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Article

Cosmo-*currere*: Conventional to circumspective

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Abstract

Through autobiographical study, I explore the relations of my lived experiences with my academic interests. Conversations are complicated not only by the singularity of the individual, but also by the world, conceived here as historical and biospheric. Engagements with the worlds of within and without and study through and on the method of *currere* (Pinar, 1975) structure the research. Through unfolding collective and personal history, moments link together and eventually permeate consciousness, moving the Self[2] and its academic interest forward. My question of being adds to the basic structure of *currere*, what I term cosmo-*currere*[3]. This is a C++ threshold, in which the two plus signs stand for diversity and inter-relationality. Cosmo-*currere* represents a shift in focus from the social world to the natural environment in research for the benefits of both the historical and the biospheric worlds.

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Introduction

My journey to cosmo-*currere* begins with an olfactory experience, smelling a bunch of roses. Through such an experience, I am transferred to a different time and another place. Contemplation on my past engagements in and with the world through *currere* enables me to re-imagine the method of currere as cosmo-*currere*. Cosmo-currere represents an environmental threshold attached to *currere*. It opens a space for inquiries about the natural environment and its relations with the historical world. I initiated cosmo-currere because the current cascading effects of anthropization responsible for Climate Change and its consequent outcomes—droughts, floods, wildfires, famine, mass-migrations, conflicts, and extinctions of many beings—clearly signal the necessity of curricular change. My cycle of inquiry began with the relation I felt for the roses. The thoughts expressed here in this article are based on my feminine body, which endured tyranny and despotism for "sexuality under the symbolic weight of law (parental, familial, social, divine)," but also experienced the joy of childbirth, the most primal, direct, intense, and ecstatic experience of the natural world that makes one

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[2] Self in capital form is to disclose the agency of the human subject.

[3] The word "cosmo" in cosmo-*currere* comes from the classical phrase of "*he oikoumene (ge)*" meaning "the inhabited (earth)" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, n.d.).

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envision being "a participant in the cosmic cycle" (Grumet, 1988, p. 3 is reflecting on Kristeva, 1977, p. 15). With that bodily consciousness at the centre of this study, I relate my lived experiences with my academic interest in curriculum in relation to the natural environment. The study of my life experiences through *currere* has become study of the method itself. Before I move ahead to describe this research further, please allow me to "regress" (Pinar, 1975, p. 19) to disclose few things about my academic life to provide a context for how things began and how they changed and a shift happened.

A Paradigm Shift

I came to the field of curriculum through the back door via the support[4] and the kindness of two people in particular. Dr. Sandra Scott animated my interest in the natural environment in her environmental education course (the first course I took during my MA program). Via an exercise that focused on embodiment, I returned to a life-threatening situation that I experienced in the past, relating my life with the endangered life of other than humans.

I then found myself becoming interested in the similarity between social enormities and natural catastrophes. At the time, I was grappling with a paradigm shift in my academic life from the field of Physical and Health Education to Curriculum Study. Realizing the complexity of the situation and viewing Dr. Pinar as an ideal supervisor for my multi-faceted academic interest, Sandra suggested I study with him. I approached Dr. Pinar; fortunately, Bill openly accepted supervising me and allowed me to work independently and freely. Serious about his work, Bill generously shared his knowledge in curriculum studies with me.

"Lingering", a word borrowed from Aoki (1991, p. 393) on the care that I have received, brings me to the third person who influenced my becoming in this field, Aoki. I entered the field too late to meet him in person, but on countless occasions, I have received assistance from his writings when pre-occupied with burning questions in relation to pedagogy and curriculum. My study was in part impelled by Aoki's concepts of curriculum-as-plan/curriculum-as-live(d) (2000, p. 322). This short disclosure of my arrival history in the world of curriculum authorizes me to "progress" (Pinar, 1975, p. 19) to the present and the aim of my study.

I wanted to understand how my life experiences contribute to my academic interests. I also intended to know what contributions my studies in the field of curriculum could make to my ordinary life. Looking in the rearview mirror, I could see a relation between the Self, the social milieu of the past, the present time, and the current situation of the natural environment. That relation revealed an existential framework that became the conceptual base for my study. Within this existential framework, the realities of my life are not just "subjective fantasy and arbitrariness" even though they are not "something absolute and valid for all" as Arendt (1990/2005, p. 14) explained reflecting on Socrates and the citizens of his time. In other words, the perspectives presented here may not align with the viewpoints of others, yet at the same time, they are worthwhile because they share realities. The question of my being and the beings of others address an existential substructure that concerns both public and private spaces.

The term, *engagement,* in the context of my research and in the relation with the method of *currere* (Pinar, 1975), reveals the reality that "at any given moment" in life, one is in a

[4] Mentioning the term support also requires extending my sincere gratitude to Professor Teresa Strong-Wilson for her incredible editorial work on this article.

