood and that he was merely going along with the joke, proving how quickly the hypermasculine imperative acts upon the psyches of police initiates in making them self-defensive and uncritical where their masculine reputations are concerned. He thanked me anyway for trying to look out for him and went back into the night to await the next lesson in his hypermasculine police education.

According to the account of Jamie's suicide given by the young man who witnessed it, Jamie had been playing with the .38 revolver that killed him all day, waving it around, removing and replacing the bullets, and generally behaving with extreme bravado all day, showcasing his confidence in his own masculinity. Finally, he loaded the gun, looked at the other people in the room, and, placing the gun to his right temple, said, "Pop goes Jamie," his last statement on earth, having punctuated his remark by pulling the trigger and sending a .38 round through his young brain, leaving a hole in his head and a larger one in understanding of the event and the reasons it occurred. Why would a virile, healthy young man take his own life when he had no known personal anguish sufficient to explain such a desperate act? The answer will never emerge because the possessor of that knowledge took it with him. I have always wondered, though, if it was the hypermasculine bombast alone that killed him. Having bragged about how tough he was and how casually he saw such phenomena as violence and guns, could he have simply worked himself up to a point where it was time to put up or shut up? I had seen many cops commit similarly extreme acts for no more reason than to prove their self-promoting sense of masculine presence. Maybe Jamie died for no more valid reason than to sustain an ideal that was inherently flawed and inimically constituted. And maybe cops do the same thing.

CHAPTER V

LENNY AGAIN

Wounds or scars give an awesome credibility to a story.

Harry Crews

Stories can conquer fear, you know. They make the heart bigger…

Ben Okri

The universe is made of stories, not of atoms.

Muriel Rukeyser

Thought is the blossom; language the bud; action the fruit…

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The morning air felt good. Still summer, the nights in early September had been uncharacteristically temperate, making the mornings especially nice. As I climbed into my pickup truck to head to work, I was alert and in a good mood despite the early hour. Easing down my long unpaved drive, my truck lurching and swaying as it traversed the minefield of ruts and gullies, I reflected on my good fortune. Time had eroded some attributes that I had long cherished about myself. The lean, muscular, self-possessed young man brimming with overweening confidence and illimitable potential was now a middle-aged, doughy, balding man with a loving wife, three grown sons, and two recently acquired grandchildren. Still, I was content. I had just purchased a beautiful McMansion with more room than I could ever hope to utilize situated on a hilltop overlooking bucolic scenes straight from a Norman Rockwell painting, my career with the Department of Veterans Affairs was going well and gave me a sense of fulfillment that I had not experienced before. I loved working with veterans and making each day an opportunity to assist others. I earned a nice living and felt really good about what I was

doing to earn it. And, significantly, I had recently ended a 21-year career as a police officer, having achieved the pinnacle of success in that profession, chief of police, and I felt exceptionally satisfied with the work that I had done with my police department. Whereas other chiefs were content to continue a tradition of recklessness and self-indulgence among their police officers, I had dedicated my tenure as a police chief to ensuring that we sincerely lived the tenets of devoted public servants, particularly in the way that my officers sought to apply legally endowed authority with compassion and the ideals of social justice firmly in mind, and I was pleased with the results. I trained my officers and staff in critical thinking methods, sometimes overtly, other times through what I called "subversive teaching" methods, but always with the end in mind of making the public customers, not playthings. My early years of policing had indelibly marked the follies associated with such unethical behavior into my psyche. I had refused to be the irresponsible, undependable cop on the beat looking for fun at the expense of those I had sworn to serve, and I had not only refused to tolerate such excesses among my officers, I had provided the leadership to dissuade them from such contemptible conduct. As my headlights cut through the morning darkness and I entered the highway on my way to a job that I loved, I felt pretty good.

Tooling along listening to NPR, I decided it would be a great morning to stop and grab a coffee from McDonald's. I had just purchased a Keurig® coffee maker, not cheap and a perfect cup every time, but Mickey D's coffee was tops in Consumer Reports estimation—and mine— so, given my self-satisfaction that particular morning, I thought a coffee treat was in order. Nearly $ 2.00 a cup, but what was $ 2.00 to a guy making my salary? A pittance really. As I wheeled into the parking lot of McDonald's, I saw employees milling about, getting things started for a long day. Oftentimes, I would recognize them individually. Many were persons that

I had arrested or had otherwise met in my capacity as a police officer, some I knew casually, but I always felt a twinge of regret when I thought about their plight. These were not kids working their way through college or trying to earn money for a car, they were adults, some much older than me, working menial jobs at long hours and for deplorably low wages just to make ends meet. One I saw frequently was T-Bone.

T-Bone's actual name was Reggie T. Joiner but his street name was T-Bone and that's what everyone but his mother called him. T-Bone always struck me as an especially sad and poignant figure. A former police partner of mine who was younger than T-Bone and had known him well in childhood told me that T-Bone had been an Olympic-class athlete, having handily won a number of state championships in track and field and was generally expected to go to the Summer Olympics and medal. Unfortunately, T-Bone had misspent his youth and abilities on alcohol and cocaine, eventually becoming nothing more than the town drunk in a town that had plenty of candidates for that ignoble moniker. By the time that I met him, he was capable of little more in the way of speech than a few mumbled and incomprehensible words, though my erstwhile partner had assured me that T-Bone had once been quite capable of articulate conversation. Whatever former glory and talent that he had possessed was undetectable when I met him, and my subsequent experiences with him were memorable more for their comedic value than any sense of pathos. T-Bone would get sloppy drunk or soaringly high and invariably get into trouble of some sort, necessitating his arrest. Skinny, slow, and virtually incoherent most of the time, he also made an easy mark for officers who wanted to effect an easy collar and maybe get in a few gratuitous punches on someone incapable of offering any real resistance, not that he did not try, though. One quality of his that came through consistently, needing no validation through eloquence, was his anger and indignation. T-Bone nearly always fought back,

but the effort only exacerbated the humorous aspects of his behavior and just encouraged the officers to antagonize him into resistance. A good police war story did not require an evenly matched opponent, just enough verisimilitude to make the story technically true. Some officers did not even need that base of authenticity, needing only a receptive audience to be regaled by the recounting of their hypermasculine adventures.

Initially, I had shared the officers' contempt of T-Bone. All I saw was a drunk and crackhead whom I could not understand and who was contemptuous of me even when I tried to help him. Unlike the other officers, my pride and prodigious sense of machismo would not allow me to pick an opponent who was incapable of successfully contending with me, so I had tried to get T-Bone and others like him home or convince them that their behavior was not in their best interest. Sometimes I was successful, other times not. With T-Bone, however, talk was a complete waste of time. No matter the circumstance, he never seemed to accept culpability or that he could have done anything meriting police intervention. Over time, I grew increasingly frustrated with him and his ilk, and finally started arresting them. Still, I used minimal force to effect such arrests; after all, fighting someone like T-Bone was more an embarrassment than something to brag about. Once I heard the story about his dissipated athletic talent, though, I began to think about him differently. It was not the athletic ability itself that had impressed me and caused me to reconsider him and his behavior, it was what his failed life represented for me. Here was a guy who could have been a world-class athlete, something most card-carrying, hypermasculine American males would kill to be, and, yet, T-Bone had profligately squandered his opportunity for greatness. Why? What could have driven him so far from the path to a meaningful, prosperous life that his talent could have afforded him?

At first, I was sure, like everyone else, that he was imbued with some constitutional defect that had manifested in a despicable character, a conviction that some of the officers couched in racist misconceptions, a dimension that, thankfully, I never felt inclined to consider. For my part, I began pondering his struggles from a more individualized approach. What was his youth like that it would tempt him to divest himself so unceremoniously of his potential? Was he abused, unintelligent, unsupported, lacking in the fundamental resources to exploit his abilities? I often found myself mentally constructing scenarios that would account for his failure. Maybe he was unable to deal with college-level studies because of a poor education, or perhaps he was afraid to take on the larger world outside of his immediate experience, preferring instead to sequester himself within his accustomed social environs and the relative obscurity of substance abuse. Possibly some injury had sidelined him at the most inopportune moment, or a criminal offense engaged in at the spur of the moment had left him ineligible to compete. Over the years, I entertained a number of likely reasons for his impoverished and squalid lifestyle, some dramatic, others insipid and unremarkable, but all intended to fill the informational void of a life story that just did not make good sense. The one thing that never occurred to me during all the time that I knew T-Bone was just to ask him. Later, I would realize that that failure was attributable to my unwillingness to recognize him in the sense that Honneth (1986) theorizes. I did not see T-Bone as a person, rife with foibles, endowed with talents, and possessed of a unique life experience that might benefit me to know and him to express. T-Bone was just a perpetrator, a subject, a violator, a drunk, and a crackhead. I had labeled him from the start based on what I had perceived as epitomizing him, thus rendering him non-human, and foreclosing the chance for mutual understanding and meaningful dialogue.

Now, T-Bone was working at McDonald's and had been for a long time. In one sense I was impressed and encouraged as I had never known him to have a legitimate job before. I imagined that he was striving mightily to beat the alcohol and drug abuse that had relegated him to the fringes of society and that, unremunerative as the job doubtless was, he was earning an honest living, a possibility that I assumed could not occur unless he had discontinued his once inveterate and intensive substance use. Regardless of my admiration, he did not look happy at all. Scowling most of the time, rarely if ever making eye contact, he just methodically carried out the manual labor that his job demanded. I never even noticed him speaking with the other staff, just walking slowly, sometimes laggardly, along as he went about his toil. He clearly never recognized me, and I did not encourage him by calling his name or attempting conversation. Before, I had never thought to get information about his life from the source, and now, I did not want to know. Demons haunt one without being bidden, but few people have the temerity to invite them in. Better to combat the specters of our iniquities when they arise than to purposely conjure them.

As I pulled up to the speaker to order my coffee, I watched T-Bone exit into the black morning dragging a long hose and immediately tried to dismiss him and his aborted life from my thoughts. I had been having a good morning and anticipated a great day, a day that I deserved. I was no longer the person who used to treat T-Bone and his like as if they were animals, caring little for their circumstances or their plights and only seeing them as statistics. I was a good guy now, really, a generous person who gave freely to others and empathized with their needs. It was too bad that his life had turned out the way it had, but it certainly was not my fault. Sure, he must have had problems out of his control and without a doubt he had been reared in abject poverty and been disadvantaged socially, economically, and maybe even intellectually, but all of that had

been years before. At some point, I remarked mentally, people must take responsibility for themselves and overcome the impediments that assail them. I had done so. I had had privileges and advantages that T-Bone had not but I had experienced difficulties of my own. An alcoholic, physically abusive biological father, straitened material circumstances, and the stigma of déclassé social position, and yet I had emerged from impoverishment that often threatened to devolve into absolute destitution. Unfortunately, rationalization and self-deception are two of the cardinal sins of the critical thinker, ideas that I had learned years before and striven to make habitual, so my defensive internal monologue could not assuage the renewed guilt that I felt at having been confronted with yet another person I could have helped and had unapologetically and unashamedly let down. No matter T-Bone's circumstances, I was the one who had sworn to look out for him, and I had never done so. Some sins are irremissible, and any sin that detracts from the fulfillment of a fellow's life expression, especially on the part of someone vaunting public service as their calling, is the most unpardonable of all.

As the speaker began to squawk, I was abruptly roused from my now somber reveries, and, instead of simply wanting the stimulating jolt of caffeine that the coffee I desired promised, I very much needed it. Few things pacify the pangs of a guilty conscious in American society like the sweet taste of capitalism contained within a cup of gourmet coffee. The irony of moderating my guilt over having failed a lesser-situated human being by purchasing a beverage that he probably could not afford in an establishment where he worked was completely lost on me at the time, yet has resonated often since. Who knows? Maybe McDonald's employees get free coffee or a significant discount. As Freud was wont to note, if people are not rational, at least they are rationalizing. Some lessons do not take the first time around.

Shaking off the morose thoughts that were harshing my "I'm-high-on-life" buzz, I turned my attention to the speaker to order my coffee. After the automated message hawking the latest artery-clogging faux-food was done, a voice asked me what I would like, and the unsettling feelings of just a few seconds before returned with the force of a roundhouse kick to the noggin. That voice was somehow startlingly familiar. The script used was perfunctorily friendly, something to the effect of, "Good morning, may I take your order?" but the tone was uninviting and excruciatingly sedate, almost robotic, as if an armed robbery might be welcomed as a relief to the monotony. I could almost see the employee's eyes roll in contempt as I hesitatingly ordered a large coffee. The response directing me to drive forward was truncated as the speaker ceased emitting sound before the voice had finished talking. As I eased forward—more slowly than usual in order to buy a few extra seconds for contemplation—I searched my memory for the face that would accompany that voice.

Arriving at the window with more than a little trepidation, I sheepishly looked in to see a familiar frame bearing a starkly altered countenance. The cheerless person who had taken my order was Lenny, although a Lenny greatly changed from the last time I had seen him. Still painfully thin, his once fine facial features that had easily passed for feminine were now sharp and unlovely, with a piercing aspect to his eyes that I had not seen previously and did not like. Greasy, unkempt hair, short and thin, was tucked into a cap. His once long, blond, well-coifed hair was now appallingly dingy and obviously unwashed for quite a while; a powerful indicator of a life lived in numbing, perpetual malaise. When I had known Lenny before, his hair was always impeccably done, often in whatever style happened to be fashionable at a given time. Now, he looked as if he could not care less about his appearance. A face that had always been perfectly adorned with makeup expertly applied was sallow and pitted, accentuating its

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unpleasant cast. He had a light mustache, something that he had always before professed to cause him great disgust, and his teeth, long a source of immense pride for him, were now yellowing where they were not dark with cavities. In the past, whatever Lenny wore was immaculately laundered and pressed, but the uniform that he wore that morning was wrinkled and stained, as if he had worn it for many days without washing it. His fingernails, always meticulously cared for and painted without so much as a minute smudge were broken, chewed down to the nub on many of the fingers, and were attached to hands that looked as if they had been baked in an oven to give them the hardened, callused appearance that they had. Overall, the man waiting on me was a wholly different person from the one I had known so many years before. The transformation was as astounding as it was complete, with little left of the younger version. I was tempted to impute the differences to those accumulated as a consequence of aging. After all, I had changed so drastically that he did not even recognize me and at one time I could not get within 100 yards of Lenny without him turning on the charm and flirting shamelessly. But I knew that time had not enacted the changes I saw in Lenny. Life had kicked his ass, repeatedly and without so much as taking a break. A mere shell of the young, irrepressibly ebullient man that I had known stood before me, and, though he had survived longer than most who knew him imagined that he would, he bore the scars of the unrelenting adversity that had challenged his right to exist. He was alive, but the joy was gone from his life.

What struck me most forcefully was the change in his demeanor. With the exception of the time that I had arrested Lenny and he had broken down, I could not recall Lenny when he was not exuberant, expansive, and enjoying life despite his disadvantage. No matter the circumstance or strife that he encountered, Lenny's gusto for life and people was vivacious. He could work his charm on virtually anyone, and even people who despised him utterly and

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sincerely usually conceded that he was possessed of a pleasingly outgoing personality. Lenny could work a crowd, getting laughs with a witty riposte or bawdy joke that would have seemed indelicate coming from others. In the best of situations, he was fun to talk to and joke around with, in the worst, as long as his dignity was not challenged or someone he cared about was not abused, he was cooperative and engaging. Smiling disarmingly, Lenny could establish rapport with the sternest cop and flatter without appearing sycophantic. His love of people and socializing had allowed Lenny to manage situations with proficiency that I had always admired and wanted to emulate. The man serving my coffee that morning, however, was a shadow of the social raconteur that I had known and respected. It was more than a little depressing. Possessions when lost are still just stuff, but when one loses who one is, especially the best of who one is, the part that one depends on to revive optimism when nothing else can, one have lost the essence of oneself. Lenny was now a social zombie, eking out a subsistence existence when he could have soared, confident in his native self and his natural inclinations. Now he just lived whereas before he had been alive.

