

Intertextual turns in curriculum inquiry: fictions, diffractions and deconstructions

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Introduction

Narrative experiments as curriculum inquiry

In this thesis I explore and enact a methodology for curriculum inquiry that foregrounds the generativity of fiction in reading, writing and representing curriculum problems and issues. This methodology is informed by the narrative and textual ‘turns’ in the humanities and social sciences – with particular reference to poststructuralist and deconstructive approaches to literary and cultural criticism – and is performed as a series of narrative experiments and intertextual turns.

This introduction provides a historical/autobiographical context for these narrative experiments and intertextual turns in order to position them as both advancements in, and transgressions of, deliberative and reconceptualist curriculum theorising. I bring history and autobiography together in what follows because deliberative and reconceptualist approaches – as discernible and influential positions in curriculum theorising – began to impact on the field of curriculum studies at times that coincided with key stages of my own development as a curriculum scholar. For example, I began my postgraduate studies in education in the year following the publication of Joseph Schwab’s (1969b) first germinal paper on ‘the practical’ as a language for curriculum inquiry, and a number of his previous and subsequent publications (Schwab, 1962; 1964; 1969a; 1971; 1973) provided the conceptual framework for my Master of Education research and thesis (Gough, 1975). Similarly, I began teaching curriculum studies at the Masters level in the year following the publication of William Pinar’s (1975b) influential book, *Curriculum Theorizing: the Reconceptualists*, and his autobiographical method of curriculum inquiry (see Pinar, 1975a; Pinar & Grumet, 1976) became a significant component of my teaching and research repertoires from the late 1970s onwards.

I also privilege autobiography in this introduction because I believe that it might be more informative for readers than a less personal account. As William Reid (1981a) writes:

When people are asked why they support certain positions and reject others, they usually point to some kind of logical justification. Often, however, this fails to produce an advance in understanding. Logical systems tend towards closure. If you are in them, everything hangs together quite nicely. If you are outside them, the logic is opaque. It is rather like having someone show you how he [sic] won a game of chess when you don't know the moves. An awkward paradox comes into play: only the expert can really have a 'feel' for the system within which he operates, but his very familiarity puts a barrier between him and the outsider looking for enlightenment. A deeper question is why people 'buy into' particular systems in the first place, and that is, literally, a deeper question, in that the reasons (if indeed it makes sense to speak of 'reasons') are hidden even to the individuals concerned. Partly they inhere in character, partly in the accidents of experience, and even that kind of distinction may not hold up very well (p. 168).

I will account as best I can for the 'reasons', personal characteristics and accidents of experience that in various combinations have led me to successively 'buy into' deliberative and reconceptualist approaches to curriculum inquiry and to move beyond them in the work this thesis represents. My discussions of deliberative and reconceptualist curriculum theorising are not exhaustive but, rather, focus on those aspects of the respective approaches that have continuities with my own work during the past decade.

Deliberative curriculum theorising

In reflecting on why I initially favoured a deliberative approach to curriculum inquiry, I can discern some personal preferences. For example, I readily identify with Reid's (1981b) self-appraisal as someone who is 'independently minded' and 'not attracted by theoretical positions that handle human problems through gross generalisations, or abstract principles' (p. 168).¹ As for accidents of experience, as a beginning teacher I had already encountered Schwab in his role as supervisor of the *Biology Teachers' Handbook* (Schwab, 1963), and I was an enthusiastic supporter of the approaches that he recommended to teaching biology as a

¹ Also, like Reid (1981b), when I first encountered deliberative curriculum inquiry I would have said that I too was 'peaceable' and shared his dislike for 'social philosophies that stress power and conflict' (p. 168), which might go some way towards explaining my initial reluctance to engage with the neo-Marxist critical curriculum theorising of scholars such as Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976), Paul Willis (1977) and Michael Apple (1979). Despite being a child of British working class parents, I was somewhat insensitive to (though not unaware of) the significance of class disadvantage. My eventual embrace of a more socially critical politics of education resulted chiefly from my acceptance of the defensibility and desirability of taking feminist, antiracist, multiculturalist and postcolonialist standpoints on matters of epistemology and methodology.

‘narrative of inquiry’ (which he contrasted with the ‘rhetoric of conclusions’ that characterises conventional science education textbooks).² I maintained my enthusiasm for teaching biology and science through historicised narratives of inquiry when I moved from high school teaching into teacher education in 1972. Although I did not explicitly take up the implications of narrative theorising for curriculum inquiry until the late 1980s, I suspect that part of their attractiveness to me stemmed from years of extolling the virtues of teaching the subject matters of school and higher education curricula as narratives of inquiry.³

My work in teacher education led me to begin exploring the literature of curriculum studies in the early 1970s and my experience was very similar to Reid’s (1981b):

Most of what I found ranged from fairly straightforward commonsense at one extreme (not too much of that), to pure fantasy at the other (simplistic talk about objectives, systems, feedback etc.). The first paper that I came across that said it was about curriculum and actually seemed to be talking about real things in a way that transcended commonsense was Schwab’s ‘The Practical: A Language for Curriculum’... I’m not sure I understood much of it at the time, and I certainly knew nothing of the background from which it came. But it seemed to be saying things about curriculum which responded to my concerns (p. 169).⁴

² The *Biology Teachers’ Handbook* was a product of the US Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) teacher education program which Schwab supervised in the early 1960s. The Australian Academy of Science supported the adaptation of a number of BSCS components in producing *The Web of Life* curriculum materials, which became the basis for upper secondary biology courses in several Australian states, including Victoria. *The Web of Life* program became the basis for Year 11 Biology in Victoria in 1967 (the year in which I completed my preservice teacher education course) and for Year 12 Biology in 1968 (the year I began teaching).

³ My preference for understanding a subject matter as a ‘narrative of inquiry’ rather than a ‘rhetoric of conclusions’ informed my contributions to the development of a number of teacher education programs in areas other than biology and science, including home economics, textiles, and environmental education.

⁴ Two other papers impressed me almost as much as Schwab’s in this initial exploration of the literature of curriculum studies, namely, Lawrence Stenhouse’s (1970) ‘Some limitations of the use of objectives in curriculum research and planning’, an early formulation of his ‘research model of curriculum’ (Stenhouse, 1975), and Elliot Eisner’s (1967) ‘Educational objectives: Help or hindrance?’ I was struck by the affinities among these scholars (although they did not explicitly cross reference one another’s work) and my own first contribution to the literature of curriculum inquiry sought to specify the implications of the positions they shared for school-based curriculum development in Australia (Gough, 1978). Reid (1981b) also recognised their convergence and named Stenhouse and Eisner among a small number of educational writers who ‘have affinities with the [deliberative] perspective, though they might not identify themselves with it’ (p. 172). I am indebted to my Master of Education research supervisor, Gwyneth Dow, for drawing my attention to all three papers.

Schwab's (1969b) contention that some subject matters might more usefully be understood as disciplines of 'the practical' rather than as disciplines of 'the theoretic' proved to be very generative in my research and teaching into the mid-1980s. Schwab's examples of disciplines of the practical included studies in which the outcomes of inquiry are *defensible decisions* to resolve practical problems (curriculum studies, medical diagnosis, the deliberations of juries) rather than *warranted conclusions* that 'solve' theoretical problems (the natural sciences, philosophy). I extended Schwab's neo-Aristotelean distinction between the theoretic and the practical to include the further distinction of both from 'the technical' (disciplines or arts in which the desired outcomes of inquiry are *productive procedures*). Table 1 summarises Schwab's (1969) distinctions between the theoretic and the practical and adds my interpretation of the technical drawn from Aristotle's (1955/c.350BCE) *Nichomachean Ethics*, which I adapted to fit Schwab's criteria for distinguishing between the theoretic and the practical. I used this framework in a number of curriculum design, development and evaluation projects and consultancies in home economics, environmental education, child and personal development studies and vocational education (see, for example, Gough, 1977; 1978; 1979a; b; 1981a; b; c; e; 1982a; 1983; 1984; 1985a).⁵

The influences of deliberative curriculum theorising on the narrative experiments performed in this thesis endure in two principle ways, namely, the refinement of my understandings of 'method' (and methodology) in research, and my appreciation of how speculative fictions can contribute to an aspect of effective deliberation that Schwab (1969) called 'the anticipatory generation of alternatives' (p.315)

Deliberation and 'method'

A deliberative approach to curriculum inquiry emphasises continuous refinement of the means by which curriculum scholars develop, test, and renew their arts. This contrasts with approaches to research in education distinguished by their adoption of theoretical perspectives – research conceived and conducted within

⁵ Two synoptic texts in Australian curriculum studies published during the mid-1980s – Colin Marsh and Ken Stafford's (1984) *Curriculum: Australian Practices and Issues* and Marsh's (1986) *Curriculum: An Analytical Introduction* – explicitly refer to my work up to that time as an Australian exemplification of deliberative curriculum inquiry.