"biographic situation" (Pinar & Grumet, 1976, p. 51, cited in Pinar et al.,1995, p. 520) and that the "biographic past exists presently, complexly contributive to the biographic present" (Pinar, 1975, p. 22). The terms *engagement* and *biographic situation*, *biographic past,* and *biographic present* disclose that my research is leaning toward phenomenology. Finally, the research is influenced by my own upbringing that points to a tension between personal goals and collective responsibility, a relation that requires care and caution in decision making. The existential framework and its phenomenological scaffolding lead us to *currere* (Pinar, 1975) as the chosen method for this study since it concords (meaning: "hearts together"; *Online Etymology Dictionary*, n.d.), both the existential framework and a phenomenological approach.

We have to understand a life backwards first to disclose its forwardness. In other words, a deliberate process of gathering data (lived experiences in this case), interpreting them, and integrating elements are required processes to re-imagine a more comprehensive whole. Through this inquiry will come disclosure of a biospheric threshold attached to the basic structure of *currere,* which has always been interested in subjectivity and sociality (Pinar, 1975; Pinar 2009, Pinar, 2015) but here where I extend 'social' to embrace the 'ecological.'

Method

This study leans on the connections between the living body and the conceptualizing mind and the existing relations between the private and the public domains theorized by the method of *currere* (Pinar, 1975). *Currere* focuses on the relation that exist between the experiencing body and the conceptualizing mind. The method "is regressive, progressive, analytical, synthetical", Pinar explains (1975, p. 19). In the *regressive* phase, one returns to the past and studies its pivotal experiences with relation to one's academic interest. The *Progressive* phase begins when one returns to the present and makes connections between the past and the present while looking toward a future to envision possibilities. Representing an investigative phase in research comprises the *analytical* stage, during which the raw data, the gathered experiences of the past, are interpreted and surfacing themes are studied. *Synthetical* is the last phase of the method, in which one's life story with relation to academic interest creates possibilities for future.

Currere discloses a relationship between "temporal" and "conceptual" (p. 19), corporeal and intellectual. Pinar unveils the importance of personal history by claiming that one is always in a *biographic situation* (1975, p. 19). In my experience, no matter how comprehensive the plan for biographic research, some events, some data, always slip out of the equation. Thus, a cycle of inquiry can be initiated when one becomes aware of the value of the left-out and/or the added data, which is what happened in my case.

Towards the end of *currere*, Pinar states: "the intellectual is an appendage of the Self, a medium, like the body, through which the Self and the world are accessible to themselves" (1975, p. 27). Implied in the words of Pinar, I sense another connection between the *currere* method and my own existential framework. I see the appearance of the relative pronoun of *through which* in "like the body, through which the Self and the world are accessible to themselves" (Pinar, 1975, p. 27) after *the body,* as an emphasis on embodied cognition. The thoughtful structure of the three sentences of: *The Self is available to itself in physical form* and *Mind in its place, I conceptualize the present situation. I am placed together* (p. 27), *appears* to reject the facile principle of *I think, therefore, I am* of Descartes's theory of modernity.

These close readings of the method provide very basic information about *currere.* Thus, I choose to embed a more in-depth study of the method and the processes it suggests for research in the four phases of *regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical* of this study. That structure affords few things at the same time. It allows: to focus on the processes of this study, to emphasize *currere* by disclosing what I understand of it, and to manage this complex exploratory study that appears to be conducted through and on the method of *currere.* As for the former in *through and on the method*, I aim to disclose the relation/s between my lived experiences and my academic interest of curriculum and natural environment. Regarding the latter, the method, I intend to extend the body of *currere*—traditionally viewing place as historical—to include ecological texts and their intersection with the social happenings in the curriculum.

Regressive: Reviving Streams of Consciousness

> Whether the living river
> Began in bog or lake,
> The world is what was given,
> The world is what we make.
> And we only can discover
> Life in the life we make. (MacNeice, 1962, p. 183)

I was born as the third child and the first girl to my parents. My two other siblings (a boy and a girl) and my parents formed our family of seven. Although my parents did not complete high school, they were avid advocates for education, felt its importance in life, and did everything possible and sacrificed a great deal in their lives to advance their children's education. School years meant competition between the siblings as we all wanted to have the attention of my parents and the way to have that was to achieve good grades. Such competition, the negative component of that environment as I understand it today, created deep chasms between the siblings.

The same year that I received my high school diploma, I was also accepted into a public university, to which admission required rigorous and difficult examinations. Entering university was a huge milestone for me. I chose the field of Physical Education, something that elite families allowed their girls to engage with at that time. I chose the field because of my extraordinary bodily awareness, a concrete consciousness gained through growing up in a busy home.

A constant effort to make my parents happy in a crowded household was exhausting, though. Feeling overwhelmed, I always found solace and joy in the natural world. Caressing a flower's petals was a habit of mine. It still is to this day. When I speak with plants and smell flowers, I caress their petals. My orientation in being in and with the world is largely mediated through olfactory and haptic sensory input. Repeating that habit in the present took me back to the past and to the pale pink roses with wobbly stems that we had in the front yard of our small house in Tehran and with which I opened this paper. I saw their life as somehow analogous to that of mine. They were housed in a narrow bed of dirt, which was confined by a wall on one side and the yard's floor tiles on the other three sides. I also lived in a small house confined by four main walls. The roses' big heads and their slender tall bodies were features they shared with me. I can see how much comfort my experiences with the roses offered me while growing up in a crowded family and a competitive social environment. I also can see the traces of

another respite from the crowded and competitive familial and social environments in Norouz, the Iranian New Year, with its emphasis on the natural world's rejuvenation, and the trips to outdoors that my parents arranged during the holidays, which provided sanctuaries in my life.