As Lenny handed me my coffee without comment or making eye contact, I hoped that he would finally recognize me so that I could offer an impromptu apology for having been part of a life that had failed him so miserably. Not ordinarily lacking in confidence—a gargantuan understatement most people who know me would say—I could not seem to summon the courage to call him by name. Taking my coffee and condiments from Lenny, I wanted to say that I hoped things were going well for him but swiftly decided that such a statement might be taken less as a phatic expression and more as an insult, something that Lenny had never tolerated before. I wondered if maybe that would have been a clever way to test his resolve and see if the old Lenny was still alive in some deep recess of his subconscious. Of course, whether my impulse was for

his benefit or to mollify my guilty conscience is a matter for conjecture. Separating self-interest from altruistic predilections is a near impossibility for humans, always looping back to the chicken and egg conundrum. So many of us had failed Lenny and millions like him that recompense was an illusion, reparations a Band-aid® on a gapping head wound. I recalled Dr. King's admonition about justice and realized that a life denied full-throated expression is a life denied altogether, and I realized that all people in positions of power are responsible for the lives that they disrupt, vitiate, devitalize, or smother. To take no action is an action, the Zen kōan assures, and in the lives of real people, failing to act for the good of Others is more than inaction, it is social treason.

As I pulled away from the window with my coffee and my dejected musings, my positivity was thoroughly shot through, having been lost in the vortex of reality that invades and suffuses most of my waking hours. No longer did I anticipate a pleasant day, nor did I feel validated in accrediting the right to a joyful life to myself. Joy must be shared for it to be authentic (Liston, 2001), and having deprived another of joy, where would mine legitimately emanate from? Manufactured joy is not joy at all, at best being a soulless, ersatz parody of real joy. If I had learned nothing else in my studies, self-imposed and formal alike, it was that people inhabit this planet socially, in a reticulated web of relationships, interrelationships, and complex interactions that require some contribution from all. And if I had learned anything worthwhile at all from my sojourn as a Curriculum Studies scholar, it was that in the realpolitik world of Western cultures, people must declaim about fairness, equity, and social justice not only speak truth to power, but scream to the firmament the truths of their lives and those of Others, and, most of all, they must facilitate the right of Others to avail themselves of their own voices.

People cannot do for Others what they must do for themselves, but others must be there to support their right to exist and partake of the good (Freire, 1970).

Leaving that McDonald's window, the last thing I heard as I drove off was a vaguely familiar laugh. It sounded so much like Lenny's old laugh that I wished that I had seen who had voiced it. Could I have been wrong? Maybe Lenny was not so bad off and had found a way of coping with life's exigencies that afforded him a measure of happiness and contentment. Maybe he had finally gotten involved in a satisfying relationship and experienced love and went home each day to someone who supported and nurtured him. Possibly he had reconciled with family and friends and they had accepted him for who he really was. I never verified any of my thoughts, just continued on to work. I do not know the realities of Lenny's life after I failed him, but I was encouraged by that laugh. Who knows? Maybe it was Lenny.

Fixin' Ta Tell Ya

As this chapter's opening vignette indicates, the noxious influences of the curriculum of Southern hypermasculinity can be tempered and their unwanted effects palliated, yet, for the Southern male reared and socialized in such environs, whether a gendered male or a Southern police male, escaping those pernicious influences permanently is likely little more than a fond hope or a quixotic dream. No one ever successfully extricates themselves from their place. The early influences that shape who one is and provide the various ways of interacting with the worlds that are encountered in adult life are forever inscribed in the psyche like old luggage passed from family member to family member, eventually becoming valued and retained simply because of familiarity. Having depended upon certain ways of negotiating the vicissitudes of life for many years, the average person seldom even entertains the possibilities of reconsidering the world, much less progressing to the point of actually embarking upon new ways of living. But

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such lives need not be forever mired in the muck of the life swamp. The terraqueous soil that entraps also produces beauty and fruitful products—it just takes an attentive gardener to extract its promise.

In this chapter, the stories of Chapter IV and the chapter vignettes will be analyzed for their content that offers the possibility of elucidating the Southern curriculum of hypermasculine place, an ineludible necessity if the current behaviors and cognitions of the Southern male generally, and the Southern male rural cop in particular, are to be assessed for avenues that will allow a remediation of subcultural aspects that unjustly impinge upon the lives of others who share Southern place with them. Parsing these episodes of my life are, again, not intended to explicate my own experience for the purpose of allowing personal revelation—although such a serendipitous outcome, though ancillary to the purpose of this research, is welcomed—but to provide data that can be used to enlighten the reader about Southern male and Southern rural police subcultures generally. As discussed in Chapters I and III, the dangers of autoethnography as a research modality subsist in the temptation to indulge in inordinately self-directed foci that fail to offer anything illuminative of the larger culture, which is the real intent of the methodology, and in presuming to speak for an entire culture from the perspective of a single member; nevertheless, if the researcher can attain and maintain the requisite scholastic objectivity to draw out common themes and details, and then act qualitatively upon them to present them for review, the academic and practical benefits can be substantial if not utterly profound. Another very real danger is the temptation to embellish for effect. I learned long ago during my Southern upbringing that the story is why people listen and the story well told is why they continue to listen, but this extremely important scholarly endeavor will not be vitiated by intentional theatrics or dramatic inaccuracies. By analyzing these data through the theoretical

lenses adduced in Chapter III, and by drawing profitably from the method of *currere*, I contend

that useful information for ameliorating the undesirable aspects of the hypermasculine

imperative, integral to the experience of Southern male masculinity, abounds, but first, one must

trek through the muck of the Southern hypermasculine swamps.

King of the Swamp

Only one bull alligator in the Okefenokee gets to be the king, the alpha male with

peremptory breeding rights and claim to the choicest territory with the richest food supply. Only

one of hundreds, sometimes thousands, can be the bull gator[1] of the Okefenokee[2]. Attaining such

an exalted status in the grim and inherently dangerous Land of the Trembling Earth is the one

actuating instinct that propels male alligator behavior, a motivation that predicates all other male

gator behaviors. Every male gator wants to be the king, yet only one can be, and having

surpassed the other males in the swamp to become top reptilian, he cedes the position only after

being defeated through mortal combat; otherwise, he stays on top for years and even decades,

usually until he dies. Despite the seemingly exponential odds of ever achieving the pinnacle of

male gator success, however, every male gator works toward the goal, like a poor person

desperately throwing good money after bad playing the lottery, hoping beyond plausible hope

that the next dollar spent will eventuate in financial security. What is life worth, after all, if not to

dream?

Having become king, the top gator, ironically, lives a life of continual vigilance,

constantly scanning his territory for the wily interloper bent upon some clandestine sexual

dalliance with one of the king's harem of nubile females. For subordinate males, the only hope of

contributing to the DNA of future crocodilians is to supplant the monarch as the exclusive

progenitor of future generations through fierce combat, a prospect nearly always preordained to

failure, or to slip into the castle surreptitiously and arrange for an unobserved assignation with a willing female, an approach much more often meeting with success. The poor king, having achieved the desired position of preeminence in gator society, spends his days fighting, patrolling, breeding, and defending, always aware, always suspicious, and always on the alert for the latest challenger seeking to usurp his throne. It is an exhausting life, fraught with continual peril and unrelenting danger. Of course, alligators, possessing only the most basic of brain structures, likely waste no time stressing over the Gods' answered prayer,[3] and, having a crocodilian constitution that other species should envy, probably do not differentiate between the ultra-stressful life of the king gator and that of the more carefree subordinate male. Thank goodness for the lack of prefrontal lobes!

The life of the Okefenokee alligator male is not that different from the life of the Southern human male with whom the gator co-exists. Southern men want to be top gator as well, but must negotiate a different type of swamp to achieve success, a likelihood that is just as improbable as that of the alligator male, yet just as ardently sought out and fought for. On the one hand, men are perpetually seeking a return to the comfort of the womb and the solicitude of the nurturing mother, as Freud long ago surmised (Frosh, 1994), or, as Allison (1992/2012) has so evocatively described it in her brand of Southern semi-fiction, "Men…are just little boys climbing up on titty whenever they can" (p. 123). But most often ignoring or failing to recognize the perennial desire to remain close to the mother and the comforts of boyhood, men generally are driven by the ceaseless drumbeat of that other predominant aspect of male nature, the hypermasculine imperative. Like the unruly and ambitious subordinate gator determined to displace the regnant king and become top gator themselves, Southern men are continually seeking to assert their own masculine prowess through behaviors and expressed ideologies that

reiterate what it means to be a successful man in the socially and culturally diverse environs that constitute the American Souths. Southern manhood itself, however, lacks such variety, being represented most accurately by the homogenized ideals of gender expression that work so relentlessly against the salutary effects of difference felicitously incorporated into healthy communities. Just like the enterprising and aspirant gator king striving to achieve the zenith of reptilian success in the swamp, Southern men are guided by one overriding desire: to prove their superiority over other men.

Although the purposes underlying the hypermasculine imperative are lost to antiquity, and were likely never consciously clear to men anyway, the behaviors and cognitions that it impels are even more pronounced in their importance than they ever were previously. In the state of nature, men battled for resources and access to mating rights, eminently practical and literally existential concerns for the hunter-gatherer male. Yet, even then, it was differentiated success in comparison to other males that was the established goal. Doubtless, males in such brutish and harrowing circumstances did not gather to debate the merits of their actions or to decoct the fundamental motivations that caused their behavior and thoughts. For the competing male, success meant a clan well-fed and future generations that perpetuated his genetic line, though he would not have been able to articulate such thoughts and was not even aware of them. It was enough to see wildebeest grilling on the fire (maybe the provenance of the putative belief that men have a natural affinity for grilling?) and to scan those assembled and know that he was the head honcho, or, perhaps, at least affiliated with the boss. While the particulars of ancient human social interactions are endlessly debated (Dunbar, Barrett, & Lycett, 2009; Shlain, 2003; Tattersall, 1998), with the focus on who was actually in charge or if a more communal arrangement prevailed, the indisputable reality is that men, regardless of their place in society,

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have always competed vigorously with each other to distinguish themselves, and modern masculinity typifies that impulse, if, possibly, resulting in more profoundly adverse affects for sociality as a whole (Miller, 2009). It is this reality that analysis of my own experience of the curriculum of Southern hypermasculine place reveals.

Gators Everywhere!

After the introductory vignette in Chapter IV, I predicated my exposition of my personal experience of Southern hypermasculine place by describing the Okefenokee, offering a brief glimpse into its history, ecological and human, and by speculating, and to some degree, asserting, how it was my earliest, and most lasting, influence. Although I went on to discuss the swamp in metaphorical terms, I also intended to establish the very real, crucial aspects of its particulars that acted upon my own development as a Southern male, a point made throughout this research in other stories, such as the trip to the cockfights described in Chapter II. Manly pursuits such as womanizing, hunting, trapping, fighting, and the veneration of weaponry of all kinds, establishes unequivocally that the model of manliness that I was exposed to in my most formative years, birth to early childhood, was framed by martial prowess, self-sufficiency, reproductive fitness, and, most important, differential success in gaining, exploiting, and maintaining, male power. What I intended to prepare the reader for was a rudimentary understanding of how my earliest experiences of maleness were based on a hypermasculine paradigm of masculine success that has guided my life expression, and, significantly for this study, that of other men similarly situated.

I also used Nelson's (2008) terminology to emphasize that my experience must properly be described as ecolocal, a term that she used to underscore the uniqueness of local ecology, and that I use similarly in describing the development and details of the Southern masculine ecology.

The relevant point here, however, is not to aver that each Southern male experiences a different type of education in the precepts of masculinity, or how to be a Southern man, but just the opposite, that, though the details may vary, with one of the many micro-Souths emphasizing one or more expressions of Southern masculinity and others choosing different ways of asserting what it means to be a man, all Southern men, and, indeed, all Western males, are guided by a recurrent and overpowering theme in their lives—the need to prove that they are The Man. Derived from urban youth slang, The Man, or da' Man, is the most powerful of the powerful, the hegemonic specimen of maleness in the collective group of men that are hegemony incarnate. And like the ambitious gators previously discussed, most men will never actually attain such supremacy but they all are willing to sacrifice greatly in the hope of ascending to the heights of masculine acceptance. The difference between men generally and the men of the Souths, however, is the lengths to which they will go in pursuing their ambitions. Across the spectrum of male behavior worldwide, aggression, domination, misogyny, chauvinism, and other expressions of masculine predominance, positive and negative, are evident, but in the American South, such behaviors occur at levels of extremes that can only be classed as deviant in the pathological sense, a phenomenon that likely explains the per capita higher incidence of violence in Southern societies and those transplanted Southern societies that developed after the Great Southern Migration of the mid-twentieth century (Lehmann, 1992; Nesbett & Cohen, 1996).

This observation finds confirmation in conversations that I have had with other Southern males, native and transplanted, who, after having my hypotheses explained to them in layman's terms, have agreed without exception that regardless of the South involved—New Orleans in one case, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and South Carolina in others, and even Detroit and the Compton section of Los Angeles being represented—men have agreed that the pressure to be

The Man is overwhelming, a reality that many found escape from only through the expedient of removing themselves from their immediate geographical and psychological places if not from their specific region, another similarity between myself and other men with whom I have spoken. One man, who represents the Compton native previously referenced, became quite animated about the subject of my research when I broached my ideas, noting the Southern aspects of his childhood experience and the stories related by his relatives of their ancestry in Alabama, and he further affirmed the need to pursue a more promising life course by leaving his home, first entering the military, a not uncommon escape for poor people in the U.S., and then taking a job with the federal government in order to remain free of the pull of his natal circumstances. Yet, most pertinently, he affirmed that the pull of the streets and its hypermasculine influences is seductive. Even in everyday situations that require logical, measured responses, he noted, the desire to forcefully assert dominance in conflict resolution is like a monster inside constantly seeking an outlet. Stating the case most eloquently, he remarked, "Street stays in you, man," a sentiment that the other men that I spoke with agreed with, and one that found particular resonance with the one from Detroit who described a similar history and almost identical path of liberation from his own hypermasculine place. What my research sustains is the notion that, even in locales as diverse as Detroit and Compton, the hypermasculine imperative of Southern place exerts an indomitable influence that cannot be escaped but must be contended with to effect remediation.

Southern Masculine Creds—It's All About Fighting and Fucking

Over the years, I have come to believe that the pent up rage engendered by my abusive father's frequent beatings, combined with the irresistible predominance of the hypermasculine imperative prevalent in the ethos of Southern manhood, is largely responsible for my fury, thus

explaining its expression through violence. Violence begets violence and perpetuates itself

generationally (Connell, 2002; Ellison, 1991; Peterson & Wrangham, 1997). But I have also

wondered how much of my seething, roiling anger is the result of having been reared in a

pervasively violent culture, one that reveres violent conflict resolution as the only way that real

men decide important matters. Even as my professedly liberal formal education has loomed as a

failure in helping to overcome my baser impulses, I have come to accept that, culture

notwithstanding, I have choices and must make them, and, just as Crews (1978) has eloquently

expressed, my place will go with me no matter the geography or state of mind, making my

choices all the more key to successfully dealing with life.

> I stood there feeling how much I had left this place and these people, and at the same
>
> time knowing that it would be forever impossible to leave them completely. Wherever I
>
> might go in the world, they would go with me. p. 182

And for me, the violence enmeshed in my life and my experience will be there as well, like the

mythical Southern panther, waiting to strike when an unwary and inattentive head is turned. You

cannot kill it because it does not exist. But you have to live with it just as if it did.

The stories that I relate in Chapter IV of this study and the anecdotes scattered throughout

clearly support my contention that violence is the defining characteristic of Southern

hypermasculinity. Violence, the threat of violence (perhaps in the South, the 'promise' of

violence would be a more apt descriptor), and the infusion of violent themes into every aspect of

Southern male development and being, is the most frequently encountered feature and the single

motivating theme, even when violence, which is really just the expression of power in physical

terms, is seemingly not present. The executive who asserts his or her will through the assertion of

bureaucratic power or its implication is no less violent in abstract terms than the redneck who

pummels someone for casting an indiscreet glance at "his woman." And though violent themes are undoubtedly present throughout American and world cultures, the actual expression of violent impulses clearly stands out in the South. Explaining my research to a longtime friend who is originally from Delaware, he opined with some enthusiasm that Southern people fight much more frequently than was his experience even in his impoverished and rough part of his native home. An avid player of such ultraviolent video games as Halo®, he noted that while he likes simulated violence, Southerners, especially Southern men, seem ready to lash out violently for the least provocation, real or perceived. Confirming the value of my study, he expressed his hope that a lot of Southerners would read it.