TABLE 1: Distinctions between the theoretic, the practical and the technical (adapted from Schwab, 1969, and Gough, 1985a)

Criteria for distinction	The theoretic	The practical	The technical
Aristotle's categories of intellectual virtues	science (<i>episteme</i>) 'knowing that...'	practical wisdom (<i>phronesis</i>) 'knowing I/we should...'	productive knowledge (<i>techne</i>) 'know-how'
End or outcome	<i>Propositional knowledge</i> in the form of <i>warranted conclusions</i> : general or universal descriptive and explanatory statements which are durable and extensive in their truth and trustworthiness	<i>Judgment</i> in the form of <i>defensible decisions</i> : (i) decisions guiding choice and action which, before they are put into effect, can be judged as probably better or worse than alternatives (ii) decisions about the relative worth of something	<i>Skill</i> in the form of <i>productive procedures</i> : behaviours which in principle are an effective means of making a given or desired product or causing a given or desired event to occur
Application of end or outcome	Theoretic knowledge applies unequivocally to each member of a large class of occurrences or recurrences and holds good for long periods of time	Practical judgment applies unequivocally only to the case for which it is sought	Technical skill applies unequivocally to each instance in which a particular kind of product is sought
Subject matter	Something taken to be universal (e.g. mass, time) or extensive (e.g. Homo sapiens, igneous rock) or pervasive (e.g. protons, electrons) and treated as if it were constant from instance to instance and impervious to changing circumstances	Something taken to be concrete and particular and treated as indefinitely susceptible to circumstances and liable to unexpected change (e.g. this student in that school in Victoria during the period following the restructuring of the Ministry of Education)	Behaviours, tools and techniques taken generally to be effective in producing an embodiment of an idea, image or pattern (e.g. the means by which poems and houses are made, class control is achieved, public opinion is sampled)
Source of problems	<i>States of mind</i> Theoretic problems arise from areas of subject-matter marked out by what we already know as areas which we do not know	<i>States of affairs</i> Practical problems arise from states of affairs in relation to ourselves—conditions we may wish to be otherwise and we think can be made otherwise	<i>'States of the art'</i> Technical problems arise from 'states of the art' in relation to products or goals—skills, techniques, tools and procedures we wish to be more productive or efficacious
Method of solving or resolving problems	Controlled by a guiding principle: <i>induction</i> (a typical procedure is the experiment)	Not rule-governed: <i>deliberation</i> (no typical procedures)	Controlled by a guiding principle: <i>production</i> (typical procedure: trial-and-error)

Note: Text in shaded areas is paraphrased from Schwab (1969).

theoretic frames similar to those which the social and behavioural ‘sciences’ borrowed from the natural sciences (or, rather, from stereotypical assumptions about how the natural sciences produce knowledge).⁶ Such research – typified by many of the applications of psychology and sociology to education – attempts to establish propositional knowledge (‘warranted conclusions’) about teachers, learners, subject matters, schools, classrooms, curricula (and so on) and various interactions among them.⁷ Other approaches to research in education have included inquiries that address normative rather than empirical questions (e.g. questions of what should be taught and learned) but often have treated these as being amenable to procedural principles, such as techniques of philosophical analysis.

Schwab’s (1969b) argument for deliberation as ‘the’ method for resolving practical problems of curriculum work influenced the development of other method-driven approaches, including action research (see, for example, Kemmis & Fitzclarence, 1986; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Methodically defined research is particularly appropriate to a conception of education as a practical (i.e. moral) art, but can also be found in the theoretic disciplines. For example, within the natural sciences, characteristic techniques or methods delimit the problems and subject matters of research specialisations such as chiral molecular technologies and X-ray crystallography and their research goals include the development and improvement of technique and method. The most valued outcome of such research is propositional knowledge and this theoretic end tends to take precedence over the methodic means. But in practical arts the main purpose of research may be the reconstruction of method through its engagement with appropriate subject matter. Method itself then becomes both an end and means of research. For example, the major goal of literary critics who are concerned with the *advancement* – rather than the routine practice – of their art is to establish and defend critical methods. But literary critics exemplify both types of methodic research: some appear to understand the development of method

⁶ Schwab (1962) drew attention to the popular misconception (among many scientists and educators alike) that science was chiefly a matter of patiently seeking the ‘facts’ of nature and accurately reporting them, arguing instead that scientific knowledge is determined by ‘deliberate constructions of the mind’ (p. 198).

⁷ Schwab (1958) warned of the limitations of theory-driven research in his essay ‘On the corruption of education by psychology’.

as a means of producing generalised propositions about writers, readers and texts, whereas others focus their attention on the refinement of the method itself – the means by which the practical art of literary criticism produces unique interpretations in/of unique literary works. Similarly, deliberative curriculum inquiry engages curriculum workers in the pursuit of unique understandings in/of the unique circumstances of their practice.

Curriculum inquiry might once have seemed very different from literary criticism but significant parallels and convergences have become more apparent in the wake of the narrative turn in the social sciences (Louis Mink, 1974; Lawrence Stone, 1979; Donald Polkinghorne, 1988; Laurel Richardson, 1990). For example, much reconceptualist curriculum inquiry explicitly foregrounds narrative (and textual) criticism, a point to which I will return in a later section of this chapter.

Reid (1981a) distinguishes between ‘method’ and ‘procedure’ by arguing that procedure should be ‘understood within a context of axiomatic thinking’ within which ‘procedure is an end-point of enquiry’:

Working from first principles, one arrives at a formulation which can be applied universally when a particular kind of problem has to be solved. The logic of the process is to be understood not in terms of the mind of the user, or of the material situation that has to be confronted, but in the goodness of fit between the finished product and the principles that gave rise to it. Method, on the other hand, has to be understood within the context of deliberative thinking. This starts, not from principles, but from problems. The essence of methodic enquiry is to initiate and sustain a process through which the nature of a problem is exposed and a solution converged upon. Each step is contingent on preceding steps: at each moment, method and subject-matter interact. Method is not an end-point of enquiry. It guides enquiry in an open-ended way. Its existence is guaranteed, not by abstract formulae which can be recorded, but by personal skills that have to be learned. At every point its use is subject to the judgement of individuals, and only retrospectively can its course be charted. Its logic is continuously reconstructed as it interacts with its subject-matter. The answer to anyone who says: ‘But that is very esoteric!’ is: ‘Nevertheless, that is what we do all the time. That is how we deal with the demands of everyday life.’ Such responses illustrate how we have become trapped in the very problem we want to solve. The practical concerns of life are at once too trivial and too esoteric to be encompassed by the kinds of theories that it is academically ‘respectable’ to talk about (p. 148).

Although Schwab and his many successors refer to deliberation as ‘method’, I have come to think of deliberative curriculum inquiry as a ‘methodology’ or as a set of methodological dispositions. This is because I find Sandra Harding’s (1987)

distinction between ‘method’ and ‘methodology’ more useful than Reid’s distinction between ‘method’ and ‘procedure’. Harding distinguishes ‘methodology (a theory and analysis of how research should proceed)’ from ‘method (techniques for gathering evidence)’:

A research *method* is a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence. One could reasonably argue that all evidence-gathering techniques fall into one of the following three categories: listening to (or interrogating) informants, observing behaviour, or examining historical traces and records. In this sense, there are only three methods of social inquiry (p. 2).