Norouz, Natural Landscape, and Respite from the Social

I return, with every inch of my body, to the arrival of Spring in Tehran. I clearly sense joy in the longer and warmer days, excitement in the visits to relatives and friends' houses, and in general, the joyful frenzy that Norouz creates. Norouz meaning new day, and brings good tidings—the end of the dreadful winter and the rejuvenation of all forms of life—as restoration and vitality are evident everywhere.

Norouz days were divided between two different activities for us. First, visiting the relatives and friends happened; a third of the holidays was spent on hosting relatives and friends at our home and visiting them at their places. The second part of Norouz Festival was spent on the trips that my parents planned and the visits we made to other locations in the country. The destinations were either the beaches of the Caspian Sea, or the countryside.

It was during one of those countryside trips that we went to Marvdasht, a small city near Shiraz in the Province of Fars located in the centre of Iran. Marvdasht is an ancient city: a capital city once famous as the city of Persepolis. Currently, Persepolis sits at the margins of the city of Marvdasht. While spending time in Marvdash, we went to Persepolis and visited *Takht-e-Jamshid*,[5] *Naqshe-e-Rostam*,[6] and *Pasargad*.[7] As a child, I was in awe of the size of Persepolis, its huge pillars soaring to the sky, different animal shapes and heads carved from stones situated on top of the pillars, and its vast elegant stairs leading, apparently, to nowhere. I enjoyed those visits to Persepolis even though at age seven, perhaps in the eyes of many, I was too young to appreciate the historical aspect of the place. I felt free and humbled there; the freedom may have depended heavily on the vastness of the place that allowed visitors to freely roam around. My humbled feeling, I think, arose through the juxtaposition of my minuscule size with the Persepolis gigantic pillars and structures.

As much as I was astonished with the monuments of that place, I remember that the joy came from staying in a little house in the natural and agricultural landscape of Marvdasht. Drinking fresh, boiled milk with cream forming on top, which we had with freshly baked bread and boiled eggs for breakfast, supplied us for a day-long adventure. After breakfast, my siblings and I went off to explore nearby farmland. With no set plans, we roamed freely for hours in the natural landscape.

We took in the fresh air and discovered the land's many features and habitants: streams, creeks, trees, flies, frogs, grasshoppers, bees, birds, and domesticated animals such as donkeys, cows, hens, roosters, and sheep. For me, the most precious discoveries were the dragonflies.

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[5] *Takhte-e-Jamshid* means Throne of Jamshid. Jamshid is a king in Iranian mythology revealing an ancient concern with nature and beginning of the world. The "Achaemenid site of Persepolis in southwestern Iran, brings to light less-discussed traces of sensory traditions of the past" that requires a double focus on what and how things are represented (Neumann, 2022, p. 79).

[6] *Naghsh-e-rostam* is Achaemenid's square tower.

[7] *Pasargad* is Cyrus the Great's tomb.

They were magnificent with amazing flying abilities and breathtaking colourful varieties. My encountering of them filled me with joy. The play of the day was to watch for, find, and touch dragonflies. In this game, one's fortune depended on the number of one's contacts with dragonflies, which determined the winner of the day. At noon, we went back to the cabin for lunch and took a nap, as the heat of the midday was a bit too much. Refreshed, we went right back to the cooler and crisper air of the late afternoon, and restarted the game of counting dragonflies. We usually stayed there until sunset. It seemed that, unknowingly, we knew those joys would not last long.

Prolonged proximity to the dragonflies created a bond with them, as once again, I saw myself in the eyes of another being. I thought I shared similar physical forms with the dragonflies: the slender long body and round head. These similarities and my marvel for the dragonflies created a delightful connection with them. Yet at the same time, I was envious of the dragonflies' extraordinary flying abilities as aerial creatures while I was earthbound and prosaic. Astonished by the dragonflies' being, a shadow of sadness was cast over me when I parted from them to go back to home and to school. The question was: would I see them again? It seemed that very soon the dragonflies and the joy they brought to my life would be the farthest things from my mind as my attention slipped back to home, to school, and to the competition they contained. Spending time in the natural environment prepared me for another year of competition in the familial and social environments of home and school. I understand now that taking refuge in the natural environment prepared me for the yearahead.

This was the story of the Norouz Festival year after year, even though every year involved the joy of meeting and connecting with a different being in the natural world. I remember that I developed similar bond with *abdozdaks*[8] when we travelled to the shores of Caspian Sea. Oblivious of the fear that most kids had of them, both *abdozdaks* and I enjoyed the vastness of the sea as we took refuge in it from our crowded, competitive, and busy lives. Returning to the past, I can see that the land, the air, the water, and the encounters with other-than-human inhabitants were integral to those joyful days.