In "The Discourse of Ass Whippin," I noted that the fear that my father manifested the night he attempted to discipline me with corporal punishment only to find that I was not easily so punished any longer, was the fear of a loss of power, not physical threat, and I further pointed out that such a loss represented an assault on the identity of the Southern male and his immoderate need for absolute respect (Nesbett & Cohen, 1996), a wound not readily dealt with successfully by the Southern man, most especially those from heralding from the ranks of Southern White trash (Bragg, 2001; Crews, 1978; Wray & Newitz, 1997), the substratum of Southern culture that constituted the majority of my family on my father's side. Having consistently employed violent attempts to exert control over me and my brother, what I call "catechized violence," he was clearly taken aback to discover that the only legitimate method of patriarchal control that he knew was rendered ineffective by my own burgeoning, if nascent, sense of hypermasculinity. I loved my father and had no desire to disrespect him; still, knowing that I had achieved a degree of masculine presence sufficient to cause him consternation was a small victory in the continual battle for predominance that Southern males engage in with each

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other, just like the young gators challenging the dominant bull in the Okefenokee. And masculine presence is everything to the Southern male. Its existence means potential success in life, its absence means being relegated to the periphery of social importance.

Yet, in order to benefit from one's experience of the world, in this case, the discourse or dialectic of Southern hypermasculine violence, the individual must not withdraw from experience, at least not mentally and emotionally. While distance may be literally necessary for survival, as the cases of my friends from Compton and Detroit, and in my own case, what cannot afford to be missed is the knowledge gained from the method *currere* which "does not constitute a reflective retreat from the world, but a heightened engagement with it" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995/2008, p. 415). Drawing its explanatory strength from phenomenology and Husserl's belief that enlightenment is attainable at the individual level in the immediate and preconceptual experience, with regard to the curriculum of Southern hypermasculine place, *currere* proffers the possibility of learning from one's own experience and passing on the knowledge gleaned to the greater community of males suffering from the dictates of a life committed to deleterious effects of pathological masculinity. Rather than an excursus into a preoccupation with the individual life, crucial information of general applicability to the larger male world can be gathered and forwarded, a therapeutic occurrence for the individual in the classical psychoanalytic sense as well as an addition to the corpus of understanding that men as a whole may benefit from. Each male life strained through the sieve of *currere* contributes to the complicated conversation that seeks to rectify social injustice by further developing appreciation of the male perspective that paradigmatically drives social interactions. Whether to understand the enemy or to acquire an ally all texts that describe the social world can achieve

enhanced understanding through examining male hypermasculinity and by understanding its pernicious imperative.

In the instant case, understanding the need for affirmed independence and individual respect that impelled me to participate in acts of ritual violence with other Southern males, well-known components of Southern masculine self-perception (Alther, 2012; Nesbett & Cohen, 1996), unfailingly contributes to the greater understanding of Southern hypermasculinity for reasons simple—it takes two to tango, thus affirming the prevalence of Southern male violent conflict resolution—and complex. In the story "Where the Men are Men and the Livestock are Nervous," my participation in agreed-upon mutual combat with a man of little acquaintance but for whom I obviously had at least a modicum of respect, simply to allow him to regain his self-respect over being cuckolded and to allow me to retain mine after being challenged, makes little sense in purely logical terms, yet is eminently understandable in the context of the Southern hypermasculine milieu, and serves to explain my behavior as a police officer and of those other police officers of my experience who were subject to the same Southern male hypermasculine curriculum. Most glaring is the failure of my acquired extended experience in the larger world, obtained through my military service and formal education, to militate against such masculine excesses. Invariably, when I have related this story to others, if they are from Southern climes they may discountenance my behavior and that of the others involved, but typically, if somewhat sheepishly, confirm its commonplaceness and, sometimes, its oxymoronic illogical logic in Southern places, as if knowing that rationally it makes no sense but may well be unavoidable when it involves Southern folks, particularly men. As I readily admitted in the story, fighting over a woman, or some misguided sense of honor involving a woman, was completely inane to me, yet, as I also noted, I felt nearly helpless in resisting societal expectations, less because of

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what others would think of me than what I would think of myself. Southern hypermasculinity

may be a product of the greater Southern culture and its ecolocal expectations, but its

perpetuation generationally and individually starts with each male.

The impulse for Southern men to engage in conflict resolution through violent means is

even scripted and codified to greater or lesser, if unofficial, degree, taking on the aspect of near

self-actuating customs that are often self-contradictory. In "Where the Men…," I confessed to

having committed an inexcusable violation of the Southern hypermasculine credo, getting *caught*

having had sexual congress with another man's woman. The offense was not having sex with

her, since Southern men generally, though rarely admittedly, are on constant alert for such

opportunities, making rebuke for the act itself incongruous. Southern men tacitly accept that

other men will cuckold them given a reasonable chance of success without discovery. The

violation occurs when the aggrieved male's reputation is endangered, requiring some form of

violent reprisal to recover lost esteem. This observation is not to diminish the reality or

importance of basic male sexual jealousy but merely to emphasize that a man can suffer the

perceived loss of intimate access to a woman, but a Southern man can never allow for the loss of

his masculine credentials. Amends must be made. And the phenomenon is not limited to

impoverished or disenfranchised Southern men, though it likely takes on a more exigent aspect

with these groups. I have personally known, and as a police officer professionally encountered,

men from the gamut of Southern social strata who would readily embark upon ill-considered

vendettas to exact retribution for sexual dalliances.

In addition to the reasons for fighting other men in the South, I also enumerated some of

the specific expectations for violent encounters, among them the understanding that fights will be

one-on-one, without weapons unless such lethal implements are approved before, that

combatants will give their best effort, and that others will not intervene as long as none of the other rules of engagement are violated. In the story cited, the axe handle used against me and the crowbar that my estranged love interest attempted to use to express her love for me were clear violations of the creed that resulted in ridicule and unending japery toward the violators. My understanding is that even now, over two decades later, those who were involved are still subjected to taunts and other forms of derision for having erred so shamefully, a fate that other Southerners have confirmed (Bragg, 2001; Crews, 1976; Hayes & Lee, 2005) for similar violations. In the world of Southern rural police similar though expanded rules can be descried. The officer who fails to provide timely and effective assistance in violent encounters risks being shunned as a "pussy" and is subject to ostracism that can span a career, while the only sure path to renown in police work is to distinguish oneself as a capable combatant in individual encounters with one or more suspects. The cop who singlehandedly subdues a resisting suspect is placed on an immediate trajectory to veneration in the police swamp as a bull gator, a fact that I learned early and exploited to my benefit and had affirmed early in my career, a subject that I discuss in "Forget All That Bullshit You Learned at Police Academy!" And just as the bull gator's reverberant bellow disrupting the quiet of the Okefenokee can be sufficient to maintain status, the reputation that the Southern cop develops as a badass is often all that is needed to retain his place in the police social hierarchy. After all, the swamp's bull gator does not get to roar unless he has proven that he has something to back it up, so Southern male cops have a similar built-in reason to vaunt their martial prowess and periodically prove it.

In both spheres of social interaction, the Southern male world generally and the Southern cop's subcultural one, recounting success in violent encounters is important to maintain status. To advertise his continuing supremacy, the alpha gator scratches the ground in his territory,

bellows vociferously and truculently, and patrols his domain like the monarch that he is, telling stories of his physical prowess semiologically rather than through language. Southern men maintain and enhance their masculine status through stories, too, but have the decided advantage of articulation through language, though they are not at all averse to exhibiting unmistakable signs of their masculine dominance, which is where hypermasculinity makes its most pronounced appearance. Clothing, tattoos, physical posturing, tall tales, fast cars, violent games, and sexual promiscuity, are all the accoutrements of The Man (Adams & Govender, 2008; Mansfield, 2006). In "Where the Men…" I noted the revelry and celebration that occurred after I had defeated my opponent, and for 21 years I observed the repeating rounds of bull sessions that my fellow cops and I engaged in. Such interactions were not mere egotistic sojourns meant to aggrandize admittedly fragile egos and conceptions of self-worth, they served the very practical purpose of announcing status and marking territory, territory and status easily lost with a single imprudent act or weak moment. Status lost is usually lost for forever, thus explaining the extreme lengths that Southern men will go to in preserving what is most valuable to their personal identities.

As much as The Man fears his loss of status through a loss of respect from Others, all men experience the fear to one degree or another, with Southern men experiencing the phenomenon to an exceptionally extreme degree. But since most Southern men can never really attain the hallowed status as The Man, what they fear most is not being recognized as A Man. Most accept that they may never reign supreme as exemplars of male pulchritude—though they all retain at least a remote hope that they might—but what they will not passively accept, and what generates the most paralyzing fear for the Southern hypermasculine male, is that he will lose his status as A Man, a "manly man," a true example of what the tough-as-nails, oak-wood

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strong, all-around badass represents. In "Where the Men...," I described the fear that my ax-wielding antagonist in Alabama displayed when he assaulted me. He had a reputation as the toughest man around his local area, and when he suspected that his hard-won status was in jeopardy, in panic he broke one of the cardinal rules of Southern hypermasculinity, he used a weapon. Yet, it was not fear of physical pain that motivated him, it was fear of loss, of losing his reputation, a fear monumentally exacerbated by the fact that his social circle would see and remember. Partly, it was a proxy fear. He had supported and advised the man that I had defeated, making his protégé's loss his own loss. In desperation, he acted atypically in an unavailing attempt to preserve what had already been lost. Like me, he had doubtless cultivated his masculine credentials since childhood, building his reputation incrementally through one violent encounter after another, only to see it threatened by a single event. Like an investor whose entire life is dependent on the stock market, he saw his return on investment dwindling fast, thus explaining his desperation. Such rash acts in moments of inordinate fear are not unusual for anyone, but take on a new level of significance when Southern men are involved, as Others are always affected adversely. The effect is particularly notable when the fear is experienced by the Southern cop.

In the stories "Forget All That Bullshit You Learned at Police Academy!" and "You Have to Like to Fight...," the fear that Southern cops experience, acquired during their development as Southern men and exponentially magnified on entering the much-revered profession of police work, is showcased. When Sgt. Dill told me that my real police academy would begin as I began my post-Academy police experience, and when the old lieutenant expressly established that fighting and sex were the two activities that were requisite for becoming recognized as a legitimate police officer, they were not rotely enumerating semi-

codified requirements for my edification, they were acknowledging their fear, the fear that the

hallmarks of successful Southern policing might suffer diminution. Their egos were thoroughly

attached to a common hypermasculine perception of what it means to be a cop, a Southern cop,

that it was important enough to ensure that rookies were effectively indoctrinated into the

existing paradigm rather than leave it to chance. Any behavior that deviated from the delineated

path of Southern police masculinity threatened not only the individual but the entire profession,

the reputation of the individual agency, and their self-concept. Police egos become virtual living

entities that need sustenance, and the food that they crave and that continually renews their

substance is violence and proven virility. "I can fight successfully and I can fuck frequently," is

the implicit mantra of Southern hypermasculine cops that continually reestablishes their

masculine credentials, and advertising virility through hypermasculine exploits is the sine qua

non of Southern male success.

Man Rules, Cop Rules

Western men live by certain unarticulated yet inviolable rules of behavior. As cited in

Chapter II, some of these rules have been promulgated by researchers, with Chafetz (1974, cited

in Levine, 1998, p. 13) including such qualities as virility, bravery, and strength; sexual

experience and promiscuity; being a capable provider for others; remaining unemotional and

impassive; being logical, self-sacrificing, and unassuming; and displaying leadership ability and

independence. David and Brannon (1974, cited in Levine, 1998) added appearing successful,

disdaining anything that appears feminine in character, exhibiting toughness, and manifesting

self-possession in all circumstances. Even casual observation confirms the validity of these

features of Western male behavior and perspective, but my research, based on a lifetime of

experience, lends credibility to their postulations as well. The theme that ties all of their

observations together, as well as mine, is that men zealously defend their reputations as men, seeking constantly to augment their masculine credentials and confirm that they are viable candidates for becoming The Man, and, in all cases, are A Man. Anything that threatens or challenges their sense of personal masculinity is cause for the fear discussed in the previous section, resulting in a variety of masculine panic that can prompt extremes of behavior that most often present as violent posturing or actions. And what applies to Western men generally is all the more applicable to Southern men, and even more so to Southern rural cops.

After reading the story "Pop Goes Jamie" at my request, a former partner at my first police department, now a lieutenant, predictably affirmed my observations about Southern police masculinity and thinking. I asked him to read the section in no small part because I knew that, unlike most of my erstwhile peers, he was open-minded enough to assess what he read objectively and offer a thoughtful, candid critique, an expectation that proved accurate. On discussion of the story and the others in Chapter IV, he undeviatingly agreed with my analysis, even adding somewhat critically that he felt I had not emphasized sufficiently the need to appear tough no matter the circumstances and the even more pressing need to avoid appearing "soft" by showing excessive concern. His feeling was that not only does an exaggerated posture of indifference cause officers to fail to honor their profession by showing compassion for the public, it results in even more inimical harm to the officers themselves and the police profession by precluding the possibility of open discourse about individual behaviors. I was nearly dumbstruck by his reasoned and intelligent assessment of his own profession, something I had not expected. His conclusive statement on the matter, however, highlighted the singular problem that infects the Southern policing profession, and likely that of police everywhere. "You're right in what you're talkin' about, Chief," he said, using a title that I no longer possessed but meant to

demonstrate the respect that cops insist upon, "but it ain't gonna change. We still got to go out there every day and represent." That simple, somewhat jocular statement spoke volumes about the centrality of respect and identity for the Southern cop and confirmed my thesis: the hypermasculine imperative is like a virus that will not be contained. That is the problem. But the rule is, Southern cops will show no weakness or anything that looks like weakness or remotely or even superficially appears like weakness. The result of such behavioral prescriptions is scenarios like the one found in "Pop Goes Jamie."

On its surface, the tragedy of a young life cut short by an act of hypermasculine bravado is distressing enough, as is the sub-story of a child experiencing such brutality at such a tender age and the loss of social sensitivity that the callous disregard for life displayed by the pasta eating friend of Jamie. Meriting even greater concern on a sociological level, however, is the education that occurred during the incident. What the younger officers, myself included, learned was that more important than honoring life or lamenting its loss is the need to continually reiterate the hypermasculine imperative, a rule obeyed not just by the police officers and other emergency personnel present but by the spectators, male and female. The men present, even the female-gendered men, had to maintain a certain stoical aspect and the lone civilian female complemented the prescript by betraying no emotion in deference to masculine expectations. It is a man's world, after all, so respect is critical at all times. But those present who could alter expectations, the police, managed only to re-inscribe existing mores and customs. The curriculum of Southern hypermasculine place is strong but the curriculum of Southern hypermasculine police place is indomitable.

Further serving to foreclose remediating possibilities when contending with the inflexible rules that Southern cops operate by are some particular to the police profession itself. As has

been established, Southern men are expected to be brave, virile, tough, and unemotional, but Southern cops, protective of their subculture and its expectations, add other rules that contribute to the adamantine resistance to change that researchers and police administrators alike have found exasperating (Couper, 2012). In "Forget All That Bullshit…," several of the rules that Southern cops must obey were firmly established, including dismissal of academic and scholastic settings as valid places for learning police procedures and philosophy ("out here in the street you learn what really counts"), the need for group cohesion ("looking out for your fellow officers"), self-preservation ("doin' whatever it takes to make it home every day"), and, absolutely the most crucial understanding for the Southern cop as it is for cops everywhere, confidentiality ("keepin' your mouth shut about police business"). The last rule is most important not because it helps to ensure that good cops are not subjected to pesky rules about ethical behavior and public service expectations or even to ensure that the excesses of bad cops are concealed, but to protect the domain of the hypermasculine cop so that he can continue to participate in the "ethos of overwrought machismo" (Alther, 2012, p. 220) that regularly reaffirms the exaggerated sense of masculine identity that drives the Southern cop's behaviors and recursive thoughts about what it means to be A Man. Out of curiosity, while writing this section I called a friend with whom I policed years before and I asked him to, without thinking, answer a question with the very first thought that popped into his mind. In response to the question, "What is the most important rule about being a cop?" he unhesitatingly shot back, "Never, ever talk about police business!" He had been a cop for less than two years almost twenty years ago. Clearly, the curriculum of Southern hypermasculine policing inculcates lessons that survive a lifetime and certainly reverberate in the psyches of career cops every minute as they go about their work. Keeping secrets and protecting the clan is the foremost responsibility of Southern cops.