In other words, methodology provides a rationale for methods and/or methodological dispositions – for the ways a researcher proceeds and/or is disposed to proceed – and refers to more than particular techniques or methods. I continue to see deliberation as an exploration of defensible ways of proceeding in relation to particular problems (rather than following ‘a’ method) and this perspective has been an enabling influence on my pursuit of methodologies in curriculum inquiry that cannot be reduced to guiding principles or procedural rules.

Deliberation and ‘the anticipatory generation of alternatives’

Because it eschews abstract procedural rules for resolving practical curriculum problems, deliberative curriculum inquiry is exploratory, eclectic and pragmatic in relating knowledge to policy and action. However, although it might be futile to seek universally applicable principles for curriculum decision-making, it is still a form of professional practice that is susceptible to improvement and, therefore, it should be possible to develop strategies by which the course of curriculum deliberations can be affected in constructive ways. Throughout the 1980s I sought some of these strategies among the methods of futures study (see, for example, Gough, 1981d; 1982b; 1985b; 1986; 1987a; b; 1988a; b; 1989b; c; 1990a). Part of my rationale for bringing the methods of futures study to bear on curriculum problems was based on Schwab’s (1969) argument that one facet of effective deliberation is ‘the anticipatory generation of alternatives’:

Effective decision... requires that there be available to practical deliberation the greatest possible number and fresh diversity of alternative solutions to problems. One reason for this requirement is obvious enough: The best choice

among poor and shopworn alternatives will still be a poor solution to the problem. A second aspect is less obvious. Many of the problems which arise in an institutional structure... will be novel problems, arising from changes in the times and circumstances and from the consequences of previous solutions to previous problems. Such problems, with their strong tincture of novelty, cannot be solved by familiar solutions. They cannot be well solved by apparently new solutions arising from old habits of mind and old ways of doing things (pp. 315-6).

Anticipation is central to futures study (and, indeed, to any policy-related study) and it thus seemed reasonable to suppose that some of the methods of anticipating possible futures in areas of social, technological and environmental policy might also be applicable to generating alternative curriculum futures. Generating the widest possible variety of alternative futures requires an eclectic approach to the arts, methods and procedures by which futures can be elucidated, which can be grouped into four broad categories:

- *Extrapolation*: perceived consequences of present trends and events can be elucidated by procedures such as trend analysis and extrapolation.
- *Consensus*: opinions about what might or ought to happen can be elucidated by monitoring cultural and sub-cultural consensus using such procedures as polls, 'expert' commissions, Delphi techniques, and the like.
- *Creativity*: artists in various media imagine alternatives which can be elucidated further by connoisseurship and criticism and, to some extent, by emulating their creative behaviour. For example, scenario-building frequently emulates science fiction (SF).⁸
- *Combinatory*: combining the products of extrapolation, consensus forecasting and creative imagination in various ways produces images of further alternatives. Combinatory techniques such as futures wheels, cross-impact matrices and relevance trees are among the most characteristic tools of professional futurists.

During the 1980s I found very little Australian literature that explicitly anticipated futures in curriculum and the examples I found depended largely on trend

⁸ Science fiction authors and critics generally use the acronym SF rather than the abbreviation 'sci-fi' used by many mass media journalists. As I discuss further in Chapter 1, SF has the advantage of ambiguity, since it now encompasses other generic labels such as speculative fiction and science fantasy.

extrapolation or on a limited sub-cultural consensus among ‘experts’ and elites (e.g., Hedley Beare & Ross Millikan, 1988; Patrick Griffin, 1986). Thus, I directed my own work towards the extension of consensus techniques to wider publics and on generating creative alternatives in curriculum.

Although I routinely privileged SF stories in teaching futures studies⁹ I did not make explicit connections between reading speculative fiction and curriculum inquiry until 1987 when two of Schwab’s most prominent intellectual heirs, William Reid and Ian Westbury,¹⁰ invited me to participate in a symposium at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in Washington, D.C., USA. The symposium focussed on the complementarity of historical, comparative and futures studies in curriculum inquiry,¹¹ with my specific role being to address the question of the extent to which futures study shared with historical and comparative studies the possibility of providing empirical (as distinct from normative) starting points for curriculum inquiry. I began my presentation¹² by retelling the following story drawn from a speculative novel.

In *Always Coming Home*, Ursula Le Guin (1986) tells stories of the Kesh, a people who ‘might be going to have lived a long, long time from now in Northern California’ and whose stories are written as translations of ‘their voices speaking for themselves’. For example, the biography of a man named Fairweather is briefly recalled by his grandchild. Part of the story tells that during Fairweather’s

⁹ I began teaching an elective study now known as Futures in Education, Society and Culture in preservice teacher education programs in 1975 and from the late 1970s regularly conducted professional development workshops on futures in a variety of learning areas for teacher associations, state departments of education, and so on.

¹⁰ Westbury worked with Schwab at the University of Chicago from 1968-1973 and was among the first of the North American curriculum scholars who took up Schwab’s ideas with considerable enthusiasm (Westbury, 1972a; b). He also coedited a definitive collection of Schwab’s (1978) essays. Reid was among the first of the UK curriculum scholars to pursue deliberative curriculum inquiry and his work has continued in this vein (see, for example, Reid, 1978; 1979b; 1981a; 1992; 1994; 1999). I began a collegial relationship with Westbury in 1984 when he returned on sabbatical leave from the University of Illinois to The University of Melbourne (where he, like me, had completed his Masters research under the supervision of Gwyneth Dow) and we co-taught a Masters course in curriculum studies. I began working with Reid at the University of Birmingham later in that same year when I was on Outside Study Program leave. In 1986 Reid, who was then General Editor of the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, invited me to join the journal’s editorial team as editor for the Australian region (Westbury was then US regional editor).

¹¹ Westbury contributed an example of comparative curriculum research drawn from his work on the Second International Mathematics Study. UK scholar David Hamilton presented an historical perspective on curriculum inquiry and Reid was symposium chair and discussant.

¹² Gough (1987c), published in revised form as Gough (1989b).

adolescence ‘he learned arboriculture with his mother’s brother, a scholar of the Planting Lodge... and with orchard trees of all kinds’. Fairweather lived in a time and place when ‘none of the Valley pears was very good, all were subject to cankers, and most needed irrigation to bear well’. He asked people in the north for help in obtaining different varieties and, by crossbreeding northern seedlings with a pear tree he found growing wild above the oak forests, ‘he came upon a strong, small, and drought-hardy tree with excellent fruit... this is the brown pear grown in most orchards and gardens, and people call it the Fairweather pear’ (pp. 274-5). Le Guin concludes this deceptively simple story as follows:

TRANSLATOR’S NOTE:

...he learned arboriculture with his mother’s brother...and with orchard trees of all kinds.

We would be more likely to say that he learned *from* his uncle *about* orchard trees; but this would not be a fair translation of the repeated suffix *oud*, with, together with. To learn *with* an uncle and trees implies that learning is not a transfer of something by someone to someone, but is a relationship. Moreover, the relationship is considered to be reciprocal. Such a point of view seems at hopeless odds with the distinction of subject and object considered essential to science. Yet it appears that [Fairweather’s] genetic experiments or manipulations were technically skillful, and that he was not ignorant of the theories involved, and it is certain that he achieved precisely what he set out to achieve. And the resulting strain of tree was given his name: a type case, in our vocabulary, of Man’s control over Nature. This phrase, however, could not be translated into Kesh, which had no word meaning Nature except *she*, being; and anyhow the Kesh saw the Fairweather pear as the result of a collaboration between a man and some pear trees. The difference of attitude is interesting and the absence of capital letters perhaps not entirely trivial (p. 275).