The smell of roses takes me back to the embodiment of Norouz, its outdoor trips, and the joy of being with/in the natural world. In the next section of this study, I explore the erosion of sentience and meaning in my life. There, I disclose how I embraced existential nihilism after a lifechanging event trigged by an inhumane, cruel man-made environment.

To prepare, I take a deep breath; "being still, slipping back inside, being in this body, in this world, intact, whole", as suggested by Pinar and Reynolds (2015, p. 93). By reverting to the past, though, I will reveal a 'life-pivoting' encounter that is a part of who I am, the existential present. I *dwell*, as Pinar says elsewhere, in another "conceptual reality" (1975, p. 21), this to demonstrate the progression of my thoughts in relation with my lived experiences and their relevance to my academic interests.

Tragedy and Disconnection from the Social

I return to the year 1981, in which we, as a family, bore an awful thing that changed the course of our lives forever. On an ordinary day that seemed like any other day, we received unbearable news that caused my mother's immediate collapse. My father, trying to be strong

[8] *Abdozdaks* are very tiny creatures living in the sands and waters of the Caspian Sea in great numbers. They are similar to a syringe or squirt. One can feel and see them on the body when the waves go back to the sea sitting in the shallow waters and sandy beaches of the Caspian Sea.

as fathers are expected to be, managed to sit on the sofa in the living room when he heard the news. His pale and sweat-drenched face put his very existence under question. Vacant, my father seemed to have no connections to the earthly world when he heard about my brother's death. As if hearing the news once was not enough to believe it, we listened to the six o'clock evening news to make sure what we heard was correct.

My brother, 24 years old, was a quantum physics student at university in one of the Southern cities in Iran. Like many people, specifically university students, who thought they had freedom of speech after the Iranian Revolution of 1979, he expressed his political views publicly. Attached to his free speech, it emerged, was something hideous, capital punishment, which in some cases, such as my brother's, led to the savage act of hanging in the public square. The verdicts in those days did not follow a judiciary procedure, as the "judges," who before the Revolution were lay-people and in most cases clerics, moved quickly from accusation to conviction. The vilification was not racially motivated, as the 'cleansing' was of an intellectual kind; targets, in most cases, were university students. Marking the opposition as Villains of the Earth was followed by executions. Such mass killings raised the question of who was the real villain. Some of the accused were hanged publicly to spread fear amongst the population. Others were tortured to death secretly, as the cruelty was too great and too graphic for public display.

The government announced its brutal actions daily and shamelessly through its media with no discretion for the families. One can speculate that the goal was to spread fear. Creating terror was also a strategy to break resistance. The message was clear: surrender, repent, join us, stay alive, and prosper, or else (die). The authorities, content with such brutalities, saw them as necessary for the establishment of the second phase of the Revolution, the Cultural Revolution. Of course, this *Cultural Revolution* had the underlying aim of a deeper destruction: no opposition was to be spared in sustaining power. For that reason, there was no mercy.

We received the body of our beloved in the heat of one summer afternoon. We hid one our most precious treasure in the heart of the Earth, and watered his forever home with the freshness of the streams running down from our eyes. Dusty[9] and exhausted from the mourning for our loved one, we drove back home in a deafening silence, which conveyed a dreadful reality, an unfathomable knowing, a loss, more loudly than any word could relay. Experiencing such semantic nihilism led to the ontological dismantling of life's purposes for me. I experienced a profound social estrangement, which was a direct consequence of cruelty within that environment.

Emancipated from that suffocating reality of the past by bringing it, as Pinar noted, "to the present in printing" (1975, p. 24), I impatiently try to interpret and to make the unseen visible. Yet, I engage with another important aspect within the brackets in *currere*: "(the disentangling of those terms to come later)" (p. 24). Trusting those words and the suggested processes, and knowing that there is more in the past to discover, I avoid analyzing the findings and decide to continue with my expedition to reveal a re-connection with the world. In the process, I

[9] We were dusty because we did not have permission to bury my brother's body in the developed areas of the cemetery. We had to entomb him in an undeveloped and deserted land parcel at the end of the cemetery reserved for political activists, and those whose burial sites, for whatever reason, had no markings. At the present, the burial site is filled with garbage.

realize how much more engaged with *currere* I have become.

Connection with a Different Land

The year 1991 was the year we arrived in Vancouver. The first noticeable aspect of the new land was its openness, as I had been deprived of such feeling. The physical features of the landscape conveyed freedom and growth. The calm and the safe atmosphere of the city, with its clean streets and well-connected and thoughtfully-planned structures, the green mountains in the background, the juxtaposition of the vast ocean with the lush land, the colossal open sky, the fresh air, and the unfamiliar and puzzling language exchanged through the breaths of people, and perhaps much more unknowns beyond "the tangible" and "the visible" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2014, p. 224), instigated an immediate and joyful connection with the land for me. I can see how I began to reconstruct the kinship and the trust that I had lost, in and through this *strange* land. Immediate and unknown inner encounters could count for what lay beyond the visible, reconnecting me to the world once again. As for the tangibles of that reconnection, I can mention how processing the place, Vancouver, happened through kinesthetic activities like running and swimming. The natural environment and social structures in this "strange" land allowed me to engage with two of my favourite physical activities.