Tangled Up in Blue

In the mid-1980s, two sociopaths named Leonard Lake and Charles Ng collaborated in committing a series of brutal murders in the Pacific Northwest. Using an underground bunker built for the express purpose of furthering their murderous, sadistic proclivities, they tortured and killed at least a dozen people, including women, children, and infants, before their heinous criminal enterprise was cut short by a minor theft incident that drew the attention of police to them. In the subsequent criminological studies of the two, a recurrent conclusion among independent researchers was that though both men had engaged in criminal behaviors individually that might well have ended in some incidents of assault and possibly murder, it was the synergistic effect of their acquaintanceship that accounted for the spree of brutality that actually occurred. Consensus held that, without their mutual influence on each other, the world at large might never have heard of Leonard Lake or Charles Ng and that they likely would have remained obscure criminals in a nation produces such men by the millions. Together, though, they formed a symbiotic relationship that resulted in the deaths of many innocent people. Truly, sociality and affiliation are no small matters when it comes to explaining masculine behavior.

By introducing this section with an account of depraved serial killers, it is not my intention to imply that Southern cops are of the same ilk. My intention is to underscore the power of affiliation and socialization for understanding the subculture of Southern rural policing. The reality is that group affiliation can, and does, result in positive and negative results, explaining equally how otherwise normal people in Nazi Germany could acquiesce to the atrocities committed during that dark period and how societies experiencing horrific natural disasters can rapidly pull together for the common good. Yet, it is informative to recall that even as people were displaying their best during Hurricane Katrina in 2005, displaying self-sacrifice and

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altruism to astounding degrees, others were engaging in despicable acts of self-interest that became a national shame. Citizens simultaneously assisted each other and looted their fellows' property, the good coextensive with the bad; likewise with the cops. Most acted heroically to save their citizens and preserve order; others walked off the job, participated in the looting, and behaved brutally towards civilians. The worst allowed their contempt and bigotry for Others to emerge and actively murdered them (NPR, 2010). The point is that individuals are capable of a variety of behaviors, positive and negative, constructive and destructive, but whatever the individual is capable of, the group is exponentially more capable of doing. And as it is with groups generally it is with cops, except that they are better positioned to enact their inclinations by possessing the imprimatur of law and institutional power.

Just as the individual can exhibit psychopathological tendencies that may explain behavior and call for remediation, so can the social milieu (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991), requiring an intervention for understanding known as social psychoanalysis. Based on critical theory and its marriage with Freud's psychoanalysis (p. 1), social psychoanalysis allows the researcher to examine the social environment in which hypermasculine behavior occurs with a view toward enhanced understanding of why men do what they do. Just as my conversation with my police lieutenant friend demonstrated, the individual Southern cop may be reasonable, intelligent, and capable of tremendous depth of understanding and self-reflection, but when you have to "represent" in the context of other hypermasculine males, individual qualities of independent thinking quickly evaporate, giving way to group think that unfailingly upholds the testosterone-fueled world of the manly cop. Again, one can express oneself honestly and even articulately in the secure setting of a one-to-one conversation with an old acquaintance who is engaged in

scholastic work where confidentiality can be assured, but when one returns to the very real world of hypermasculine policing, one must represent.

In "Forget All That Bullshit…" I described the preconceptions about policing that I entered into the profession with. Cops were brave, ethical, stalwart in the face of corruption and influence, and always did their best to protect and serve their public, opinions formed largely from the TV culture that I internalized as a child. But when I actually became a cop and was exposed to the indoctrination process typical of subcultures, I was startled to discover a different world altogether, a world of excess and self-indulgence, a world of police culture driven by fear of loss of respect and identity. I learned that rhetoric about public service and self-sacrifice was the reality of the Southern cop and that the real world of Southern policing ran on the aggrandizement of individual egos in furtherance of reputations that allowed the hypermasculine cop to prevail in a social environment that enumerated expectations that were non-negotiable and never subject to questions or review. And I readily accepted the dictates of my new profession even as my rational sense encouraged me to question and reject them. As I noted in "You Have to Like to Fight…," I was an enthusiastic novitiate, never stopping to contend a point or challenge a precept. When the old lieutenant promulgated the requirements to be a "good" cop, I immediately asserted my masculine credentials without hesitation, leaving one hypermasculine world, that of the typical male Southerner, and entering another, more extreme version of Southern masculinity, the world of the Southern rural cop. When I said, "Let's go!" in response to the old lieutenant's assertion that a fight was imminent, I meant it, even though it made no sense logically. What I was responding to was the group expectation, the hypermasculine imperative that had guided my life and as a cop had become even more pronounced, not my self-developed intellectual and social understanding. The pull of the hypermasculine was just too

strong to be denied in the beginning. The famous playwright and social commentator Oscar Wilde once wryly observed that "Young men want to be faithful and are not; old men want to be faithless, and cannot," a quip that compendiously acknowledges the lure of the hypermasculine ethos that pervades the total of male experience. As it is with sex for men, it is with group expectations. Young men generally validate illogical expectations by conforming with them, sometimes to the detriment of society.

Just as I did in "Pop Goes Jamie" when I deferred to the example set by my peers and superiors in the police profession to determine how best to proceed in what was one of the most dramatic of circumstances, I did consistently during the early years of my police career, and so did the other young cops. And it was not just that I complied, I reproduced. In the early days, I told myself that I was merely observing the customs of policing that I should honor; later, I recognized that I was a cog in the reproductive machine that perpetuated social injustice and inequity (Apple, 1979) and that typified behaviors in the Southern police culture (Hohle, 2009). My experience proved for me the inestimable allure of socialization processes as opposed to the power of the individual understanding, yet, rather than engendering a sense of helplessness and surrender to the status quo, I increasingly found myself wanting to stand out from the herd. What I experienced was an inchoate but firmly rooted desire to emerge from the morass of hypermasculine police behavior and, idealistically in retrospect, to remediate the subculture of policing itself to make it the honorable profession that I wanted it to be. Naively believing that my position as a sergeant would give me the needed power to enact substantive changes, I pursued my objective with ardor and energy, thinking that other cops would rally to the cause, only to find after voluminous disappointments and years of frustration that the hypermasculine imperative and the subcultural tenets of Southern rural policing were too firmly entrenched to

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allow for significant change. Only as a chief of police was I able to experience some semblance

of the policing that I believed in so fervently. Only by acting from a base of real institutional

power was I able to exact a measure of social justice. But once I had the power that is exactly

what I did. As I said, not all Southern men get to be The Man, just as not all gators get to be the

alpha bull and run the swamp, but those that do have responsibilities to see to if they want to

claim true masculinity. True masculinity is responsible masculinity enacted in the context of

communal living. The dominant gator in the Okefenokee manages it, so can the gators in

Southern rural policing.

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Analysis of the stories from Chapter IV and the vignettes throughout this study establish

certain features of the Southern masculine experience as evident. First, although outliers exist

with regard to the ways that Southern masculinity is expressed, with some men genuinely

observing the otherwise rhetorical tenets of the faithful, self-controlled, pious Southern

gentlemen devoted to family and God, the reality of the bulk of Southern men's lives is a vastly

different matter. Southern men, notwithstanding socioeconomic status, political affiliation, race,

ethnicity, education, or any other demographic classification, pursue lives of not masculine, but

hypermasculine, expression, a phenomenon that I call the hypermasculine imperative. The need

to ostentatiously prove the validity of their masculine credentials to women, other men, and

themselves is a pulsing, unrelenting din that permeates the totality of their lives and drives them

to what, if one adheres to standards of normalcy based upon Western social standards, can only

be adjudged as aberrant. The hypermasculine imperative induces behavior in the Southern male

that, though it finds corollaries in the behaviors of men of other regions of the U.S., result in

extremes of male exhibitionism that lead to destructive rather than socially constructive

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behaviors. The products of the Southern hypermasculine life are fast cars, substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, and violent encounters that cause male mortality due to non-natural factors at higher rates than any other region in the country (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012).

Despite the damage that males do to themselves and the inimical patrimony that they pass on to their progeny, what is often missed—or ignored—is the substantial damage that men under the thrall of the hypermasculine imperative do to society at large, especially those who are consigned to the periphery of social influence and power, a distressing fact that gains increased significance when one realizes the degree to which institutionalized power in the form of the police presence in the U.S. is accounted for. Though intimately tied to socioeconomic factors relating to poverty, social and educational disadvantage, and a history of marginalizing the least powerful groups in American society in order to validate more powerful groups' hegemony (Apple, 1999; Butler, 1997; Connell, 1987; Foucault, 1970; Fenstermaker & West, 2002; Honneth & Baynes, 1993; Mills, 1959; Zinn, 2007), no more exquisite manifestation of the incongruities and disparities that exist in U.S. culture is more prominent than that of the police. Endowed statutorily with coercive power to maintain the capitalist status quo and regulate and control the dangerous classes (Brace, 1872; Quinney, 2001; Shelden, 2001) that marginally empowered and utterly disempowered groups represent, the police are the active, visible expression of the American class system. And though individually and collectively they are often very aware of the power that they possess, evidenced through occasional instances of excessive force and legal injustice that they participate in or otherwise abet, police are more often the unwitting enforcers for a society that chooses to venerate the small percentage of the haves over the mass of the have-nots, a position that other oppressors have found themselves in (Freire,

1970), and the drumbeat that propels the march of the police machine is the hypermasculine imperative. Whether male or female, regardless of race or ethnicity, and notwithstanding previous or current socioeconomic status, police in the U.S. are, generally, White, male, and devoted to the paradigm of hypermasculinity, and no region is more inextricably mired in the hypermasculine imperative then the American South and its police along with it.

But just as Freire (1970) pointed out, the oppressed often aspire to be oppressors themselves, blithely unaware that they are supporting a system that relegates them and their fellows to the margins of the hegemonic power structure, and without recognition of this fundamental situation, the status quo remains. As Freire has it, "To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation" (p. 47). Failing to recognize the reproductive aspects of society and the disadvantage and social injustice that they perpetuate, Southern police officers pursue their daily work firm in the belief that they are supporting a system that ensures fairness, equity, and justice for all citizens, blissfully unaware that they are defending a system that enchains all, including themselves. As this research demonstrates, Southern rural cops measure their professional success on one overarching paradigm, the exhibition of masculinity intended to cement and continually reaffirm their status as guardians of predominant Southern masculinity, an ideal with roots in the South's past of shame, exclusion, and fear, and an ideal that persists in minimizing the life expression of many people. By failing to recognize Others in the sense that Honneth (1986) propounds, Southern cops play a daily game of "I am The Man!," a game that has negative consequences for society overall, yet affects those already disadvantaged the most, and promulgates an erroneous image of masculinity for generations of men, and Southern cops, to be misled by. But, it does not have to be this way…

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CHAPTER VI

A POWDER BLUE CURRICULUM

We get used to the chains we wear, and we miss them when removed…

John Dewey

So with faith, if it does not lead to action, it is in itself a lifeless thing.

James 2:17

A mind once stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimension.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

[Men] relate to their world in a critical way. They apprehend the objective data of their reality…through reflection…. And in the act of critical perception…discover their own temporality. Transcending a single dimension, they reach back to yesterday, recognize today, and come upon tomorrow.

Paulo Freire

In pursuing this research, my avowed intention was to examine my life experience through the lens of critical autoethnography in order to determine how I, a White male police chief from the Deep South, ultimately committed myself and my police department to the cause of responsible public service with the aim of ensuring social justice and equity despite having been reared in an environment festooned with rigid cultural dictates that should have preordained that I act in stereotypical socially and politically conservative ways that historically have subverted social progressivism. I hypothesized that place, the geographical and psychological totality of where people come from and that acts to make individuals and communities what they become, is the paramount factor in assessing Southern rural male, and police officers', experience, and that in the immediate case, Southern place, an admittedly expansive panorama of

multiple cultures and subcultures incapable of neat definition, engenders a phenomenon that I call the hypermasculine imperative, an exaggerated sense of machismo that acts to impel Southern males to seemingly illogical and self-destructive behaviors that work to further disadvantage already destitute and marginalized peoples. And, most pertinent to this study, I contended that what actuates the extremes of hypermasculinity among the average Southern male becomes markedly more operative in the lives of Southern rural cops.

Reared to seek self-affirmation by aspiring to become the imago[1] of the ideal Southern tough guy, or The Man, Southern police take already extreme beliefs about Southern masculinity to such aberrant levels that, ironically, the people that they have sworn to "protect and serve" often become the victims of their hypermasculine excess, suffering myriad indignities and injustices from a system that is designed, albeit unwittingly, to aggrandize and maintain the egos of individual officers and agencies rather than protect those most in need of social equalization. Though most Southern cops operate benightedly from the sincere belief that everything that they do is intended to offer security for those who depend on them, most miss the unmistakable signs of social reproduction evident in society that they unconsciously, but unfalteringly, support. Having assessed my own experiences as a dyed-in-the-wool Southern male badass and career police officer, I contend that my research demonstrates clearly what I have maintained from the inception of this study, that the hypermasculine imperative drives the thoughts and behaviors of the Southern rural cop and, allowed to persist unchallenged and uncorrected, the inherently noble profession of policing, a profession supposedly committed to ensuring the maintenance of law and order and American freedoms, can never become what the rhetoric surrounding it purports it to be. Notwithstanding the data that proves my hypothesis, one very important aspect of my proposed research remains unaddressed.

The final point that I intended to demonstrate was how I emerged from the cultural milieu of Southern hypermasculine policing to experience an entrenched desire to see my beloved profession become a social institution legitimately committed to meeting the ideals that it vaunts yet typically fails to honor. In my research, I showed quite emphatically that I was not predisposed to liberal and socially progressive thinking, despite early thoughts that promised to bear intellectual fruit later in my life, and that I was as immersed in the hypermasculine lifestyle and cultural expression as any Southern man could be. Although I often found myself questioning the irrational precepts of Southern hypermasculinity that I have previously delineated, and even developed what I have described as a parallel alternative identity (PAI) in an attempt to reconcile my personal thoughts with the culture that I saw around me, I have been adamant that I was no charlatan attempting to dissimulate or dissemble. I was in it. The culture of Southern hypermasculinity was my life and, consequently, guided my thinking and behaviors, even when I logically knew what I was doing made no sense. As my research makes evident, that is precisely the inimical nature of the hypermasculine imperative for the Southern male: no matter social status, relative affluence, or level of education, whether drug dealer, homeless person, politician, judge, or police officer, for the Southern man, competing to become The Man or ensure that others accept you as A Man, is the overriding concern in life. Failing to obtain masculine creds, or losing them once obtained, is the bête noir of Southern manhood. To be derided as unmanly is the social kiss of death.

In this chapter, I will briefly examine the factors that I am convinced contributed to my ability to control my hypermasculine propensities to a degree that allowed me to emerge from an early police career devoted to using my jurisdiction as a proving ground for hypermasculinity to one that was truly bent upon honoring my profession and the public that depended on me and my

police officers. I use the word "control" designedly to make the greater point that Southern men do not escape the hypermasculine imperative once it is instantiated as the ideal for Southern masculinity. Like a demon that possesses the soul and appears periodically to reiterate its dominance through extremes of hypermasculine behavior, the best that a Southern male can hope for is to learn to manage hypermasculine impulses and redirect the energy toward goals that are socially beneficial, a monumental challenge in a region where most men never recognize the insalubrious nature of their behavior, even when it results in the premature and tragic deaths of so many of their loved ones through accidental and violent occurrences. Making the efforts of some Southern males to effect a remediation of hypermasculinity is the fact that so many Southern men—and women—see nothing untoward in such behaviors. Seeing nothing amiss, they are likely to discredit the efforts of the more enlightened male, leaving him to deal with the temptations associated with the socially acceptable status quo. Contending with overwhelming odds or succumbing to acceptable social mores is a harsh dichotomous choice, indeed, when lives depend upon the choice made.