The difference of attitude is indeed interesting; moreover, it is the *difference* between the Kesh view of learning and our own that gives the story its critical edge. The story’s capacity to generate questions for curriculum inquiry in our own time and place does not depend to any great extent on knowing precisely when and where we might be able to locate the Kesh. If Fairweather’s story, and Le Guin’s translation of it, helps us to question the taken-for-grantedness of existing conceptions of curriculum and learning and to generate alternatives, then it matters little whether the Kesh exist as an historical and/or anthropological ‘fact’ or a speculative fiction of Le Guin’s (and ultimately her readers’) imagination. The facts of the story’s existence and of our critical responses to it are more than sufficient as empirical starting points for curriculum inquiry. To dismiss Le

Guin's story as 'mere' speculative fiction both undervalues the creative imagination as a source of critical insights and overvalues the 'factual' bases of historical and comparative studies.¹³ As Le Guin says of her own work:

The difficulty of translation from a language that doesn't yet exist is considerable, but there's no need to exaggerate it. The past, after all, can be quite as obscure as the future. The ancient Chinese book called *Tao teh ching* has been translated into English dozens of times, and indeed the Chinese have to keep retranslating it into Chinese at every cycle of Cathay, but no translation can give us the book that Lao Tze (who may not have existed) wrote. All we have is the *Tao teh ching* that is here, now. And so with translations from a literature of the (or a) future. The fact that it hasn't yet been written, the mere absence of a text to translate, doesn't make all that much difference. What was and what may be lie, like children whose faces we cannot see, in the arms of silence. All we ever have is here, now (p. xi).

In my symposium presentation I suggested that in much the same way that comparative studies in education help us to avoid the kinds of cultural parochialism that can result from confining educational inquiries to our own localities, both history and futures study can help us to avoid various kinds of *temporal* parochialism, with speculative fiction being one especially useful resource for creative deliberations on 'the anticipatory generation of [curriculum] alternatives'.

I cannot say that either Reid or Westbury ever shared my enthusiasm for speculative fiction, although we agreed that historical, comparative and futures studies could all contribute to generating strategies of *defamiliarisation* – a concept that circulates in educational discourse under such aphorisms as 'to make the familiar strange, and the strange familiar'.¹⁴ Reid (1990) uses this concept in

¹³ For example, as a generative source of questions for curriculum inquiry, Le Guin's speculative account of the Kesh way of learning is comparable to Alma Gottlieb's (2002) anthropological story of the Beng way of learning. Gottlieb's ethnographic study of the Beng villagers of Africa's Ivory Coast focuses on the Beng belief that children are reincarnated souls from whom their parents must learn lessons of the afterlife. Mediated by local seers, Beng parents understand education to be a listening process through which they discover their child's hidden knowledge and capture the essence and destiny of his or her soul. Thus, for example, Beng parents assume that their children are maximally multilingual at birth, because they knew all languages in the afterlife, but that they lose this multilingual capacity around the age of three. 'Language education' is thus a reactualisation process of selecting the 'right' channels that will be useful for communicating with others in this new life; it is a process of forgetting many languages, not learning one.

¹⁴ Daniel Chandler (2001) attributes this phrase to the German poet Novalis (1772-1801, a *nom de plume* of Friedrich von Hardenberg) and notes that the concept is found in the writings of other romantic theorists, including Wordsworth and Coleridge and is also closely associated with surrealism. Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky (1917/1965) introduced the concept of

his article, ‘Strange curricula: origins and development of the institutional categories of schooling’, to demonstrate that historical records describing curriculum in unfamiliar terms¹⁵ can bring a fresh perspective to the analysis of taken-for-granted aspects of current UK schooling. Reid explicitly acknowledges that futures studies can serve similar purposes (p. 203) and implicitly demonstrates the complementarity of historical and futures studies in his comparisons of early 19th century English ‘schoolrooms’ – rooms in which large groups of children were taught by monitors – with the late 19th century invention of what we now call ‘classrooms’:

Discarded inventions, such as schoolrooms, puzzle us, while living ones, such as classrooms, dull our imaginations with their excessive familiarity. Yet they too are inventions of their time, with a beginning and, we can confidently predict, an end. Though the classroom places constraints on the delivery of curriculum, we need not view these constraints as fixed forever (p. 210).

The strategy of defamiliarisation assumes that the tactic of surprise may serve to diminish distortions and help us to recognise our own preconceptions. My disposition towards surprising myself and others with speculative fictions (rather than with, say, Reid’s ‘discarded inventions’) stems partly from my desire to expand the sources of puzzlement that are available to us and partly from my sense that speculative fictions provide qualitatively different puzzles from those that we can find in historical records. The strategy of ‘making the familiar strange’ might help us to bypass one set of conventions but it remains very difficult – and perhaps impossible – to escape altogether the framing of experience by convention. It is perhaps ironic that deploying speculative fictions to generate alternative futures for curriculum – a move I believed to be entirely consistent with a deliberative approach to curriculum inquiry – helped me to move beyond the framing of my own experience by more than fifteen years of engagement in deliberative curriculum work.

defamiliarisation (or in Russian, *ostraneniye*, literally ‘making strange’) to literary theory, arguing that, over time, our perceptions of familiar, everyday situations become stale, blunted, and ‘automatized’: ‘After we see an object several times, we begin to recognize it. The object is in front of us and we know about it, but we do not see it – hence we cannot say anything significant about it’ (p. 13).

¹⁵ Reid begins by quoting an excerpt from the *Statutes of Elizabeth I* in which the scholastic curriculum at the University of Cambridge in the early seventeenth-century is portrayed through the prescribed activities of ‘Commencers’ and ‘Sophisters’.

Reconceptualist curriculum theorising

Although I can recall with some precision when and how I began to take up and use deliberative approaches to curriculum inquiry, my awareness and appreciation of reconceptualist theorising grew in a more gradual and diffuse way. During the late 1970s and early 1980s I began to take on more responsibility for developing and teaching graduate programs in curriculum studies,¹⁶ and I scanned curriculum journals for inspiration, looking especially for different ways of conceptualising curriculum work from those offered by writers who valorised mechanistic models of instructional design (e.g. George Beauchamp, 1968; Francis Hunkins, 1980; David Pratt, 1980) and those who were refining Lawrence Stenhouse's (1975; 1980) research model of curriculum under the planning rubrics of 'action research' (e.g. Kemmis & McTaggart, 1981; Jon Nixon, 1981; Carr & Kemmis, 1983).¹⁷ Some of the most promising examples I found were in the vein of what would eventually become known as 'arts-based educational research' (Barone & Eisner, 1997). These included Madeleine Grumet's (1978) 'Curriculum as theatre: merely players', Thomas Barone's (1979) 'Effectively critiquing the experienced curriculum: clues from the new journalism', and Elizabeth Vallance's (1980) 'A deadpan look at humor in curriculum discourse (or, the serious versus the solemn in education)'. Some (but by no means all) students found that using the languages and metaphors of theatre, new journalism and humour as registers for examining curriculum problems and issues liberated their imaginations and gave them freedom to question taken-for-granted assumptions.

But it was Grumet's (1981) 'Restitution and reconstruction of educational experience: an autobiographical method for curriculum theory' that provided the impetus for my more systematic engagement with what she and Pinar termed 'the reconceptualisation of curriculum studies' (Pinar & Grumet, 1981). I found Grumet's rationale for an autobiographical method for curriculum inquiry to be compelling, and her account of the procedures through which she enacted the method with her own students seemed to me to be clear and readily adaptable to

¹⁶ This included sole responsibility for teaching up to half of the units in Rusden College of Advanced Education's (later Victoria College's) Graduate Diploma in Curriculum Administration and co-teaching two units of Curriculum Theory and Practice in The University of Melbourne's Master of Education course.