Fast-forwarding, I can see how much joy a simple act of running has brought back to my life. Running from home in Kitsilano to Jericho beach almost every summer day nourished my life in many ways. Sweaty and overheated from the long run, I usually swam in the ocean for half an hour. After getting used to the idea of floating in this universal cannibal—the ocean—I lay on my back. The combination of being cradled by the ocean waves, feeling sunrays on my body, and a mixture of muffled rumbles and high-pitched click and crack of the waves in my ears, created a meditative condition. After being lost for a while in Neverland—in escapism and reverie—I returned to myself through the sound of my own breath. Revitalized through that sublime and heavenly process, I would go home, pondering through feeling my feet on the ground. Experiencing the pensive interaction of the water, air, sky, land, and my own breaths sparked a shift to another *conceptual reality* related to a lesson I learned in grade three of elementary school. I return to Saadi's prose, which part of Farsi language class, focused on the concepts of breath and being. Returning to the past to understand the importance of breath—the literal, foundational, yet *invisible* prerequisite for being—through the prose and breath of Saadi—aligns with the lucid and ontological exploration of the question of B/being at the heart of my study.

Saadi's Breath and the Concepts of B/being

Exploring the relation between my lived life and my academic interest, raises the question of "*what knowledge is of most worth*" (Pinar, 2012, p. xv). So far, I have woven my experiences through my breaths—i.e., my life—in the familial, the social, and the natural worlds. I also mentioned, ever so briefly, the breath, the short-lived life, of my brother and the fragility and the finitude of the human condition, along with the social tyranny that a revolution brought upon many. Further, I educated myself through the breaths that Pinar, Aoki, Grumet, and other scholars have taken in their academic life. Through all these encounters and in the fullness of time, I became conscious of the necessity of my question, which is "an Explicit Repetition of the Question of Being" (Heidegger, 1953, p. 1). That awareness required another

regression, a return to my elementary school experience with the terms *hayat*[10] and breath, *nafas, dam*[11], in the prose of Saadi, the famous 13th century Persian poet.

I recite those words with deliberation. *Har nafasi ke foro meravad momede hayat, ast, va chon barayad mofarahe zat. Pas dar har nafasi do nemat mojoud ast va bar har nemati shokri vajeb.*

Translation: Every breath that goes in is necessary for B/being and as it comes out revitalizing to the *zat* (i.e., the core meaning). Then, in every breath exist two gifts and for each gift an outstanding thanks.

We were taught that there is a relation between every breath taken in and out, between the existence of the body and the development of the mind. We were also told that we have to be thankful for the two gifts that we receive through each breath of air. What I see in the words of Saadi in relation to my interest in natural environment and curriculum is much more than what we were taught through Saadi's prose. Breath is not only the object of my breathing, but the actor for my existence. I breathe in and breathe out and I am thankful for the inhaling and the exhaling that warrant life and understanding. That action concludes the *regressive* phase of this research and initiates a return to the present.

Past, Present, and Future as All Present in the Present

In this complex discussion of my temporality, through the study *of*[12] the pivoting experiences of my life, a single breath, a *nafasi* in Farsi, I have laid my experiences *of* the past one after another. My childhood experiences *of* an overcrowded household, the experience *of* the roses and the connections I felt with them, the high expectation *of* my parents about school and the competition it created, the experiences *of* Norouz, *of* the dragonflies and *of* the *abdozdaks*, and the kinship I felt with them through analogy, the experience *of* a tragedy, *of* detachment from a cynical, cruel, and fear mongering society, *of* the feelings prompted by the natural beauty and the breaths *of* fresh air *of* a "strange" land, and of course, the experience *of* Saadi's prose about the relation between breath, *nafas*, and B/being, *hayat*, in the Farsi language class at elementary school, were a few momentous experiences *of* the past.

Coming to the present and to the *progressive* phase of this study, I "look the other way… in Sartre's language, at what is not the case yet, what is not yet present" (Pinar, 1975, 24). In doing so, I ask: what is the relation *of* my lived experiences, my academic interest *of* curriculum in relation with the natural world, and the world we presently live in? What is the influence *of* my past experiences on the person I am today? Did the re-experiencing *of* the past increase the Self's awareness in being in and with the world? What can be the relation between my lived life, my academic interest (curriculum), and the present anthropocentric worldview that has othered the natural world, causing Climate Change, natural catastrophes, and social calamities? When did this *othering of* and control over the natural world begin? The last question brings me to this *complicated conversation* of curriculum that aims to reveal "the truth of the present" (Pinar, 2015, p. 37) and to Grumet. She explained: "the shift from farm to city, from nature to culture," created a "profound rupture" that was never repaired, "nor was it left

[10] *Hayat* is a word in Farsi with a double meaning of Being and being without taking a capital form.

[11] *Dam* is a world in Farsi means a single breath, a moment, an instant, and the present.