After examining the factors that allowed me to palliate the effects of my hypermasculine excesses, if not completely and permanently inoculate myself from them, I propose an approach to educating Southern police officers that could liberate them from the influence of hypermasculine behavior and, conceivably, positively direct the thinking of future generations of cops. Although the curricular approach that I advocate, critically engaged education and pedagogy, or CEEP, is perfectly amenable to all education, and, I contend, should be the basis for all educational endeavors, formal or otherwise, my primary concern in this research is to offer something specific to the police profession that may be used to effect a sea change in how police officers and agencies interact with their publics, especially those who suffer most from the

misdirected behaviors that I witnessed for twenty-one years, behaviors that resulted in social injustice. By emphasizing the philosophical reasons for the existence of policing in an atmosphere that values criticality in every aspect of police practice, I am convinced that Southern policing, in fact, all policing, can finally live up to the mantra of virtually every police department in the nation—to protect and to serve.

A Patchwork Intellectual Quilt with Critical Threads

My research has substantiated my long-held belief that my life, particularly my educational life, both formal and informal, has been, as much as anything else, a process of coming to terms with the need to develop a critical attitude toward phenomena, beliefs, philosophies, opinions, and all else that assails one mentally during the all-too-brief sojourn through life. Saying this is not axiomatic as the casual observer might be tempted to believe. Most adults, especially those with academic credentials and intellectual pretensions, are convinced that they think for themselves and reason their way through life, yet research and simple observation refutes such claims (Facione, 1990). Fighting the negatively hegemonic influences of an early life rife with conservative values and hidebound beliefs, most societally imposed and some manifest at home and in my own family, was no mean feat, and required that I work against influences so predominant that contending with them successfully at all is exceedingly rare for most people. Unquestionably, life is much more comfortably lived when received knowledge is passively and complacently accepted as the easiest approach to interacting with the world. Assessing what is seen critically is a much harder prospect for even the best and brightest of people. What chance could a poor White trash boy from South Georgia have? Still, as my research demonstrates, it only takes individual motivation and minute chinks in the traditional social edifice to allow for a novel approach to understanding the world that can result

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in new ways of thinking that can lead to social awareness. A few influential people and a couple of casually mooted ideas can be sufficient to permit a renewed perspective on social phenomena. And education, formal and informal, presented to such a predisposed mind can work wonders. I have heard that having allowed Jesus into one's heart, the born-again Christian begins life anew, watching the world and events with the benefit of different eyes, never to return to old ways of thinking. I can testify that the same occurs when criticality is sincerely accepted as the proper basis for thinking about the world. Having determined to question all that enters consciousness, the critical thinker never retreats as retreat is impossible. One can lie to others but not to oneself, at least not successfully. Yet, what is really needed is something more than critical thinking, a potentially limiting construct. What one must achieve is criticality.

For me, developing a critical sense started before my conscious awareness and involved an appreciation for learning, books, and education. My biological father, despite significant faults that worked against my healthy emotional and mental development, inculcated esteem for continual intellectual development in me, a perspective that stipulated respect for formal education and reading as the most serviceable vehicles for expanding my mind. The irony of his influence is heightened when one considers that his own rearing was anything but liberal and intellectually stimulating, yet, assessing his childhood reveals telling facts. His father, a lifelong swamper who trapped, hunted, sharecropped, and sold moonshine to care for his huge family (fourteen children), somehow managed to obtain a high school degree when such a feat was exceedingly rare among poor South Georgia White trash. Who knows what influence that fact had on my father? Perhaps his own father's admittedly minor academic achievement, coupled with a stint in the U.S. Navy where he was exposed to multiplicitous cultures and a ferment of ideas, was sufficient to endow him with an inextirpable sense of the value of knowledge. In turn,

as I watched him spend his rare idle hours reading and engaging in debate with others about weightier subjects than might have otherwise been the case, I developed a keen appreciation for the worth of learning and education. Later, as I embarked upon a more mature self-directed course of learning, I would discount formal education as it exists in the U.S., yet my esteem for education itself would only grow more intense.

I learned little in school, and was well aware of that fact even as I negotiated the curricular obstacles placed before me in a succession of public educational institutions and technical colleges. As I grew, I developed a tendency to weigh the value of the education I experienced by comparing it to what I could have learned on my own. Self-educated persons from ages past became personal heroes and remain so. My real education came as I read independently and observed the world around me, cultivating opinions that very frequently ran counter to established paradigms and received notions about how things should be. Ultimately, I became an intellectually arrogant person who took a perverse pleasure in doubting nearly everything, and I proceeded through my youth believing that I had somehow escaped the influences of my Southern place and was a completely objective, reasonable thinker. Possibly the most curious of life's coincidences is that when one is most self-satisfied and smug one experiences something that offers the possibility of fundamental change in thinking if one is willing to take a chance. For me, it was learning about the idea of critical thinking.

Somewhere in my early college experience I was introduced to the idea of critical thinking as a concept, not realizing that it had been manifest in my experience all along, just unnamed. A provocative idea at the time, it did not register fully enough to effect a significant change in my education, remaining a nebulous and ill-formed concept that I adduced anytime that I wanted to summarily dismiss the arguments of others by claiming the intellectual high

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ground as a superior thinker. I wielded the idea of critical thinking like a gun that I could pull out for intimidation and replace without actually examining it. Finally, however, my dissatisfaction with what I observed in police practice would prompt me to take a thorough look, and when I did so, learning fully and appreciably about what critical thinking actually entailed, I experienced an epochal shift in the way that I viewed the world and myself. Suddenly, being "objective" and "reasonable" was not enough. I had to question, actively, minutely, and sincerely, and be willing to accept that cherished beliefs and opinions might be completely useless and that strongly held beliefs could be unfounded and even harmful to Others. In the end, I had to effect a foundational change in perspective and accept that being a responsible, genuine intellectual being meant a continual reassessment of everything, including my own beliefs and behaviors. Such a daunting prospect needed additional educational tools more than just an idea in order to succeed. I found those tools in related concepts.

The concepts that potentiated my development of a critical thinking philosophy were critical theory, critical history, critical criminology, and the field of curriculum studies, a discipline that I adjudge as inherently critical since it questions standing beliefs about education and curriculum and requires continual reassessment to remain a vital field of study, principles that describe a critical thinking philosophy very well. Although the critical thread has been interwoven through a variety of subjects and disciplines—critical legal theory, critical social theory, language, feminism, and even architecture—the studies that have influenced me most, and led to my criticality, are those listed, but there could have been others. The point is that it is not important where the critical sense is found or how it is awakened, only that it emerges. Critical theory, derived from the thinking of the Frankfurt School scholars and their psychoanalytical, postmodern, and other philosophical and theoretical influences, demonstrated

for me that true critical thinking can, and should, apply to all aspects of life, a "ruthless critique of everything" (Marx in Bronner, 2011, p. 26) that allows nothing to be placed irreproachably on a pedestal. All phenomena, opinions, beliefs, ideologies, and systems are subject to review and rebuke. Critical theory also emphasized the possibility that the self-avowed critical thinker could unwittingly proceed through life and experience blithely—and mistakenly—convinced that everything experienced was being scrutinized for its blemishes and cracks and that social and culture influences had been successfully subdued where they were harmful or erroneous while such early and persistent influences actually worked effectively to nullify the salutary effects of more expansive thinking. Freire (1970), Fromm (1941/1994), Nietzsche (1886/2002), Honneth (2004), Habermas (1975), Benjamin (1973), Brookfield (1987b), and a host of other critical theorists convinced me that one can never completely escape such influences, and the discipline of curriculum studies through its examination of the curriculum of place reaffirmed what the critical theorists had taught me.

Before becoming acquainted with critical theory proper, I gained my first critical theoretical insights from the field of critical criminology during my graduate studies in criminal justice. Until then, I had not even encountered the term critical criminology, but my mind, predisposed to the concept because of my inchoate and indistinctly formed critical sense, absorbed the precepts of critical criminology like a sponge, and the newfound knowledge and expanded awareness were immediately employed in my police practice. Until that point, I knew that I had to redirect my efforts as a cop toward practices that were more socially responsible and that ensured social justice, but finding an entire discipline devoted to these ideas was liberating. I had felt alone before in my thinking, often questioning the veracity of my new ways of thinking, yet finding such beliefs codified and promulgated as a formal discipline appealed to my positivist

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sense of seeing the world, a sense that would eventually itself be displaced by more effective ways of viewing the world. And through critical criminology, I was exposed to critical history, an approach to examining and analyzing the past that not only does not ignore the irregularities and inaccuracies of official social, cultural, and institutional accounts, but actively seeks to display such inconsistencies and outright lies for public view. By examining the facts of American and world history in a sociological context, I understood that nationalist dogma and institutional ideologies are not harmless but can, paradoxically, act to harm those they profess to celebrate and protect, especially society's most vulnerable persons. Authors like Spring (2011), Zinn (1980/2003), and Loewen (1995/2007) offered new perspectives on the past, perspectives that affirmed views that I had developed through experience, and even gave them a name. Whether called radical or critical history, I learned that such examinations involved more than simple historical criticism, they required factoring in the human costs associated with hegemony, reproduction, reification, and injustice. Although not all such authors accepted the critical designation (J. Loewen, December 2012, personal communication), the effect for me was the same: never accept received presentations of the past, always scrutinize objectively and thoughtfully consider what is found.

What has become inescapably evident to me over the years, particularly my years immersed in the field of curriculum studies, is that no single discipline, subject, idea, or influence, whether human or conceptual, has been responsible for my ability to combat the pernicious affects of the hypermasculine imperative as I worked to be a responsible police officer and, ultimately, police chief. What has been operative in my intellectual life is a philosophy that now exceeds the bounds of the approach called critical thinking, an approach that subsumes myriad philosophical and theoretical stances yet culminates perspicuously in one fundamental

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but emotionally and mentally liberating concept—criticality. Not a neat set of cerebral

techniques amenable to mechanistic application, nor a perversely contrarian frame of mind that

spurns the reality of all existing phenomena, criticality is an intellectual perspective that means

the mind will not be fed but will hunt, actively seeking the cognitive sustenance that the

genuinely thinking person requires to subsist. True criticality means no arbitrary or artificial

boundaries on viewing the world are permitted, and all serious decisions are made thoughtfully

and with a view toward arriving at independent, autonomous opinions and beliefs. And when

applied to social conditions, criticality becomes critical social awareness, the prerequisite for

acting on one's world for the better. In my life, this awareness was achieved through accident as

much as motivation, yet, critical social awareness can be taught, formally, systematically, and

effectively. It just has to be deemed important enough to justify the effort.
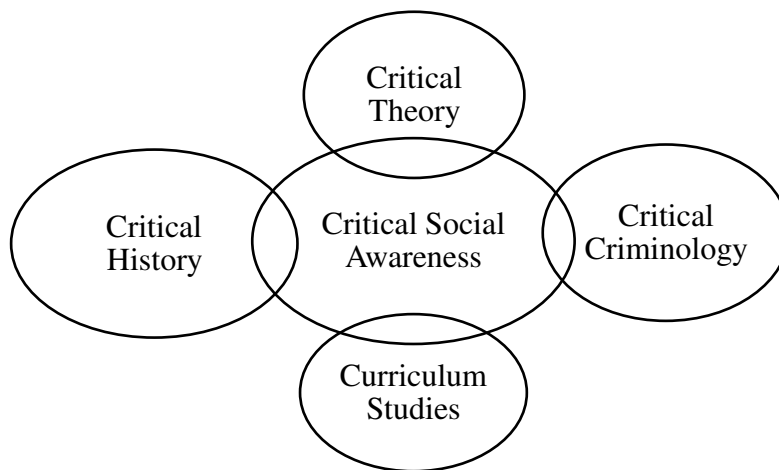
Figure 3. A path to critical social awareness.

Curriculum as Hypermasculine Text

Before suggesting new methods for educating police officers that can teach them to honor

their profession by ensuring critical social awareness that eventuates in improved ways of

interacting with their publics, it is necessary to fully appreciate the existing state of the police

officer's education and training, not in the literal sense of subject matter and practices promoted, but in the social curricular sense of the subcultural and subtextual elements that convert whatever is learned into precepts for a pervasive, underlying philosophy of how Southern cops behave and the beliefs and ideals that they subscribe to. To effect this understanding, I take an approach based on the seminal thinking of Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman (1995) in their preeminent work, *Understanding Curriculum*. In that volume, Pinar et al. promote the idea that understanding curriculum is a function of understanding the various texts that frame curricular efforts, texts that include various philosophical and theoretical perspectives and employ a multitude of methodological approaches. In speculating about the future of curriculum, the authors maintain that understanding curriculum will involve "a shift to a more conceptually autonomous, intertextually complex effort" (p. xvii). I agree. But to thoroughly understand curriculum, regardless of the theoretical, social, educational, or philosophical stance adopted, curriculum will have to be understood as hypermasculine text, a perversion of the healthy masculinity that it could be. Simply disdaining hypermasculine excesses as aberrant and unfitting to an enlightened society may feel self-righteously satisfying but will do little to ameliorate those excesses and their injurious results. What is needed is an understanding of curriculum as hypermasculine text.

In proposing an understanding of curriculum as "text," Pinar et al. mean discourse, including "most simply but profoundly" (p. 7) words and ideas. Citing Derrida's idea that there is no original source for these texts and Foucault's that there is no author, the poststructuralist concept of finding meaning in the belief that each person is "in" others, or the social aspect of education, learning, and understanding, *Understanding Curriculum* accepts that what was before is now and, unaffected by salutary change, will be. The authors accurately emphasize the

influence of race, ethnicity, gender, politics, theology, and, most important, history, as constituents that have acted, and continue to act, on the ways that curriculum is understood and subsequently employed, ways that impinge upon the larger world and individual lives. Although these insightful thinkers presciently adduced myriad valid approaches to understanding curriculum—racially, theologically, politically, historically, phenomenologically, aesthetically, autobiographically—they failed to adequately underscore possibly the most crucial fact of all, that understanding curriculum requires thoroughly understanding the innately hypermasculine, White, heterosexual nature of all social phenomena, including education and curriculum. Again, dismissing such an understanding as sufficiently addressed once it has been purposively and soundly rejected is a lamentable and egregious mistake. To effect any change in educational and curricular practices, hypermasculinity, and the hypermasculine imperative, must be intimately understood and remediated.

In his rudimentary but excellent exposition of the Christian Bible, its history, and its meanings, Riches (2000), explicating the concept of texts, presents a view that could as easily be describing the text of hypermasculinity:

Texts, once canonized, change. They become sacred texts. In the communities that recognize their new status, believers regard them as set apart, special texts to be treated like no other texts. For this reason, their expectations about these texts are different from those they have of other texts. Precisely because the canonical texts are sacred, it is unthinkable that they should conflict with believers' own deepest sense of the sacred. Any serious dissonance between the community's experience and the world of the sacred text cries out for resolution. Either the world of the text must be made to conform to the

experience of the community, or the community must change to conform with the text. A

powerful dialectic is set up… p. 54

In relation to biblical exegesis, the text is a literal, if hotly interpreted, physical medium that is

subject to debate and minute inspection. As such, it presents at least the possibility of

remediation through scholarly discourse. Yet, the text of hypermasculinity, as authoritative for

men as any printed book, is insidious and less tractable than most. Consisting of hidden and

unwritten curricular components consistent with those suggested for curriculum in general

(Apple, 1975; Dreeben, 1976; Jackson, 1968; McLaren, 1994), the curriculum of

hypermasculinity is not a preferred way of examining curriculum in the sense of viewing

curriculum as racial text or postmodern text might be, but is a necessary way of examining

curriculum since the paradigm of White hypermasculinity permeates every aspect of societies

around world. Though the degree to which a hypermasculine ethos actuates a given society

certainly occurs on a continuum that varies to significant degrees, the evidence of world history

and current social difficulties (North Korea's bellicosity along with American imperialism stand

as dramatic examples) bear testimony to the continuing, if not even more pronounced, tendency

of hypermasculinity to shape the world, and on the hypermasculine continuum, American

culture, and Southern policing as an institutional example, is the paradigm for other world

cultures, and its implicit, unacknowledged influence is the most inimical aspect of all.