¹⁷ Although I saw action research as being compatible with a deliberative approach to curriculum work (see, for example, Gough, 1982a), I was also concerned that in the absence of robust alternatives it could easily become a new orthodoxy for curriculum inquiry.

my circumstances. The strongly exploratory character of the method – which Pinar (1975a) called *currere*, using the Latin root of ‘curriculum’ in its infinitive form so as to emphasise experience – appealed to me and I was pleased that many of my students also found it useful in advancing their understanding.

In 1989 George Willis (University of Rhode Island) and William Schubert (University of Illinois at Chicago) provided the impetus for me to perform autobiographical curriculum inquiry (as distinct from merely using it in my teaching of curriculum studies) by inviting me to contribute a chapter to an edited collection, *Reflections from the Heart of Educational Inquiry: Understanding Curriculum and Teaching through the Arts* (Willis & Schubert, 1991). The book is structured in two parts. The first part focuses on various ways in which the arts have influenced the school curriculum and curriculum inquiry and includes several substantial chapters by well-known arts educators including Elliot Eisner and Grumet. The second part consists of personal accounts by 27 (mainly North American) curriculum scholars who were invited to write short autobiographical accounts of how a work (or limited number of works) of art had contributed to their understandings of curriculum and teaching. My chapter, ‘An accidental astronaut: learning with science fiction’ (Gough, 1991a), describes and reflects upon the succession of what I called ‘fortunate accidents’ through which particular SF stories influenced my personal and professional development and, eventually, how SF literature and media became significant in my work as a teacher, teacher educator and curriculum scholar. Beginning with my ‘childhood dreams’, inspired by the comic strip ‘Dan Dare: Pilot of the Future’, I recall how the influence of my elder brother’s fondness for SF predisposed me to notice the incongruous location of Arthur C. Clarke’s (1953) novel, *Childhood’s End*, in an Education library and how the experience of reading it seems in retrospect to have quite literally changed my life. Clarke’s work eventually led me to a professional interest in futures study and to other SF authors, notably Ursula Le Guin, whose work (as noted above) exemplifies the capacity of this genre to generate questions for curriculum inquiry. I conclude my chapter by reflecting on what I seemed to have learned from authors like Clarke and Le Guin, noting especially my self-realisation as ‘a child in time’ and the ways in which SF stories have helped me to appreciate the ‘imaginative perspectives of space and time future’ that now shape the stories I tell to my children, colleagues, and colearners.

The experience of writing ‘An accidental astronaut’ forcefully demonstrated to me that Grumet’s (1981) claims for *currere* were not far-fetched – that it does indeed have the capacity to reveal how our histories and hopes (both collective and individual) permeate our stories of educational experiences and prompts us to ask how our *interpretations* of these stories influence curriculum thought and action. Grumet (1981) also draws attention to the consequences of our personal involvement in our own stories – the ways in which an individual’s attitudes, choices and values might be rendered invisible:

The problem of studying the curriculum is that we are the curriculum. It is we who have raised our hands before speaking, who have learned to hear only one voice at a time, and to look past the backs of the heads of our peers to the eyes of the adult in authority. It is we who have learned to offer answers rather than questions, not to make people feel uncomfortable, to tailor enquiry to bells, buzzers and nods (p. 122).

Although autobiography seemed to provide me (and many of my students) with an accessible and flexible frame for ordering and critically analysing educational experiences in tentative and open-ended ways, I sometimes found reason to doubt the method’s capacity to address the ‘we are the curriculum’ problem to which Grumet refers. Both Pinar and Grumet clearly sought to rescue autobiography from solipsism, from the self-absorption that fuels many educational researchers’ mistrust of ‘subjectivity’. But I found myself suspecting that at least some students used autobiography to reinforce a unitary sense of an essential self rather than seek a critical perspective on educational experiences that they might otherwise have taken for granted. It was not until I began to work through the implications of poststructuralist understandings of subjectivity for *currere* that I began to see how I might ameliorate this difficulty. My own conceptual breakthrough was prompted by my recognition of the contradiction that seemed to be inherent in the title of William Pinar and William Reynolds’s (1992b) edited collection, *Understanding Curriculum as Phenomenological and Deconstructed Text*, namely, that poststructuralist understandings of subjectivity as multiple and continually contested irreversibly destabilise the phenomenological quest for essential meanings (see also Gough, 1994a and Chapter 3 of this volume).

Despite these reservations I continued to encourage postgraduate students in curriculum studies programs to try *currere* for themselves. In the early 1990s I

supplemented Pinar and Grumet's autobiographical method with Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin's (1990) somewhat similar method of 'narrative inquiry', an approach to teacher education and teacher professional development that focused on personal storytelling. What I initially took from their work was the idea that much of what we claim to 'know' in education comes from telling each other stories of educational experience. Narrative inquiry is thus concerned with analysing and criticising the stories we tell and hear and read in the course of our work – children's stories, teachers' stories, student teachers' stories, and our own and other teacher educators' stories – as well as the metanarratives (or myths) that surround and are embedded in our social interactions. We tell stories informally in our anecdotes and gossip, and we tell them more formally in policy documents, textbooks and journal articles, as well as through the rituals of teaching and conference presentations, and all the other texts and artefacts and media that we use to construct and convey meaning in our daily lives. It was a short step from 'curriculum as story' to the more poststructuralist view of 'curriculum as text' that I began to encounter more frequently in reconceptualist work (including the Pinar and Reynolds collection to which I referred in the previous paragraph).¹⁸ I found the disposition to understand curriculum as story/text to be a more powerful heuristic for research purposes than an autobiographical method, especially for analysing and generating critical perspectives on some of the objects of my inquiries at the time, with particular reference to science education and environmental education (see, for example, Gough, 1993a; b; c; d).

Narratives, fictions, and intertextual turns

In his editorial introduction to a special issue of the *Australian Educational Researcher* on 'the textual turn', Bill Green (1994) characterises the five articles that make up the issue as 'marking out or at least registering a new space in educational research', and suggests that they share a number of qualities:

What links them is a new awareness of and a shared concern for and sensitivity to *language*, broadly conceived; to a linked series of notions such as language, textuality, discourse, information, culture, rhetoric and the

¹⁸ My initial enthusiasm for Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) conception of 'narrative inquiry' was relatively short-lived, principally because I found their silence on the implications of poststructuralism and deconstruction for narrative-based research to be indefensible. This silence persists in their subsequent work (e.g., Jean Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; 1998; 2000).

symbolic. Within this series, representation emerges as a new (and renewed) problematic in and for educational research. This encompasses both the political (who speaks for whom? with what authority? what voices aren't heard, or glossed over?) and the semiotic (that is, questions of meaning and signification, ideology and power). Above all else, then, it is language that can be pointed to as a critical defining feature of postmodern(ist) forms and frames of experience and theory – although, once said, such a statement needs to be firmly and flexibly articulated with matters of technology, economy, cultural change and social formation, as always (p. iii).

My essay, 'Narration, reflection, diffraction: aspects of fiction in educational inquiry' (Gough, 1994b), is one of articles to which Green refers and it also provides the substance of Chapter 1 in this thesis. I have quoted Green here not only because I agree with his characterisation of the interests and imperatives that informed my contribution to the special issue but also because I can see, in retrospect, that the article to which he refers marks the beginnings of my own self-conscious participation in 'the textual turn' in educational research and my determination to explore further the possibilities of fiction and intertextual reading strategies for advancing curriculum inquiry. Some of the qualities to which Green refers were undoubtedly immanent in my previous work but I cannot claim that I would or could have identified them as such. For example, in much the same way that Reid (1979b) couched some of his explorations of practical reasoning and curriculum theory in terms of a 'search' for 'a new paradigm', I had also taken up some of the 'new paradigm' rhetoric in my work on environmental education curricula (Gough, 1987d). However, in what proved to be one of my last substantial contributions to the literature of deliberative curriculum inquiry (Gough, 1989a), I displayed some impatience with this rhetoric:

I have little enthusiasm for any 'quest' for a 'new' educational paradigm. In part, this lack of enthusiasm reflects my antipathy towards the quasi-religious zealotry of such a quest. 'The new paradigm story is a postmodern version of ancient millenarian cults that predicted the imminent coming of a new order, a paradise on Earth' (Michael & Anderson, 1986, p. 119). I simply cannot reconcile much of the rhetoric of new paradigm thinking with the kind of curriculum work that I want to do now and in future (for example, I am suspicious of the quality of life after quests: what does one actually *do* after one has *found* the Holy Grail?). Certainly, this sort of rhetoric is too pretentious for the kind of work I am doing here, now: I am not attempting to write a chapter in one of the Great Books, I am writing a work-in-progress report – a short story – with the intention of engaging you, the reader, in a further exploration of the world it signifies (p. 227).