[12] The italicized 'of' that appears through this phase is to emphasize connection and relativity throughout the events of my life, in this auto/biographical study.

behind or outgrown" (1988, p. 85). In other words, progress in the form *of* a *shift from farm to city,* has ignored a terra-lineal principle that warrants life. Over time, progress in the forms *of* technology to the end of profit and domination has kept humanities pre-occupied to the point of forgetfulness on what basis *hayat,* or B/being, is.

Within the emergence *of* those thoughts, I also see Aoki, who asked: "does man [sic] deserve this earth" (1991, p. 383)? At this point, I close my computer and for the purpose of "relaxation" that Pinar suggested for his phase (1975, pp. 24, 25), clearing my head from this cognitive overload, I go for my daily jogging. I breathe in and breathe out, breathe in and breathe out. The warm and unusual air *of* the winter in December on a sunny bright day is a welcome occurrence and, at the same time, an alerting one as Vancouver is typically cold, wet, and dark at this time *of* the year. Breathing in and breathing out on a steady rhythm relaxes me. Then, I see the relation between the instrumental perspective, which has viewed nature as a source for exploitation, and the created current condition of the world. Delightful to see that the land, the air, and the water are still present, that here is here, I also see the dreary and the bleak sides *of* the resetting that the whole biospheric system is going through.

Considering the intricacy of the matters at hand, I ask what transformative future do I envision? What is that *zat,* the essence, that is trying to disclose itself? What is that *whatness* that is trying to penetrate? What conduit, in what form, can support the deeper understandings required for the re-imaginings of the future? It is the last question that brings my investigation closer than ever to the method of *currere,* as I become more aware of its latent potential.

While holding "the key curriculum question—*what knowledge is of most worth?*" (Pinar, 2012, p. xv) more tightly, I ask: what *is of most worth* in the present and for the future*?* The tarrying on this phase and on the question reveals a sorrow for the existence *of* the world's body, its direct relation to the existence *of* my own body, and the bodies *of* others—both natural and cultural—all subjected to control for the sake *of* profit. Being present in the present also triggers a feeling, a joy, a glimpse *of* hope for the future. It is at this juncture that I move into the *analytical* (phase of *currere* as I more carefully scrutinize the presented data, my lived experiences, and the method itself.

A Contemplative not a Calculative Act

The combination of my life's inconclusiveness[13] and my freedom from the past's daunting moments gifts me with liberation in the present. That emancipation also highlights a responsibility that comes with my felt autonomy. Careful, I take a deep breath and oscillate between the worlds of within and without to analyze my lived experiences in relation with the question of B/being that I have raised. This exploration of the meanings of my being with-in the world, in relation to my educational interests—curriculum studies and the natural world—discloses a complexity that needs my careful investigation.

Re-imaging myself at the university as a student and now as a teacher and the "intellectual interests" and the "emotional conditions" that each of those roles instigates in me (Pinar 1975, p. 26), opens a contemplative space. I am about to analyze, from the "medieval Latin" root constituted of the two parts of "ana" and "luein," meaning "up" and "loosen" (*Online Etymological Dictionary*, n.d. & Pinar, 1975), my present lived experiences. Contemplation

[13] Inconclusiveness means not "close" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, n.d.) and being alive.

about the past and the present provides opportunity for "description via conceptualization," which Pinar explained, "is breaking into parts the organic whole" (p. 26). Loosened and surfaced from that process through and in *currere* are the two themes of body and mind and their complex interrelatedness. The body's precedence over the mind in time and importance is also detectable

Awareness that without a body there is no experience and there is no mind reverberates through the words of Pinar: "One's analysis is a constituent element of the present, like the brain a part of the body, not the body a thought in the brain" (1975, p. 26). Focus on the existence of the body also re-members Saadi for me, who reminds all of us that every breath that goes in is necessary for B/being. Realizing the explicit and the implicit importance of the body mentioned by Pinar and Saadi raises the interest of: what insights *eventually* can be revealed through discernment about the role of the body, as a concrete form, within the context of curriculum and the natural environment? To see the possibilities through the dialectic process *taking place* between my own experiences and the traditions I rely upon in this study, requires further investigation of my lived experiences, and the concept of lived experience itself.

Reflecting on the occasional respites from an anxiogenic competitive familial milieu, the disconnection from a vicious hyper-politicized social environment, and the joy from a connection with the land and its other than human beings in the natural world unveils a deeper consciousness: the pre-existence of a more inclusive relationship in B/being in and with the world. To reveal that 'deeper consciousness,' I make reference to Gadamer's (2013) concept of aesthetic experience[14], placing it within the art-filled context of the world. "Aesthetic experience is not just one kind of experience among others, but represents the essence of experience per se" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 63). He added, "we can see the affinity between the structure of Erlebnis as such and the mode of being of the aesthetic" (p. 63). I take those descriptions of *aesthetic experience* as signals to its intense[15], complicated, and immediate nature. Experiencing aesthetically, mentioned Gadamer, is "removed from all connections with actuality" (p. 63). I understand that description as an effort to not objectify the art-filled world, but to consider aesthetic experience (*Erlebnis*) as an occurrence that stands out of the world for a human subject, because of its awe-evoking sensation that is contrary to one's expectation.