The curriculum of hypermasculine text works on every aspect of the male experience,

including the social, political, economic, and philosophical, to ensure that whatever mode of

expression a given male or group of males elects to employ while interacting with the world, the

result is always a reaffirmation of White male hegemony and superiority, even as men

worldwide feign an interest in equalizing social circumstances. As this research proves, the

curriculum of hypermasculine text is operative at all levels of the Southern male experience, most saliently in those institutions that vaunt their devotion to freedom, equity, and justice, such as the police. The paradigm is so pervasive that even as women and other minorities achieve enhanced status and access to social influence and political rights, the expression of their newfound freedoms and rights is often an imitation—if not a parody—of the existing hypermasculine paradigm (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2012; Flowers, 2008). The reality is that men, notwithstanding the successes of modern feminism and other activism to achieve parity in gender relations, still set the rules and reap the rewards, and act diligently and zealously to preserve their predominance. Apparently benign behaviors that typify male hypermasculine expression such as hunting, extreme sports, and serial philandering, are merely less harmful acts that are, essentially, of the same variety as discrimination, violence, and resource accumulation that act to victimize Others, and in the context of Southern police behavior, such exclusionary practices carry the sanction of law. If societies are to deal effectively with the harmful effects of the hypermasculine imperative while allowing men to retain a healthy masculinity that values responsible behavior, then curriculum as hypermasculine text must be understood by examining male behavior in a neutral, scholarly sense that, nevertheless, does not minimize the unfortunate and reprehensible aspects of masculinity as now conceptualized. In the end, curriculum as hypermasculine text must be used to eventually nullify its subject.

CEEPing Into Consciousness

An old adage holds that one should never present a problem without proposing a possible solution, an eminently reasonable bit of wisdom, except that, any problem as complex and controversial as the effects of the hypermasculine imperative on society at large and Southern policing in particular is, inarguably, not amenable to pat solutions; factually, dealing with such

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ingrained social phenomena requires a comprehensive, sensitive approach that is cognizant of social and individual needs. Having been reared in the maelstrom of Southern hypermasculinity and having built lives and personalities that are founded on becoming The Man, Southern males, to paraphrase Dylan Thomas,[2] will not go gentle into the good night of radical social and personologic change. As many researchers have established (Caprara & Cervone, 2000; Millon, 1995; Ryckman, 2004), once set, personality and its constituent behaviors and cognitions is generally intractable to change, a fact that may be even more pronounced among Southern men who promote, implicitly if not always explicitly, an exaggerated code of masculine social honor and decorum (Cohen, Nisbett, & Schwarz, 1996). This difficulty in effecting change that works for enhanced social justice may be even more difficult with Southern cops (Laguna, Linn, Ward, & Rupslaukyte, 2010). Still, notwithstanding the admitted difficulty of effecting social change, the reality is that such change is possible, and failing to make the effort may leave the socially aware researcher as culpable for injustice as those who actively perpetrate unjust acts. As the late social activist and humanitarian Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. observed, it is not the words of enemies that will be remembered, but the silence of friends.

Remediating the harm that Southern police officers cause, whether intentionally or through inadvertence, is no simple matter and involves myriad social, political, and institutional factors, making any attempt to inaugurate monumental change that addresses them all overly ambitious if not utterly quixotic. Perhaps the most fruitful approach is for each motivated person who seeks significant social amelioration to chip away at the hypermasculine edifice where they find likely purchase, working diligently toward the other side and encouraging others working within their own spheres of influence to do the same. Activism in political and social dimensions holds tremendous promise for improvement of society, and comports nicely with the tenets of

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critical social theory that enjoin citizens to challenge existing structures (Bronner, 2011). Yet, despite the potential of acting within various societal spheres, no single social institution presents the unlimited potential for change that education does (Anyon, 1988; Brookfield, 1987; Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1983; Kincheloe, 1999; Shor, 1980). In my own life, my personal course of education, an on-going process that encompasses formal and, most profitably, informal facets, has allowed me to act against a lifetime of socialization to reach what may be the most crucial aspect of developing a critical mindset, the realization that I can plot the intellectual progression of my own life and act based on reason rather than social ritual. With this profound realization in my mind, I posit education of Southern police officers as the most promising vehicle for enacting significant social change.

Predicating education as the best approach to change cops' attitudes, however, necessarily involves an approach to learning that is diametrically opposite to what police educators and trainers currently offer. Procedures, policies, practices, tactics, and a host of other technical dimensions are the bases of criminal justice education and training in colleges, universities, technical schools, and police academies throughout the profession, a stark reality that engenders the very serious question, what about purpose? The fact is that most cops receive their initial and continuing training in technical schools and classrooms that posit technical aspects of police work as paramount (Berg, 1990), rarely emphasizing the most important aspect policing, purpose. If protecting and serving the public is more than rhetoric and really is the noble aim of police agencies in the U.S., why would the philosophy of policing receive such short shrift and not enjoy pride of place in police classrooms? This patently rhetorical question is easily answered by citing the hypermasculine imperative as the driving force behind everything that cops do. Technical aspects of policing are overemphasized because rank-and-file police

officers as well as their high-ranking leaders view such training as the "real training" that allows them to do their jobs competently. While there is no question that police officers need to remain abreast of the latest technology and science that supports their work—perhaps more than any other profession—by failing to highlight the purpose of policing, its noble philosophy, officers pursue their work armed with the latest techniques to address issues that they do not really understand. It is to combat this ignorance of purpose that I offer the idea of critically engaged education and pedagogy (CEEP).

Influenced partly by the idea of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), a teaching approach that encourages instructors to teach with the cultural, ethnic, and social differences of their students foremost in mind and honored for the value that such differences bring to the learning environment rather than attempting to pigeonhole their charges into preformed identities that relegate cultural differences to the periphery of relevance, a situation that artificially homogenizes learning and leaves the Other as identifiable outcast (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Called "culturally relevant teaching" by Ladson-Billings (1994), the philosophy is also known as "culturally appropriate," and "culturally responsive" (Au & Jordan, 1981), "culturally congruent" (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), "culturally compatible" (Jordan, 1985), and even "culturally inclusive" pedagogy (Quaye & Harper, 2007, p. 32). The common denominator that these various locutions share is that difference is not only permissible but critical for effective learning and for developing the self-confidence of learners. The concept fits well with the revised educational approach that I recommend for Southern police officers but with an even more important aspect emphasized.

In Chapter I, I offered a criticism of the term culturally responsive pedagogy and its sequelae based on the language itself. As the poststructuralists and other theorists with a

linguistic bent have emphasized (Butler, 1990; Derrida, 1967/1976; Foucault, 1970; Kristeva, 1984; Lacan, 1977), language is not only important but indispensable for ensuring adequate comprehension, and it is unquestionably no more important in any other sphere than those aspects of sociality that bear upon equity. Given that few social institutions assume the importance that education and police work do, the power of words comes into stark, if not alarming, relief. The ancients believed that language held magical properties, and, in a much more attenuated sense than they used, it does. How people frame ideas, propositions, and statements is absolutely crucial if they hope to effect social remediation and ensure social justice. Therefore, though descriptors may seem minor in the overall scheme, clearly they are not. The language that one uses will, to a greater or lesser degree, determine how one pursues life and its details. On that basis, careful terminology must be used for the most important aspects of sociality, and few are as important as education.

With the previous concerns in mind, I incorporate the essential ideas of culturally responsive pedagogy, or CRP, as integral to my conceptualization of CEEP while rejecting what I perceive as passive terminology. Words like responsive, compatible, congruent, and inclusive are inadequate for what I propose since they lack the urgency and proactive connotations that the word "engaged" conveys. A critically engaged education and pedagogy entails not only tolerance and understanding but mandates that learners and teachers in educational and social communion actively, even aggressively, engage the world and Others in order to internalize social justice and equity as concepts worthy of their attention, and, in fact, as the most important dimensions of learning and education. The concept places educational responsibility squarely on the backs of pedagogues and students together, adjuring them to act in dialogic educational congress to develop mutual understanding of the most important aspects of life, effective and compassionate

understanding of one's fellows. CEEP also spurns the mechanistic approach of traditional critical thinking that purports to expand the student's mind by providing techniques for critically assessing the world (Brookfield, 2005). Instead, the philosophy of criticality, a perspective that combines critical thinking and an analysis of social phenomena employing a critical theoretical perspective, is adduced as the most promising approach to learning. Though applicable to any learning venue, in the case of police officers' education and training CEEP would require that police are repeatedly exposed to philosophical and sociological concepts that emphasize that the purpose of policing as an institution is to ensure the rights and security of all peoples, and would underscore difference as not only meriting attention but as deserving of veneration. Cops would, from the start of their training and throughout their continuing in-service education, be reminded emphatically by their instructors and leaders that true public service is more than the application of tactical and technical skills and that real policing involves compassionate appreciation of social factors in an evolving context. Most of all, they would be repeatedly exposed to the idea that in the heady democratic milieu, the tyranny of the majority and the despotism of the powerful must constantly be regulated by police professionals who use their statutorily endowed authority to protect those who have been traditionally dispossessed and disenfranchised rather than maintaining the hegemony of the power elite.

Possibly the most pivotal aspect of CEEP for police officers' education is that it would represent continual learning that is liberated from the often intellectually stifling confines of formal education, a foreign and sometimes hostile environment for cops where they are most often preached to yet remain unconverted. For cops, real education and training occurs on the streets anyway, so hearing from other cops and senior police managers and supervisors, especially those with experience and respect, that social justice is not an abstraction

bureaucratically imposed and to be endured but a noble goal to be vigorously sought and

rigorously attended to could mean the difference between an honorable profession and the

continuance of the hypermasculine boys club that currently exists. When a paradigm shift occurs

in which true public service becomes more highly valued than the development and maintenance

of hypermasculine personal and institutional identities, the police will become what they have

always held themselves out to be, defenders of society. By engaging their world and their

profession critically, enthusiastically scrutinizing their practices and those of others, especially

those in power, Southern cops, indeed all cops, can finally live by the motto "to protect and to

serve" with deserved pride, secure in the knowledge that the rhetoric has been discarded and

genuine social justice is in place.

Living in the Hinterlands

The trembling earth of the Okefenokee is surrounded by more solid ground, expansive

wooded areas covered in scrub brush and towering pines with multiple layers of dried pine

needles carpeting rich soil that settlers to South Georgia cherished for its fecundity. Making

regular forays into the swamp itself to reap the bounty of its wildlife, valuable hardwoods, and

various medicinal herbs and plants, few of those early pioneers had the pluck to live in the

swamp fulltime, finding the environment just too precarious and unpredictable. Still, some hardy

souls, whether out of a sense of adventure or because their social status left them few options,

chose to brave the darkly beautiful surroundings of the expansive watercourse. Possessed of steel

resolves and determined constitutions, they made productive lands that other settlers deemed

virtually useless, and having worked hard and suffered much to develop the great swamp into

land amenable to civilized life they also created a hypermasculine ethos to defend their

possession that reflected the rigors of a necessitous and hardscrabble existence. Over time, more

and more people left the swamp for the surrounding hinterlands, returning to the swamp only to draw from its bounty, yet the tough-as-nails mentality and hypermasculine beliefs that had sustained them during the harsh years of swamp life remained. You can take the swamper out of the swamp but you cannot take the swamp out of the swamper, and the attitudes, customs, mores, and credo that framed their swampland existence was perpetuated over the generations, remaining an integral part of the lore and mythos of many South Georgia White trash families. For the poor and marginalized whose ancestry includes a swamper past, the past and shared memories are often all that is left to cherish.

Most of those who left the Okefenokee and its adjacent lands have joined the rest of the contemporary world and have long since moved on to new existences that have altered the course of generations of abjection and disenfranchisement. Just as my own father used his G.I. Bill education benefits to obtain a degree in accounting from the University of Georgia and successfully, for a time, pursue a life far from the swamp and the South Georgia culture of his youth and young adulthood, so many others have sought escape from what, despite many treasured and nostalgic memories, was, indeed, a hard life. Some were more successful than others. One of my father's brothers ended up in Los Angeles, becoming something of an enigma in my life as I never met him. Another uncle on my father's side joined the U.S. Army and was almost as mysterious in my young White trash mind. Others ventured no farther than the more settled areas of Ware County, Georgia, and its county seat Waycross, and, emotionally, no farther than a life of alcohol and drug abuse, and its attendant criminal justice interactions. As it turns out, the same plucky and unyielding attitude that had allowed generations of settlers to make the most of South Georgia's badlands just did not transfer felicitously to more socially

restrained parts of the culture. The same qualities that made a swamper a manly man made a displaced swamper a criminal, and good stories became long rap sheets.

What I have discovered in this study is that attempting to escape from place is not only misguided but futile. One cannot, regardless of the approach taken or the fervency of the desire, escape one's place. Place makes people, and alter their circumstances as one might, the influence of early place remains inexorably fixed in their minds and their emotions, emerging to act on their lives when they least expect it and, sometimes, when they least need it. In my life, I have worked laboriously to effect a change in my thinking and behavior that would leave my White trash, hypermasculine history well behind and buried deeply in that mysterious South Georgia swamp, never to be uncovered, but I was naïve. People are, individually and collectively, largely creatures of place, and place consists of geography, emotions, attitudes, experiences, and, most of all, stories, the stories that they tell themselves about their lives and histories. Without place, people would be nothing at all, mere automatons that metabolized and reproduced, moving robotically through life and never really experiencing anything. Maybe some people are living such existences now, displaced from place and having lost connection with what constitutes them. If this research confirms anything for the reader, it should underscore one vital, inescapable point: place is in one eternally and must be seen for what it is, an opportunity to understand oneself.

Throughout this study I have used the Okefenokee as a metaphor to represent continual transition that leads to a new state from the old with the relevant aspect being that, though one transforms, willingly or not, evidence of the past is always present. Like fossils of bygone ages, the relics of personal history remain, providing tangible markers of where one has been and the transitions experienced along the way, all leading back to place. In the case of the Okefenokee,

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the wondrous swamp will eventually become dry land like the surrounding woods, yet the evidence of its dank and watery past will be there for the curious explorer to learn and take guidance from for millennia. Still, the transition goes on, unstoppable. Individual lives and social interactions are also in a continual state of change, most often developing in new ways that are not subject to the desires and systematic efforts of social institutions. People interact in ways that are haphazard and erratic, producing new customs and social expectations that may work for the better or the worse, with little indication which. But such does not have to be the case, and that is what this research has really been about, offering something that stands to better society.

By examining the hypermasculine imperative and its influence on the behaviors of Southern men and Southern police officers, I have sought to establish that hypermasculinity is not a narrow concept affecting small portions of society and with limited detriment. Instead, what I posit here is that hypermasculinity under the guise of healthy masculinity is the paradigmatic driving force in the world, impelling male behaviors among both genders that work against the principles of social justice and equity, and that continue to make the world a much more dangerous and unfair place, and that the profession of policing in the South is even more adversely affected by the nefarious influence of the hypermasculine imperative than other regions of the U.S. and, possibly, the world. In postulating such a theory, I have noted that as the U.S. goes so goes most of the world, not that men worldwide need additional encouragement to heighten their hypermasculine excesses. Men have always sought to dominate and subjugate Others, and, in the absence of a countervailing force that promotes responsible masculinity, they are unlikely to see any value in a more equitable approach to living. Instead, what one currently sees is that hypermasculinity has transcended gender and is now just as likely to be adopted by women as a model of behavior worth emulating, a phenomenon that effectively ensures not only

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the maintenance of the existing paradigm but, potentially, potentiates its increase. Aspirant manly men come from somewhere, now they can come from different genders.

What I have emphasized in this study is that the hypermasculine imperative and its pernicious effects must be analyzed and the theoretical and methodological lenses for such analysis should be critical autoethnography, an approach that effectively combines the lapidary theoretical gaze of traditional critical theory mixed with postmodern, post-postmodern, psychoanalytic, and poststructuralist constituents with the accessible methodological strategy of men's personal stories and utilizing elements from biography, autobiography, and *currere*. The critical autoethnographical approach allows for firsthand data that might otherwise be impossible to obtain through other methods and theoretical frames because of the inherent nature of the phenomenon under scrutiny. The hypermasculine imperative consumes men utterly, leaving them cloistered and reticent when the possibility exists that their masculine identity may be threatened, making critical autoethnography, where men examine themselves to glean facts about hypermasculine experience, the most promising avenue for research; nonetheless, this is not to say that other research approaches are unavailing or not worthwhile. Multiple methods in the area of masculine and hypermasculine studies are crucial for understanding, but the critical autoethnographical approach cuts to the heart of male experience, producing usable data that can allow for immediate extrapolation to other areas and, perhaps most important, uncovering new areas for further research.