Characterising my essay as ‘a short story’ anticipates the more self-conscious explorations of narrative theory that I would begin within a year or two of writing the above words, but I would not have situated my work as ‘narrative inquiry’ at that time.

Another reason for beginning this thesis with the work represented by Chapter 1 is that the circumstances in which I wrote it are relatively clear-cut. Although I continued to privilege speculative fiction in my teaching and writing, I had not pursued its significance for educational research in any depth beyond a small number of somewhat exploratory conference papers. My desire to focus my attention on elucidating the possible functions of fiction in educational inquiry increased substantially as a direct result of attending a session at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) held in New Orleans, 4-8 April 1994. The AERA Program Committee sponsored a session titled: ‘Yes, but is it research? Alternative perspectives on paradigm proliferation within AERA’. The session was moderated by 1993 Program Chair Robert Donmoyer and loosely structured around contributions from a panel of eleven well-known North American researchers who debated this topic in a lively (and often very entertaining) way. The session attracted an enthusiastic, standing-room-only audience of more than 500 registrants.

Donmoyer began the proceedings by referring to a hope that panellist Elliot Eisner (1993) had voiced in his previous year’s AERA Presidential Address:

One of my doctoral students once asked me if Stanford’s School of Education would accept a novel as a dissertation. At the time she raised this question, about a decade ago, I could only answer in the negative. Today, I am more optimistic, not because all of my Stanford colleagues share my convictions, but because the climate for exploring new forms of research is more generous today than it was then (p. 9).

The question of whether or not a novel could be regarded as research yielded a variety of responses from the panellists – from strongly affirmative, through affirmative-with-reservations, to non-committal. The issue was also the subject of a spirited series of exchanges between Eisner and a member of the audience, Howard Gardner, who was adamant in asserting that he could not see how a novel could, under any circumstances, constitute educational research.

Reflecting on my experience of this session – which included listening repeatedly to an audiotape of the proceedings (Donmoyer, 1994) – I was surprised at two omissions from the debate about novels as educational research. First, nobody volunteered the information that at least one US university (Hofstra) has already accepted a doctoral dissertation in education in the form of a novel (Sellitto, 1991). Second, and more importantly, the only examples of novels-as-research that were referred to in the session were those that Eisner described as being ‘true to life’. For example, frequent references were made to Steven Spielberg’s (1992) movie, *Schindler’s List*, and to the novel on which it was based (Thomas Keneally, 1982).¹⁹ The debate thus focused on an extremely narrow band of the storytelling spectrum and very few of the qualities of novels that might be pertinent to educational research were considered.

By limiting the debate to novels that are barely distinguishable from investigative journalism (and certainly from the so-called ‘new journalism’ of writers like Norman Mailer, Hunter S. Thompson and Tom Wolfe), the panellists avoided any discussion of the place of *fiction* in educational research. For example, in challenging Eisner, Gardner described a ‘thought experiment’ in which he investigated a prison and imagined ‘writing six novels’, one of which was ‘true’, in the manner of *Schindler’s List*, while the other five were ‘made entirely of whole cloth’. The latter, he intimated, would be worthless as research. The argument in which Gardner deployed this ‘thought experiment’ was vigorously rebutted by Eisner in terms of a hypothetical reader’s ability to judge the ‘referential adequacy’ of any given account of life in prisons. What no one brought to the debate was any consideration of the worthwhile functions of unequivocally ‘made up’ stories – stories that do not necessarily purport to be ‘true’ (or even ‘true to life’). This silence prompted me to begin work immediately on a paper for presentation at the following year’s AERA Meeting titled ‘Yes, it *is* research: functions of fiction in educational inquiry’ in which I sought to specify the contributions that reading and writing fiction – be they ‘true to life’ stories or those ‘made entirely of whole cloth’ – could make to both teaching and performing educational research. This paper was virtually identical

¹⁹ Although Keneally’s novel is known in Australia and Europe as *Schindler’s Ark*, it was retitled *Schindler’s List* for publication in North America.

to my contribution to the ‘textual turn’ issue of the *Australian Educational Researcher*, which appears in this thesis as Chapter 1.

Chapters 2-10 extend and differentiate the work introduced in Chapter 1 in a variety of ways. Each chapter represents and performs ‘the textual turn’, as Green characterises it, in some way, with particular reference to issues of language, rhetoric, textuality and especially intertextuality. These representational issues raise political and semiotic problems for curriculum inquiry that I examine in relation to research methodology, specific subject matters (such as environmental education) and contemporary issues and debates in curriculum (including the internationalisation and globalisation of curriculum work).

Composition of the thesis

The main substance of this thesis is fashioned from ten articles published in refereed educational research journals between 1994 and 2003²⁰ based on research undertaken during the period 1993-2002.²¹ Each of the chapters that follow this introduction is drawn in very large part from one of these articles. I have lightly edited the original texts, principally to remove some repetition of methodological positions and discussions. I have also made some relatively minor additions to several chapters – chiefly in the form of brief references to more recently published literature or to take the opportunity to include visual material that I omitted from the published versions – but I have deliberately resisted the temptation to bring every essay ‘up to date’. This is because the essays perform an evolving methodology that has always been (and continues to be) a work in process, and the process that each essay enacts has always been contingent upon

²⁰ Two of the journals, the *International Journal of Applied Semiotics (IJAS)* and *Managing Global Transitions: International Research Journal (MGT)*, describe themselves as interdisciplinary research journals rather than journals of educational inquiry. However, the *IJAS* is sponsored by the Semiotics and Education Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association and the editorial board members of *MGT* (as well as the majority of contributing authors to date) are affiliated with university faculties/schools of management or education.

²¹ Deakin University’s *Guide to Candidature: Higher Degrees by Research 2001/2002* states that applicants who ‘have a substantial publication record prior to candidature... may be permitted to submit a thesis based primarily on this work... Applicants in this category will normally be required to enrol for a period of about one year during which time they will write a text which incorporates the published work into a coherent whole’. See http://www.research.deakin.edu.au/hdradmin/GuideToCandidature2001/admission_to_candidature.htm <12 July 2003>

the circumstances in which the essay was written. Where appropriate, I have made these circumstances explicit in prefatory notes or footnotes.

Like the articles on which they were based, each chapter is conceived and produced as an *essay*. I use the term ‘essay’ not only as a noun but also as a verb – to attempt, to try, to test – and I characterise myself as an essayist²² in order to draw more attention to the process of ‘essaying’ than to the ‘finished’ product signified by the noun ‘essay’. In conceptual inquiry an essay can serve a similar function to that of the experiment in empirical research – a disciplined and methodic way of investigating a question, problem or issue. Both ‘essay’ and the related term ‘assay’ come to English speakers through the French *essayer* from the Latin *exigere*, to weigh. Thus I write essays to test ideas, to ‘weigh’ them up, to give me (and eventually, I hope, my colleagues) a sense of their worth. For me, writing an essay – whether it is for a conference presentation or for a scholarly journal – is a mode of inquiry: most of the time, I do not know what the ‘thesis’ of the completed essay will be when I begin to write. Ideas about narrative and textuality are the instruments and apparatus with which I produce ‘data’ in my conceptual laboratory. This is one of my reasons for calling the essays that constitute this thesis ‘narrative experiments’, although I find more appropriate analogies for my work in the experimental arts than in the experimental sciences. For example, in a 1950 interview, the abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock was asked: ‘Then you don’t actually have a preconceived image of a canvas in your mind?’ He replied: ‘Well, not exactly – no – because it hasn’t been created, you see. Something new – it’s quite different from working, say, from a still life where you set up objects and work directly from them’ (quoted in Pinar, 1994, p. 7).