The brief mentioning of Paul Natrop's "immediacy of experience" and his developed "universal subjectivization" research method (in Gadamer, 2013, p. 62), takes us back to an idea existing as early as 1888: "the concreteness of primal experience—i.e., the totality of consciousness—represents an undifferentiated unity, which is differentiated and determined by the objectivizing method of knowledge" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 62). I see both *the immediacy of experience* and *the totality of consciousness* possible in the fundamental experience of embodiment, i.e., an inhabitation of consciousness as a subjective presence with-in the worlds.

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[14] While Gadamer's thoughts about *aesthetic experience* in the provided passage may have strictly been in relation to art, I understand aesthetic in a more inclusive way. My understanding of aesthetic here is in its root form, "aisthetikos" meaning "of or for perception by the senses, perceptive" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, n.d.).

[15] Intense in its etymological root of "intend" meaning "direct one's attention to, pay attention, give heed" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, n.d.).

By 'with-in the worlds', I relate the being in one's own body and being in the body of the world. I can see that the embodiment also makes a reference to *nafas, a dam*—as a swift, fleeting occurrence happening in an instant between the subject and the world/the present—structured as without-within-without. Such fleeting experience—a *dam* in a *dam* with the *dam*—makes embodiment and *the totality of consciousness,* or the 'deeper consciousness' in my words, possible. What is a further relation of *the totality of consciousness*—the deeper consciousness—to research? The concept of *the totality of consciousness* also brings into the picture research purpose—the search for understanding—that according to Gadamer, is universally partial, historically situated (2013), and if I may add, ongoing. The focus on the embodiment of a *breath, a dam,* combined with the revealed fragmentary, subjective, and evolving nature of the research, signals to a distant yet essential *Erlebnis* related to this study. Delighted at being very close to the possibility of extending my part through this temporal-ontological research, I return to Saadi's prose and analyze it further.

Har nafasi ke foro meravad momede hayat ast, va chon barayad mofarahe zat. Pas dar har nafasi do nemat mojoud ast va bar har nemati shokri vajeb. Meaning: (Every breath) that goes in is necessary for B/being (hayat in Farsi) and as it comes out revitalizing to the *zat* (i.e., the core meaning, the essence). Then, in every breath exist two gifts and for each gift an outstanding thanks.

The salient point that the body and the mind's existence and revitalization depend on a single breath is no longer a satisfying interpretation of Saadi's thoughts for me. I see more meanings.I underscore the terms breath (*nafas*), essence (*zat*), and B/being (*hayat*)—previously explained as a word in Farsi for Being and being without taking a capital form for the former term—in *har nafasi ke foro meravad momede hayat ast, va chon barayad mofarahe zat.* I take a *dam,* meaning a breath as in a moment and in the present. I already see two gifts in the first line of Saadi's prose; one gift as securing Being, *hayat*, and the other as protecting the being of every being, *hayat,* through taking in that which is without of the within. The focus on the taken breath and its dependency on the air of the without accents the importance of the planet earth and its biospheric conditions revealing curriculum as bio/geospheric text (Bigloo et al., 2021), which brings me closer to my conceptualization of cosmo-*currere.* An essential occurrence of half a breath, highlights *Erlebnis*, as the *without-within.* To progress, I move to the second line of Saadi's prose and disclose the third *nemat,* or gift.

The openness of the Farsi language allows for the interpretation of *har nafasi* in the second line of Saadi's prose, as every *jan*, meaning: every life, every soul, and every energy. What is the third *nemat,* or gift, that I see in the words of Saadi through this auto-biographic-ontological study? "What conceptual gestalt is finally visible" (Pinar, 1975, p. 27) through this final analysis here? Was I able to escape, as Gadamer elucidated, "dogma" (2013, p. 370) of the anthropocentric tradition forced upon me? To answer those questions, allow me to re-member Gadamer one more time. He shared with us that Husserl saw experience was not "the actual flow" of experience of an "I", but he understood experience "as an intentional relation" (p. 60). In a pivotal moment, I discern here that intentionality extends to non-human beings. Through such a perspective, I argue that because every entity in the world is part of the web of life, it strives to live, possesses intrinsic value, and holds meaning/s, i.e., *zat* and essence. That viewpoint also lays before us other questions in this quest of B/being. For examples, what makes life itself possible for all beings? And what kinds of changes can emphasize the veiled shared entity, which makes life possible, so as bring in curriculum and education? Detecting the footprints of self-evaluation and self-esteem in the competitive environment of my childhood through *currere,* connected the study of my lived experiences to Naess and his

"ecosophy" philosophy, by which he meant "a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium" (Naess, 1973 in Drengson & Inoue, 1995, p. 8 and reflected upon in Drengson et al., 2011, p. 107). Naess referred to *ecosohpy* as wisdom that includes rules, value priorities, and hypotheses (Drengson et al., 2011). "The higher the Self-realization attained by anyone, the broader and deeper the identification with others" (2011, p. 107). I oscillate between the within and the without worlds. My research will address these questions emerging from the stated perspective in the *synthetical* phase of this study.