In studying hypermasculinity, whether as its effects Southern cops or any other subpopulation, this research has affirmed the need to concentrate on the curriculum of place, the educational influences, formal and informal, that contribute to male hypermasculine development. It is, after all, communion with other men, women, and society at large that

provides the emotional and intellectual substrate for male identity development, so ameliorating

the more deleterious aspects of male conduct must begin by studying place and education and

how they affect such development if changes of substantive value are to be made, and changes

must be made. My personal stories, mined for their hypermasculine themes, have demonstrated

that Southern cops are motivated predominantly by the need to establish themselves as The Man,

or at least, A Man, societal status that affirms in their minds and the minds of Others that their

masculine credentials are irreproachable, an impression that fulfills a crucial psychological need

to be perceived a strong, dependable, independent, and trustworthy, even when the rhetoric

exceeds in value the reality.

Finally, I proposed learning how I, as a chief of police, was able to successfully adopt a

socially progressive attitude that benefitted my public as I passed on my belief in social justice to

those police officers under my command, a reality that, in theory, should never have occurred

given my socially and politically conservative upbringing as a White male from the Deep South

and one thoroughly steeped in hypermasculine traditions. In light of my early education through

the curriculum of Southern hypermasculinity, I should have followed in the footsteps of the

biddable and unthinking Southern cops that preceded me, and, in fact, my early career was

characterized by such shameful behaviors and cognitions. Still, I ended up somewhere else. My

research confirmed what I had long suspected, that a germ of thought based on the critical

mindset, cultivated over years through exposure to learning, people, ideas, and radical concepts

allowed me to grow intellectually to the point that earlier influences were constrained and

controlled, leaving room for more progressive thought. And I am confident that this research

shows that my experience can be repeated systematically by adopting educational methods for

Southern police officers that emphasize criticality and constant reiteration of the real purpose of the policing profession, service to Others.

My experience in the Curriculum Studies program at Georgia Southern University has helped me make an epochal transition in my own life, assisting me with emerging from the hubris that had, until recent years, typified my thinking, specifically, that I had somehow risen from the muck of the swamp and left its influence behind. I have learned that true criticality must be assiduously developed, jealously guarded, and continually refined if it is to remain a vibrant intellectual approach to experiencing life. I thought that I had emerged from the swamp and left it behind, only to find that it was with me all the time, and always would be. Most telling, I realized that trying to escape my swampy place was a mistake from the inception, being one of those foolish consistencies that Emerson[3] disdained so long ago. Better to learn from the approach taken by researchers like Whitlock (2007) and Casemore (2008) and remain firmly in my Southern place and endeavor to have a positive effect by presenting what I have learned and experienced. By continuing to live in my place, I can draw out those who still participate in the laughter behind, the laughter that marginalizes and destroys and relegates whole generations to lives of want and despair and crushes dreams with the weighty rhetoric that masks intolerance and inequity. By remaining in my place, I can point out the beauty that resides in the swamp as well as the dangers that lurk and guide others through it. Ultimately, by remaining in my place, I can show that Southern masculinity is redeemable.

A word about notes…

The notes included here are provided for three chief reasons: first, to explicate terms, ideas, customs, and mores and other peculiar, unfamiliar, idiosyncratic, and unconventional usages that are unique to my experience or derive from my experience of culture making them unlikely to be immediately recognizable by the reader. Second, having been nourished intellectually by such appended matter, I assume that the avid and incurably inquisitive reader will expect them, thus, providing them is no more than honoring my sense of authorial propriety. Finally, my own importunate curiosity insists that I include them in order to satisfy my own interests related to the subjects addressed, and to challenge the future reader by asking, who will read them?

Chapter I

1. A "blue line" decal is a small black sticker bisected horizontally by a thinner blue section intended to symbolize the so-called "thin blue line" of police who safeguard the interests of society from lawless elements within it. Placed somewhere on the vehicle, usually the rear bumper or back glass, presumably it demonstrates the driver's solidarity with police and their plight, though many see it equally as an attempt to dissuade enforcement efforts by police.

2. An idea postulated by Paulo Reglus Neves Freire (1921-1997), Brazilian Marxist and critical educator. According to Freire, the oppressors of marginalized peoples are themselves oppressed, requiring their own liberation. Dominated by ideological thinking inherited from their families and their cultures, they were also in need of liberation. Still, like those oppressed, the oppressors must also experience *conscientização*, or

consciousness, before they could lift themselves up from their own ideological subjection (Freire, 1970/2009).

3. Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE). First of the "Five Good Emperors," he ruled Rome from 161-180 CE. A Stoic philosophically and an exceedingly successful ruler politically and militarily, he is renowned now more for his *Meditations,* from which are derived a number of pithy sayings meant to guide thinking, including "The first rule is to keep an untroubled spirit. The second is to look things in the face and know them for what they are" (Needleman & Piazza, 2008).

4. Approximately 2,500 people each year die as the direct result of police pursuits of suspects and another 55,000 are injured, with 1 in 100 pursuits ending in a fatality. Such statistics indicate the potentially lethal reality for the average citizen when discussing police practice (Hill, 2002).

5. In 1939, Winston Churchill (1874-1965), prime minister of Great Britain, when asked about the possible actions of the Soviet Union, reportedly remarked, "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest" (Blake, 1997).

6. Literally from the Greek *omphalos,* "navel" + *skepsis*, "act of looking, examination." Similar words are *omphaloskeptic*, one who engages in the practice and *omphaloskeptical* related to contemplation of one's navel. Most often used facetiously.

7. Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695). Arguably the most famous French fabulist, he wrote poetry and is known for his *Fables*. One of his verses reads, "Tho' to grasp the prize I be denied, mine at least this glory, that I tried" (Mackay, 1973). My fondness for this saying stems from my conviction that social change must be predicated upon a commitment to

action, and the most fruitful course of action is a steadfast commitment to, as a minimum, committing absolutely.

Chapter II

1. "Panther" is an inclusive term used by people around the English-speaking world to describe large felids that they cannot identify definitively, or often do not exist at all or only in mythology. Most often applied to variant local populations of the leopard, *Panthera pardus*, found throughout Africa and Asia including the Tibetan highlands, those ignorant of animal taxonomy often believe them to be a distinct species. In the South, the general conceptualization is of a wild cat, usually slightly smaller than the cougar, *Puma concolor,* formerly *Felis concolor*, and virtually always dark black, although local descriptions vary noticeably, with some describing the animal as larger or smaller, and less, frequently, of variant colors. A pervasive myth throughout the South, the mistake is magnified by the fact that *Puma concolor* once occupied most parts of the South, including Georgia, before being extirpated in most of their historical Southern ranges. Further complicating the matter is the still present, though perilously endangered and probably functionally extinct, variety of *Puma concolor*, the Florida Panther, *Puma concolor coryi*. Although some maintain that it is a distinct subspecies of cougar, DNA evidence makes this contention debatable as they are virtually indistinguishable from their more populous parent populations of cougar, a debate exacerbated by the introduction in the 1980's of Western cougars into the Florida population, making disentangling the genotypes virtually impossible. Another confounding factor that may contribute to the specifics of the Southern belief that panthers are always black is the occasional presence of melanistic bobcat specimens. Given their infrequency and most

Southern inhabitants ignorance of their existence, Maehr (1997) hypothesizes that they may account for the "black panther" legends of the American South since Southerners, on seeing a black bobcat, may have no other way of explaining what they have witnessed (see Maehr, 1997).

2. Mason jars, sometimes called "Ball jars" after one of its manufacturers, are used for canning and preserving foods, and have historically been particularly popular in the Southern United States and rural areas around the country. The name derives from that of their inventor, a Philadelphia tinsmith or originated the design in 1858. Given the poverty of Southern Whites and African Americans, actual glass ware and other beverage containers were scarce, making the wide-mouthed Mason jars convenient and useful for drinking from. They were especially popular with moonshine producers because their threaded rims and small size (about one quart) allowed them to securely contain their illicit spirits and make storage and transport easier, as well as making convenient drinking vessels for their customers (see Blumenthal, 2011).

3. "Moonshine" is the colloquial term for illegally produced whiskey, also known as "White Lightening" and other regionally specific names. Its illegality stems from federal and state laws that require all distilled spirits to be taxed, a requirement that significantly increases cost to the chagrin of distillers and consumers alike, and additionally has a political component. After the Revolutionary War, the Federal government, desperate for funds, passed a tax on grain used to produce whiskey, an action that many Americans considered an unpardonable infringement upon their rights, especially in the wake of the bitter fight for independence. The tax sparked the Whiskey Rebellion during the presidency of George Washington (1732-1799), which resulted in outbreaks of extreme

violence and was summarily crushed by Washington's army; consequently, many moonshiners since that time—though often completely ignorant of the associated history—cite the reprehensible nature of governmental interference in their production and sell of liquor as a matter of political concern and an ideological statement of defiance toward a repressive state (see Thompson, 2007).

4. In the context of cockfighting, terminologically "pitting" conveys the meaning of placing the roosters in proximity in order to incite their fighting ire sufficiently to ensure that they will engage in combat then dropping them into the arena to fight. Coaxing the animals to fight is more ceremonial than practical given that generations of selective breeding have rendered them prone to fight with virtually any other living being—and some inanimate ones. I once watched a game rooster (the adjective 'game' is often used to describe them in the South, presumably because they are used in gaming, or gambling, and because they are game to fight) strike repeatedly at a plastic shopping bag that had blown into its reach (see Bilger, 2002; Ownby, 1990).

5. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), German polymath, was influential on many schools of thought, including postmodernism and poststructuralism, especially for his critical reviews of areas as differentiated as religion and music, and his concept of the "will to power," or the drive to satisfy ambition and ego, was no less influential, being employed by such flagitious persons as Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) and creditable researchers alike, such as psychologist Alfred Adler (1870-1937), who incorporated Nietzsche's will to power concept in his own ideas about individual psychology (see Ingram, 1986).

6. The Southern Hypothesis of sub-cultural violence, predicated on data confirming higher incidents of violence and homicide in the southern states as compared to other areas of the nation, suggests that there are cultural and social precursors and explanations for the number unrelated to chance or general demographics. A variety of explanations have been mooted, including the provocative, such as violence as a historic artifact of the supposed says of Southern aristocratic chivalry and poor Southern males misguided attempts to sustain this ersatz "code of honor," to prosaic aspects such as excessive heat in Southern regions. The hypothesis is not uncontested despite unequivocal data confirming greater occurrence of violence in the South (see Ellison, 1991; cf. Dixon & Lizotte, 1987; Fischer, 1989; Reed, 1972; Shelden, 2001).

7. While the recalcitrant belief that Southerners are congenitally lazy has generally been consigned to the realm of folk mythology, there is some scientific basis for the original supposition. While many Northerners have historically ascribed laziness to Southerners as either derived from presumed inferior ancestry, or, more charitably, as a result of the intense heat (cf. Southern Hypothesis of violence), a possible parasitological explanation can adduced from the well-documented infestation of hookworm that afflicted fully 40 percent of Southerners until as late as the mid-twentieth century. One of the salient effects of hookworm on humans was lassitude that might have, indeed, caused some observers to attribute their listlessness to constitutional indolence (see Numbers, 1982).

8. Current's (1983) Northernization Hypothesis of the South holds that Northerner's immediately preceding, during, and after the Civil War derogated the South using standards that were presumably universal to describe acceptable civilized behavior. The

theory is occasionally paraded out but is seldom discussed seriously any more (see Current, 1983).

9. Independently hypothesized by Gell-Mann and Zweig in 1964, quarks are subatomic particles that, theoretically, defy the laws of physics on the atomic level by not occupying space and time simultaneously. They can only be observed by extrapolating from the activities of larger particles that they combine to form. In addition to their mysterious physical properties, different quarks are referred to as *flavors*, including *up*, *down*, *strange*, *bottom*, *charming,* and *top* (see Jones, 1992).

10. Literally, "woman worship" in ancient Greek.

11. Wilbur Joseph, or "W. J.," Cash (1900-1941), known even in contemporary times as the first historian and commentator to cast a critical eye on the mythopoetics of Southern life and culture, was found dead in a Mexico City hotel room on July 1, 1941, hanging by his necktie. Controversy surrounded his death from the start since Mexican authorities patently ignored his wife's and parents' requests that he be transported home for burial; instead, the Mexican government had his cremated remains sent to North Carolina. Providing additional grist for the conspiracy mill is the well-documented fact that the day before his death, Cash complained of having been followed and accosted by Nazi spies, a not improbable scenario given the relative ubiquity of German Nazi agents in Mexico City at that time. Although rendering definitive closure to the controversy is unlikely, Cash's lifelong battle with alcohol and against profound depression makes suicide the most probable cause of his death (see Clayton, 1997).

12. "Br'er" is a truncation of "brother," an honorific for human males and fictional mischievous Southern rabbits and their familiars.

13. Mary Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964) died of complications of *Lupus erythematosus* at age 39 and is buried in Memory Hill Cemetery in Milledgeville, Georgia.

14. *Lieux de mémoire* literally means "place of memory" in French. It is used to describe the association of memory with tangible objects such as geography or Marcel Proust's (1871-1922) famous madeleines in *À la recherche du temps perdu*, often rendered *Remembrance of Things Past* or *In Search of Lost Time* (1913-1927).

15. Men exhibiting hypermasculine behavior have a lowered life expectancy for a variety of reasons, including accidental causes and violence, but deaths are also attributable to poor health as a result of substances abuse, inadequately nutritious diet, coronary disease, and high blood pressure (see Connell, 2005).

16. The use of the locution "police" to describe the totality of law enforcement agencies in the U.S. is not only definitionally inaccurate but tends to propagate a grave sociological misconception among Americans, leading them to believe that the sum of U.S. police agencies is conceptually, organizationally, and structurally coterminous. Once one appreciates not only the staggering number of individual police agencies at the federal, states, county, and municipal levels, and their almost complete autonomy from each other, it becomes easy to see why the misconception can lead to public angst over police misconduct that is so recalcitrant. For example, in Georgia, the City of Atlanta Police Department has 2,000 police officers while smaller towns may still have a single officer, or none at all, depending solely on county sheriffs for police services. Consequently, it is little wonder that citizens fail to understand why correcting misbehavior in one police department may have no identifiable effect on an adjoining one. The misconception

appears to be endemic. In one comical example, actor John Candy portrayed a New York City police officer seeking a transfer to an NYPD unit in Florida!

17. Thomas Samuel Kuhn (1922-1996) proposed in his 1962 book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, that, rather than progress in a linear, predictable fashion, scientific paradigms actually occur radically after extended periods of stasis. Coining the term "paradigm shift," now ubiquitous in common parlance, Kuhn's ideas were influential in promoting and popularizing many new epistemological and theoretical perspectives, such as postmodernism (see Preston, 2008).

Chapter III

1. Critical theory emerging from the Frank School, or Institute for Social Research, is often conceptualized for convenience as having occurred in three discrete "generations" describing the particular predominant influences. The first generation is most often associated with Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) and Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) and included such luminaries as Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), Eric Fromm (1900-1980), and Leo Lowenthal (1900-1993); the second with Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929) and his acolytes, Klaus Günther, Hauke Brunkhorst, Ralf Dahrendorf, Gerhard Brandt, Alfred Schmidt, Claus Offe, Oskar Negt, Albrecht Wellmer and Ludwig von Friedeburg, Lutz Wingert, Josef Früchtl, Lutz-Bachman; and the current, or third, with Axel Honneth (b. 1949). Some have reportedly discerned a new, fourth, generation coalescing around the thought of Rainer Forst, although this idea has evidently not gained currency to date (see Malpas & Wake, 2010).