Some years ago Reid (1979a) observed that ‘the well argued essay’ seemed to be the preferred genre of curriculum writing as published up to that time in the *Journal of Curriculum Studies* (of which he was then European Editor). But he warned that preferring to write in just one genre was inherently conservative and suggested that other possible forms should not be excluded without question:

²² Although I have always regarded Schwab as an inspiration rather than a model, I should point out that his major works were essays. He wrote only one book, *College Curricula and Student Protest* (Schwab, 1969a), and the majority of his journal articles and book chapters depend for their considerable impact on the internal strength of his arguments – his essays rarely carry any citations or references.

‘Thoughts on curriculum can be pointed, substantive and coherent even if they are only a few lines long; they don’t have to run to 5,000 words... Nor need they be in prose, or even in words’ (p. 17). Reid might similarly have observed that the well argued essay was also the preferred genre of curriculum *reading* among curriculum scholars, since most of the references cited in the well argued essays to which he referred were other well argued essays. I have not ventured very far beyond this genre in my own curriculum writing, not least because the well argued essay continues to be the genre of choice for most academic journal and book editors and manuscript reviewers. However, the arguments I advance in this thesis draw upon texts from a much wider variety of popular, literary and academic genres and other cultural materials than could be found in the bibliographies of most curriculum books and journal articles from two or more decades ago.

In the decade of research covered by this thesis I published 21 articles in refereed scholarly journals and six ‘original’ book chapters (‘original’ in the sense that they were not reprints or revisions of previously published material) that explore the conceptual and methodological territory represented by this thesis. Selecting a sample of essays that does not exceed the word limits of a thesis has meant that I have had to omit some significant dimensions of this body of research. I chose first to ignore all book chapters, although one of these, ‘Understanding curriculum systems’ (Gough, 1999e) connects narrative theorising, to a significant community of practice (school curriculum leadership) that is otherwise not addressed in the thesis. I have also chosen to omit all of the essays that apply narrative theorising and intertextual reading strategies to science education, chiefly because most of these represent work I undertook in the early to mid-1990s and I prefer to bias my selection towards those that reflect my current practical interests in the internationalisation and globalisation of curriculum work. Finally, I have omitted most of the articles from environmental education research journals, although some of these address significant issues of subjectivity and agency (Gough, 1999b; c), postcolonial politics (Gough, 1999d; 2000a; 2002d), and research methodology (Gough, 2002b). However, because I maintain a practical commitment to reconstructing method through engagement with material problems and issues, I cannot ignore the contributions that my pursuit of environmental education research questions has made to my understandings of

Chapter summaries and background notes

The following notes provide a brief overview of each chapter and, where appropriate, some details of the times and circumstances in which they (and any antecedent versions) were written.

Chapter 1: Narration, reflection, diffraction: fiction(s) in curriculum inquiry

As noted above the major source of this chapter is a paper written for presentation at the 1995 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) but published prior to this Meeting in a special issue of the *Australian Educational Researcher* (Gough, 1994b). The principal purpose of this essay is to mount a convincing case for enlarging the provenance of fiction in educational inquiry. Although many scholars in education and other disciplines have taken a narrative turn in theorising their practices, at the time I wrote this essay there were relatively few examples of educational researchers explicitly using (or even considering the use of) fiction in their work. I argue that fiction is not only a useful textual form in educational inquiry but that sometimes our purposes might be better served by (re)presenting the texts we produce as deliberate fictions rather than as ‘factual’ narratives that ‘reflect’ educational phenomena and experiences. I also argue that some modes of fiction can help us to produce texts that ‘diffract’ the storylines of educational inquiry and thus move research efforts beyond reflection towards generating *difference* in the worlds of curriculum and teaching. This version of the essay includes some visual material that I was unable to include in the published article and a different example of ‘diffraction’ from that used previously (although it comes from the same experiential source).

In the interests of clarity and coherence, much of the original essay’s discussion of diffraction has been relocated to Chapter 3, where I demonstrate some generative effects of reading one of the dominant discourses of reconceptualist curriculum theorising (namely, autobiographical curriculum inquiry) through the diffractive lens of cyberpunk SF.

Chapter 2: The crime story and educational inquiry

The initial source of this essay was a paper written for presentation at the 1994 Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education

(Gough, 1994d) in which I examined three intertextual continuities between educational inquiry and detective fiction. First, I appraised the investigatory methods of fictional detectives by reference to their resemblance to various forms of educational inquiry. Second, I compared the characteristic textual strategies used in detective stories with those used in the discursive production of educational research. Third, I considered the extent to which recent transformations of both detective fiction and educational inquiry might be comparable – and intertextually linked – manifestations of cultural shifts signified by various notions of postmodernism and postmodernity. I argued that these intertextual relationships between educational inquiry and detective fiction are pertinent to teaching research methodology, interpreting research literature, and choosing textual strategies for narrating educational research. This paper received wider circulation as part of a Working Paper series (Gough, 1996b) and it was used by a number of colleagues in Australia and Canada in postgraduate courses and teacher professional development activities. By the time it was published in the form presented here (Gough, 2002a) I was able to include references to its use by other researchers.

Although crime fiction became an object of my inquiries more recently than science fiction, I have placed this chapter before my more extensive discussion of SF in Chapter 3. I do this chiefly for convenience, because much crime fiction – especially in the popular mode of the detective story – is more obviously modernist in its representations of inquiry than much SF, and I believe that the arguments I advance about the relations of modernist and postmodernist fiction to curriculum inquiry can be stated more economically by dealing with the crime story genre first.²³

Chapter 3: Diffractive fictions: manifesting cyborgs in curriculum inquiry

The first version of this essay was a paper presented in a symposium, ‘Cyborgs in education’, at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research

²³ Note, however, that a case can be made for asserting that modern SF preceded modern crime fiction. For example, many historians of SF (e.g., Brian Aldiss & David Wingrove, 1986) nominate Mary Shelley’s (1992/1818) *Frankenstein* as the first modern SF novel, whereas Edgar Allan Poe introduced the first detective in modern fiction, C. Auguste Dupin, in ‘Murders in the Rue Morgue’ (1841; see David Pringle, 1987, p. 135).

Association held in New Orleans, 4-8 April 1994. The paper was published with minor modifications as 'Manifesting cyborgs in curriculum inquiry' (Gough, 1995). This essay has two main themes. First I sketch a rationale for using cyborgs as narrative experiments within a postmodernist framing of curriculum inquiry as a textual practice. Then I draw on my experiences of using such narrative experiments in graduate curriculum studies programs to consider ways in which curriculum scholars might respond constructively to the cultural concerns that cyborgs raise for educators.

I conclude Chapter 3 by restating the importance of not only manifesting but actively *proliferating* cyborgs in curriculum inquiry because I recognise that there are limits to the number of stories and meanings that can be presented in a chapter-length essay. For example, I usually provide single rather than multiple readings of the texts to which I refer, and supply only brief excerpts from the multiplicity of stories that my students/colleagues and I typically produce through the mode of inquiry I call a 'postmodernist *currere*'. Such truncated accounts of experience do not necessarily do justice to a deconstructive orientation to curriculum inquiry because, as Pinar and Reynolds (1992b) write: 'To understand curriculum as a deconstructed (or deconstructing) text is to tell stories that never end' (p. 7). Kenneth Knoespel (1991) puts this another way: 'Deconstruction, rather than reading a single text a single time, promotes the reading of many texts many times for an ongoing confessional comprehension of how meaning is generated' (p. 116). Thus, in Chapter 4, I enact this methodological disposition more explicitly by focusing initially on one reading of one text – a colleague's reading of a movie version of the Dracula legend – and then performing further readings that demonstrate the generativity of going beyond a single interpretive act.