2. While the original theorists of the Frankfurt School were generally pessimistic about the future of human social interactions, largely because of what they perceived as the failure

of the proletariat identified by Marx and Engels to arise in revolution, Walter Bendix

Schönflies Benjamin (1892-1940) was particularly disturbed by the prospects for

humanity, a state that, coupled with an already depressive nature, and exacerbated by the

advent of Nazism in his home of Germany, doubtless contributed significantly to his

suicide by overdosing on morphine tablets in September 1940 (see Osborne, 1997).

3. Marx predicted that the *proletariat* (from L. *proletarius,* the lowest social order in ancient

   Rome, and derived from *proles,* or "progeny," so-called because they possessed little

   more than the ability to produce children for labor) disillusioned by being estranged from

   the ownership of their excess labor and not being allowed to participate in the prosperity

   of the capitalist venture, would rise up in revolution and supplant the *bourgeoisie* (F.

   "middle class"), or capitalist class. Promoting the revolution as imminent, when it failed

   to appear after the devastation of World War I, the thinkers of the Frankfurt School

   expressed their dismay in their social theory (see Bronner, 2011).

4. Nietzsche has wrongly been ascribed a philosophical role in the rise of Nazism in

   Germany because of his supposed anti-Semitic views and validation of the "will to

   power" as legitimate. Ironically, Nietzsche was vehemently opposed to both anti-

   Semitism and German nationalism, cornerstones of the Nazi platform. The

   misrepresentation of Nietzsche's work has most often—and accurately—been laid at the

   door of his sister, Therese Elisabeth Alexandra Förster-Nietzsche (1846-1935) who, as an

   avowed Nazi herself, popularized the misconceptions (see Solomon & Higgins, 2001).

5. Eugenics (Gk. *eugenēs,* "well-born") is the science of manipulating genetic inheritance to

   achieve a socially or politically desired outcome. Although Nazi Germany was vilified

   for engaging in the now discredited science, ironically, the Germans began their eugenics

program based on the discoveries and systematic pursuit of eugenicist programs began in the U.S. in the early twentieth century. For a fascinating history of eugenics, see Gould's (1981) *The Mismeasure of Man*, and for an illustrative example of U.S. complicity in establishing eugenics as an acceptable form of scientific exploration, see *Buck v. Bell*, US 200 (1927).

6. Sir Francis Bacon, 1st Viscount St. Alban, (1561 – 1626), was a scholar and philomath who esteemed himself as a statesman, jurist, scientist, and author. Having famously remarked "I have taken all knowledge to be my province," his eclectic approach to erudition has been vaunted since. The scientific method is occasionally referred to as the "Baconian method" after his systematic approach to experimentation (see Peppiatt, 2009).

7. Unfortunately, most of that early documentary evidence that would be so useful in the instant case was long ago immolated, burned metaphorically on the altar of desired closure after leaving my first police assignment, and literally in a trash barrel behind my house. Parenthetically, rural Southerners seem to be captivated by fire and the act of burning. A strict Freudian could reasonably attribute this fact to the defense mechanism of repetition compulsion postulated by psychoanalysts, possibly related to the scorched earth policy of Sherman's famous march. Rural Southern yards and fields are often festooned with charred pits, 50 gallon drums, and other spaces set aside solely for the act of watching things be consumed by the flames. This could be an elucidative study. Luckily, several of my journals still exist and will provide crucial and probative evidence for my research. First articulated in Freud's 1914 monograph *Erinnern, Wiederholen und Durcharbeiten*, or "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through" (Lacan, 1973, p.

49), the defense mechanism known as "repetition compulsion" describes the tendency of some victims of trauma to repeat the traumatic acts or inexplicably subject themselves to situations that mimic the original trauma, e.g. incest survivors who take sexual partners resembling the offending family member, or abused women serially selecting as their mates men who abuse them. Having previously postulated the pleasure principle, which holds that humans actively seek pleasurable circumstances and assiduously avoid pain, Freud was stymied by the reality of the repetition compulsion (Freud, 1920/2012). Although many theories have been put forth attempting to explain the phenomenon, no definitive explanation is universally accepted (see Gabbard, Litowitz, & Williams, 2011). William Tecumseh Sherman (1820-1891), an author, statesman, and entrepreneur, is best known for his career as a Union general during the Civil War. Described by Liddell Hart (1929) as "the first modern general" (p. 430) for his presumed, but false, inauguration of the concept of total warfare, Sherman has been both exalted (Woodworth, 2005) and pilloried (Walters, 1973) for his use of the scorched earth policy that contributed to the South's downfall. Whether there is any actual psychoanalytic connection between the apparent proclivities displayed by many Southerners for burning is purely speculative, but the propensity to burn items in barrels, pits, and other receptacles is well-established. For a more balanced analysis of Sherman's life, see Hirshson (1998).

8. Gregor Johann Mendel (1822-1844), an Augustinian friar, famously experimented with breeding different varieties of peas to demonstrate that certain traits were inherited. Though a contemporary of Charles Darwin (1809-1882), the connection between heritability and evolution would not be made until the twentieth century, much too late to assist Darwin with establishing a mechanism for evolutionary change, a problem that

tainted his evolutionary theory during his life and after. Had the connection not been finally made, however, the reliability and plausibility of evolutionary theory might still be a bone of contention even among learned persons (see Henig, 2001).

Chapter IV

1. Most states in the U.S. have a "hot pursuit doctrine" that allows a police officer to pursue a suspect anywhere as long as the chase remains active and the suspect is within the officer's sight or within his immediate knowledge.

2. Georgia courts once ruled that if a person shot someone below the waist, there was obviously no attempt to commit murder!

3. The Okefenokee Swamp has been called the "Land of the Trembling Earth" by Native Americans for millennia, based on oral histories and the earliest accounts of White settlers hearing the term, though its origin and its etymology and philological bases are disputed (Nelson, 2005). What is not disputed is the descriptive utility of the locution, as visitors quickly learn. Decades of aggregated dead foliage provide a tenuous and shaky substrate for walking since they are literally floating on water-logged earth (see Nelson, 2005).

4. Older Southerners can still be heard to refer to Coca-cola as "Holy Water" because of the prosperity that it brought to many people who were wise enough to invest in the company in its early years. A police officer who once worked for me and hailed from Scotland, Georgia, related the story that his paternal grandfather used to tell his family about the time in the 1930s that a traveling Coca-Cola® representative approached him in McRae, Georgia, at a local general store and offered to sell him Coke® stock for a dime a share. He declined, only to realize years later that even a modest investment would have made

him a rich man. I most recently heard the term Holy Water used for the soft drink in November 2012 when the only director of the State of Georgia Veterans Service, Pete Wheeler, who has held his position since 1947, and was attending a Department of Veterans Affairs ceremony, held up a bottle of the deliciously sweet and opaque beverage, after I called it "Coke," and corrected me by tapping it and saying, "Holy Water." Reportedly, Mr. Wheeler has been a holder of Coca-Cola® stock since the 1930s (see Pendergrast, 2000).

5. Postulated by Niles Eldredge (b. 1943) and Stephen Jay Gould (1941-2002) in 1972, "punctuated equilibrium" is a theory of evolution that answers the concerns of those who question the utility of Darwin's (1859) phenomenally slow process of species change. Whereas Darwin saw speciation as a gradual, minute process of change eventuating in new forms, critics, generally accepting evolution science itself but questioning the applicability of his approach to the process, which they deemed excessively slow even in geologic time, sought a mechanism that could explain the fossil record's evidence of swift and dramatic transformations (Hull, 1983). Eldredge and Gould (1972) proposed a model that accounted for rapid change by holding that while species experienced long periods of *stasis*, changing ecological conditions often occurring with great celerity, offered *preadapted* animals, those with adventitious features that served other functions, or none at all, with opportunities to survive and thrive, thus passing on their genetic complement and emerging as new species. Their idea of punctuated equilibria as representing the mundane fits and spectacular starts of natural evolution makes an excellent metaphor for human lives since most of people deal with stultifying routine interspersed with episodes of noticeable, often life-changing, alteration, a notion that

comports with Thoreau's (1854/1993) supposition that "the mass of men [sic] lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation" (p. 7).

6. *Lex talionis*, literally the "law of the talon" meaning the law of retribution, an "eye for an eye."

7. In the days before ADT® Home Security, Guinea fowl, family *Numididae*, worked nicely as alarms in rural areas of the South where the nearest neighbor could be miles away and unexpected visitors could bring trouble as often as not, particularly at night when everyone was asleep. Autochthonous to West Africa, Guinea fowl flock closely together and emit a distinct—and distinctly irritating—vocalization on the approach of unfamiliar people or predators, making them welcomed members of Southern rural farms for generations (see Ferguson, 1999).

8. "Command presence" is a term derived from U.S. military lingo that describes the establishment of authoritative control by an individual or unit. Adopted by police officers in their general parlance, cops speak of establishing their command presence in risky or dangerous situations, a practical necessity given the limited resources that many police officers have available to them, particularly in impoverished and rural jurisdictions (see Richards, 2013).

Chapter V

1. Although local lore maintains that only one bull of the species American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) is dominant in the Okefenokee, the reality is that mature males are fiercely territorial and a number will establish demesnes over the swamp's huge area. Still, it is true that a few establish and successfully defend territories that are

significantly larger than most bulls, meaning that, among other advantages, they will

breed more successfully than less well-heeled males (see Brochu, 1999).

2. As a child visiting the Okefenokee, I was regaled with stories of legendary "King"

alligators that ruled the expansive swamp. Adding to the charm of such stories is the

mounted carcass of Oscar at the Okefenokee Swamp Park just south of Waycross. In this

case, Oscar was the bull gator of the park, having been the only mature male in residence

when the park was built in 1945. Subsequently, virtually all offspring produced in the

park are his. Oscar died in 2007 aged 100.

3. According to playwright, social commentator, and satirist Oscar Wilde, "When the gods

wish to punish us, they answer our prayers."

Chapter VI

1. The "imago" in Carl Gustav Jung's (1875-1961) conceptualization—quickly if

grudgingly adopted by Freud—is the unconscious, idealized image of the adult self,

usually an abstract perception of the parent of the same sex. Derived from entomology

where the chrysalis sloughs off the adolescent version of itself and enters a state of

maturity, in the psychoanalytic view, the imago represents for each person what they

wish to become as adults. The disparity between the idealized self as expressed in the

imago and the predictably imperfect result is the source of much emotional angst for the

adult, occasionally necessitating therapeutic intervention (see Jung 1912/1952).

2. Do not go gentle into that good night,

Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,

Because their words had forked no lightning they

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright

Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,

And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight

Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,

Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas (1951)

3. A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and

philosophers and divines.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, (1841) "Self-reliance"

(Dis)placement: The experience of living in a place and a given culture while feeling distinctly outside of the place and culture. (Dis)placement engenders a sense of estrangement for most people who contend with it yet offers the (dis)placed person the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge by juxtaposing data from the culture in question and independent cognitions that often run counter to cultural features. Also described as being *displaced-in-place*.

A Man: A Man describes the idealized status of normalized masculinity in Western cultures that men, ironically, often attempt to achieve through pathologized masculine endeavors, or hypermasculine excesses. Inordinately pronounced in Southern cultures, being recognized by others as "A Man" generally becomes the overarching theme of Southern males' lives, and having that status impugned once attained can result in hypermasculine excess, including bursts of irrational rage and concomitant violence.

Critical autoethnography: A qualitative research methodology that explicitly avows intent to produce useful research data that contributes to social remediation and that uses the tenets of rigorous critical thinking to ensure that results are the product of exacting standards. The methodology is differentiated from traditional autoethnography by its acknowledged, rather than implied, critical social stance. As in autoethnography, critical autoethnography explores cultural attributes through the medium of individual experience of culture.

Critical social awareness: The realization that every aspect of the individual life impacts sociality, thus making each person responsible for acting positively on the collective social

experience. Having attained critical social awareness, the individual necessarily begins to see and interpret phenomena in relation to others and their needs.

Critical thinking philosophy: A philosophical perspective toward phenomena, knowledge, and experience that permits the observer to subject all stimuli to critical scrutiny in order to arrive at opinions and judgments based on reason and logic. Opposed to the more traditional stance of viewing critical thinking as a technicist process based on literally applicable tenets and principles, a critical thinking philosophy requires that the individual place open-mindedness and objectivity, intermingled with an appreciation for qualitative factors such as emotion, at the center of all thinking. Cf. Brookfield (2005b).

Critically engaged education and pedagogy (CEEP): Inspired by the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994), critically engaged education and pedagogy (CEEP) is a general frame for learning and instruction that places the emphasis on dialogic teaching that actively engages difference and places the stated purpose for the instruction as the central concept to be expounded. Rather than concentrating on technical aspects of a field or discipline, CEEP mandates that the philosophy of social remediation through critical thinking should be reiterated continually to remind students and practitioners of their avowed purpose so that goals related to social justice and equity remain paramount.

Curriculum as hypermasculine text: Derived from the thinking of Pinar et al.'s (1995) understanding of curriculum as various textual phenomena, curriculum as hypermasculine text is not a desired way of viewing education and educational phenomena, but, given the paradigmatic

hegemony of the hypermasculine imperative, it is a pragmatic and necessary way of analyzing social and educational phenomena. The objective of viewing social and educational attributes as hypermasculine text is always to re-create social worlds where hypermasculinity has been subdued –if not eradicated—so that seeing the curriculum as hypermasculine text is no longer necessary.

Curriculum of Southern hypermasculine place: Based on Kincheloe and Pinar's (1991) conceptualization of curricula of place in which the cultural and psychological features of a person's milieu are determinative of their experience of the world, curriculum of Southern hypermasculine place emphasizes the preponderant influence that hypermasculine excess has on the thinking and behaviors of males from the Southern U.S. resulting in oppression of Others.

Hypermasculine imperative: The sum of impulses, cognitions, and seemingly irresistible ideals that impel men to stereotypical masculine behaviors that result in oppression, marginalization, and victimization of Others. As the central identificatory aspect for Western men (if not all men), the hypermasculine imperative subordinates rational thinking whenever a man's sense of identity status as a man is threatened or when a man seeks to aggrandize his masculine status. The hypermasculine imperative is an all-consuming pseudo-ethos that permits no deviations from masculine behavior that might impugn the male self-concept.

Micro-Souths: The multiple cultures and subcultures that represent Southernness. The concept of micro-Souths acknowledges that, although the Southern U.S. undoubtedly is represented by certain common cultural, political, and social features, each region and community is possessed

of peculiarities of behavior and thought that makes describing a unitary, mono-cultural South dissembling at best and arrant absolutism at worst.

Parallel alternative identity (PAI): An alternate identity structure employed by persons who find themselves experiencing cognitive dissonance from living in a cultural milieu that engenders disparate thoughts and beliefs. A PAI allows the individual to persist in the native culture and sociality while successfully integrating psychological attributes that are in contrast to the ruling cultural and social paradigm. Importantly, a PAI is not dissimulation used by the person to fit in while secretly harboring divergent views but is used by individuals completely immersed in their natal or adopted culture. Similarly to *(dis)placement*, the PAI presents the individual and the pedagogue with a unique opportunity to positively influence social thinking and develop critical social awareness by maieutically building upon cognitive dissonance, especially through the media of critical autoethnography, autobiography, and storytelling.

Pathological hypermasculinity: A conception of masculinity that recognizes the detrimental results of hypermasculine excess. While individual males may episodically engage in hypermasculine behaviors and indulge hypermasculine thoughts that are not necessarily deleterious, routinely engaging the world from a hypermasculine stance that perpetuates social inequity and endangers Others, physically, socially, economically, politically, or psychologically is deemed de facto pathological. In the instant study, the author contends that the overwhelming majority of masculine experience is, indeed, pathologically hypermasculine, a reality that immoderately affects the rest of the world by serving invidiously as the regnant paradigm for human interactions.

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The Man: The idealized ultimate achievement of hypermasculinity that all men aspire to. Co-opted from the vernacular of U.S. males, being recognized as The Man affirms an individual male's status as a "men among men" or a "man's man," an unspecified state in which other men hold another male in the highest regard and defer to him for his opinions, guidance, and interpretation of social phenomena. A much vaunted but rarely achieved status that some obsequious men use to ingratiate themselves to other men, The Man is the exemplar and imago of Western masculinity.

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