Chapter 4: Textual authority in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*; or, what's really at stake in action research?

This essay owes a great deal to an accident of experience. The section now subtitled 'Erasing Dracula' originally formed part of a worksheet outlining issues of textual authority in curriculum work that I prepared for the course ED-B 580 Interpretive Inquiry at the University of Victoria, Canada, in August 1995. While I was photocopying multiple copies of the worksheet for students I was joined at

the photocopier by a colleague, Terry Carson (University of Alberta), who at the time was also a visiting instructor in the Masters program in curriculum studies. He noticed my reference to Dracula and pointed out that he was just about to make copies of 'Dracula as action researcher', an article recently published by one of his doctoral students, Jean-Claude Couture (1994). Couture's article revisits his involvement in a university action research project with particular reference to his complicity in – and, eventually, resistance to – working for the interests of the university. He uses the 1992 movie, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, as a source of metaphors and analogies for rewriting the story of his involvement in the project. In my response to Couture, which is the source of Chapter 4 (Gough, 1996c), I suggest that the movie provides fewer textual resources for the deconstructive reading he offers than does Bram Stoker's original novel. I note that Couture might therefore have overlooked important resources for resisting his positioning as an accomplice of the university and suggest that juxtaposing his story with Bram Stoker's version of the Dracula legend highlights crucial questions about the mobilisation of textual authority in educational action research.

Chapter 5: Playing at catastrophe: environmental education after poststructuralism

This essay was written at the invitation of Madhu Suri Prakesh (University of Pennsylvania) in her capacity as guest editor of a special section on ecological and environmental education of an issue of *Educational Theory* (Gough, 1994c). The essay explores what it means to do ecopolitically committed theoretical work in education in the light of poststructuralism's questioning of narrative authority. I explore this issue by creatively juxtaposing the crisis of representation in academia with what is popularly known as the world's 'ecological crisis' and argue that where ecopolitics and education intersect, the key questions for educational theory are 'eco-rhetorical'. I provide specific criticisms of the ways in which modernist educational discourses construct human subjects alienated from nature-as-other. Drawing on poststructuralist notions of multiple subjectivities and the 'play' of significations across discursive fields, I offer strategies for deconstructing representations of nature-as-text that optimise ecopolitically constructive possibilities for curriculum and teaching as textual practices.

Chapter 6: About the weather: technocultural constructions of self and nature

Ever since I first heard Crowded House sing ‘Everywhere you go, you always take the weather with you’ I wanted to write an essay in which I could ‘play’ it as an intertext. I began to get a sense of how such an essay might begin when I was working at Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, on Outside Study Program leave from September to November 1995. Among the multiple cable TV channels available in our rented apartment were two 24-hour weather channels (anytime we went anywhere we could take the weather with us). But it took a call for papers from the organisers of the *Regulating Identities* conference²⁴ held in Surfer’s Paradise, Queensland, 3-4 October 1996, to provide the missing link in my thinking. The paper I prepared for that conference (Gough, 1996a) and subsequently published (very appropriately) in the *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education* (Gough, 1997) examines some of the ways in which nature is textualised in technocultural discourses, with particular reference to the incorporation of satellite-based weather monitoring and digital imaging technologies into global consumer markets of information and entertainment. I argue that these discourses not only construct and mediate our day-to-day experience of weather, but also help to produce our identities as actors in the world by regulating the social and cultural practices through which we interact with nature. I suggest that critical readings of popular media representations of weather are a necessary part of an approach to environmental education that recognises and problematises our participation in the cultural narratives and processes that produce our understandings of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ and mediate their interactions.

Chapter 7: Globalisation and curriculum inquiry: deconstructing transnational imaginaries

The first version of this essay was presented at the *Globalisation and Education* symposium²⁵ held in Brisbane, Queensland, 5 June 1997 and was subsequently published with minor modifications (Gough, 1999a). In this essay I consider some of the ways in which the processes and effects of economic and cultural

²⁴ Sponsored by the Department of Political Science, Queensland University of Technology

²⁵ Sponsored by Queensland University of Technology and the Australian Association for Research in Education

globalisation are being manifested in curriculum policies and school programs, and expressed by teachers and students, with particular reference to the ways in which meanings that circulate in increasingly globalised media (such as television and the internet) are deployed in the construction of school knowledge. I begin by outlining an approach to conceptualising globalisation as a 'transnational imaginary' in curriculum work and then briefly explore two contextual issues that might complicate efforts to inquire into local expressions of this imaginary. The issues on which I focus are (i) global perspectives that are already entrenched in many school subjects and (ii) popular expectations that the globalisation of new information technologies will transform schools and their curricula. I explore the latter issue through a parodic reading of politically conservative education policy as airport fiction.

Chapter 8: Relocating curriculum studies in the global village

This essay was commissioned by Hugh Sockett (George Mason University, Virginia USA) in his role as editor of 'A Special Issue to Mark the Millennium' of the *Journal of Curriculum Studies* and is presented here with minor changes (Gough, 2000b). I use my own spatially located 'encounter with broadsheet globalism' as a point of departure for examining the prospect of internationalising curriculum studies in the context of increasingly complex patterns of global interconnectedness in social production and organisation. I explore some ways in which diverse knowledge traditions can be sustained locally, and amplified transnationally, without being absorbed into an imperialist archive. I argue that emphasising the performative rather than the representational aspects of curriculum work might help us to resist the homogenising effects of economic and cultural globalisation. The internationalisation of curriculum studies can then be understood as creating transnational 'spaces' in which local knowledge traditions in curriculum inquiry can be performed together, not as local representations of curriculum translated into a universal discourse.

Chapter 9: Learning from *Disgrace*: a troubling narrative for South African curriculum work

I wrote this essay shortly after one of many working visits to South Africa since 1998. It explores some of the challenges we face in talking about issues of

difference in the difficult social and political conditions of post-apartheid South Africa. My own story of working in South Africa is nested within the narrative of J. M. Coetzee's (1999) novel *Disgrace*, which is nested in turn within narrative theories of curriculum inquiry. I use a deconstructive reading of South African curriculum work to generate questions about what has been muted, repressed, and unheard in the discourses/practices within which I and my South African colleagues participate – voices and stories that existing theories, methods, and perceptions might prevent us from hearing. In particular, I trouble two aspects of curriculum work in South Africa: the dominance of the English language and the dominance of race over other inequalities in a politics of transformation.

Chapter 10: Speculative fictions for (re)imagining democracy: two thought experiments

This essay was initially prepared for presentation at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Brisbane, 1-5 December 2002, under the title 'Democracy, global transitions, and education: using speculative fictions as thought experiments in anticipatory critical inquiry'. The purpose of a thought experiment, as the term was used by quantum and relativity physicists in the early part of the twentieth century, was not prediction (as is the goal of classical experimental science), but more defensible representations of present 'realities'. Speculative fictions, from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to the *Star Wars* cinema saga, can be read as sociotechnical thought experiments that produce alternative representations of present circumstances and uncertainties, and anticipate and critique possible futures. In this essay, which closely follows the published version (Gough, 2003), I demonstrate how two examples of popular speculative fictions, Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965) and Ursula Le Guin's *The Telling* (2000), function as thought experiments that problematise global transitions in their respective eras. I argue that critical readings of such stories can help us to anticipate, critique, and respond constructively to social, cultural and educational changes and change environments within nation-states that constitute, and are constituted by, global change processes and their effects.

A note on signposts and segues (and their absence) in this thesis

These essays were originally produced for publication as stand-alone articles. In assembling them into this thesis, I have added some cross-references to draw attention to their interrelationships with one another where this seems to be appropriate. However, apart from the guidance provided by the background notes above, I have tried not to clutter the beginnings and ends of chapters with too many signposts and segues that direct readers in their passage from one essay to the next. Although the sequence in which I present the chapters is not arbitrary, their relationships with one another are not as linear as their numbering implies, and I prefer not to overdetermine the intertextual readings that these essays make possible for one another.