At this stage of interpretation, other words of Pinar resonated with me: "The biographic present is not part of a conceptual system; the system is an aspect of the present" (Pinar, 1975, p. 26). To avoid subordinating the living subject to an abstraction, as Pinar warns (p. 26), I end this *analytical* phase of *currere.* At this time, I clearly see a re-synthesis possible through this ontological research that also is an inquiry about the structure and the intent of *currere*, which has always emphasized human subjectivity and the historical world.

Coming to Where One Truly Belongs and Inter-relationally

Over the course of this research, I have unfolded my personal history. I could see how moments linked together and gradually permeated consciousness, moving me and this study forward. As Grumet shared with us, Habermas maintained that "in the analytic situation the very understanding of the causal connections in one's own life history dissolves them", and the self once "the object of its history regains subject status in self-formative process" (1976b, p. 115, cited in Pinar et al., 1995, pp. 521, 522). Grumet also explained that through such actions, the human subject increases a capacity to "direct the process of one's own development" (p. 155). My autobiographical research proved to be no exception. My experience of a competitive familial environment has been as a double-edged sword that both has built and eroded the sense of self-worth in me.

Do I even know how the experiences of competition, self-esteem, and self-evaluation, which as Festinger (1954) noted, is often linked to comparing oneself with others and the evaluations made on the self and on others turned to self-realization? Through back and forth between the past and the present, I can see the familial competition and its pain-inducing pursuit of self-esteem. I also can see both self-compassion and compassion for others in the analogy of oneself and roses. The analogy that also reveals being together in the interconnected web of life. As soon as I inhabit the term together, I am taken back to Aoki in *the Sound of Pedagogy in the Silence of the Morning Calm* (1991, p. 397). Aoki shared with us how Heidegger did not "resort to reasoned moves; instead", how he opened himself to the experience of "*Kehre,*" (p. 397) which is:

> a leap that acknowledges the face of the challenge of "letting things appear" within the horizon of the calculable; it is a leap that, paradoxically, is a moving away that is a coming nearer into the neighbourhood where resides the call of Being; it is a leap from the metaphysical ground into an opening—an abyss that is neither empty nothingness nor murky confusion. (Aoki, 1991, p. 397)

In this leap, this working away from calculating, measuring, and managing, to working from the abyss of within filled with one's experiences in being in and with the world, through *Kehre,* as Hopstadter (1979, p. 17) cited in Aoki (1991, p. 397) called, "a reversal with a surprising

turn", I came to my own, as Joan Stambaugh termed, "coming to where one truly belongs" (Aoki, 1991, p. 397). By turning away from the instrumental *enframing* of belonging *together* throughout this study of *belonging* together, I became whole again and was appropriated as an agent. As Aoki eloquently mentioned:

> Indeed, the event of appropriation is a letting-belong-together, a letting be into one's own. It is, as Albert Hopstadter likes to emphasize, enownment. Belonging as enownment is a reaching out to each other, an extending of a gift one to each other, such that in the reaching one can, if appropriately attuned, catch sight or hear the claim of Being. Viewed in this way the event of appropriation appropriates [man] and Being in their essential togetherness, which rests not in togetherness but in belonging. (1991, p. 398)

What is the contribution that this study makes to curriculum and education? What is that *zat*, that essence, and that *whatness,* which *mofarah,* joyful, and revitalized is disclosing itself as a *gift*? What is that which is trying to unveil itself through the taken breaths, a concept that I studied in elementary school and an existing entity that has secured my life and the life of others? What is that body, that substance, and that fundamental entity, upon which all existence depends?

The focus on the embodied breaths of air, my lived experiences in being in and with the world, underscores the importance of another body: the solid ground—the Earth itself—that houses all forms of beings and supports their life. Understanding the importance of the body of the Earth, the bodies of all beings, and the structure—the body—of *currere* renders place in physical form as the first principle. If there is no physical form, there is no existence, no here, no experience, and no thought. Awareness of the relations between body-and-mind, subject-and-social, human-and-other-than-human, past-present-future, embedded in my lived experiences and in *currere* reveals the second principle of inter-relationality.

Thinking of the terms together, belonging, *zat,* joy, *dam,* and breath at hand, I can see how *together* and intricately inter-related we, all beings, are in *belonging* to this world, without which neither here, birth, life, action, growth, meaning, nor future and there exist. Thus, sensing that which makes life possible; that which makes possibilities possible; that which openly accommodates humans and other than humans; that which is a permanent place for natural and historical concreteness, their bodies in life and in after-life; and that which, ultimately, discloses *togetherness* and *belonging* in its most dense form of all, in black humus that is made up of all bodies, reveals the paramount importance of the Planet Earth. This 'worldly' emphasis makes an aperture in the method of *currere*; via that opening, *currere* is re-conceptualized as we arrive at the C++ terrain of cosmo-*currere.*

The letter C in that terrain stands for both cosmo and *currere.* The first + sign signifies an opening, within which I see the kind of multiplicity that Deleuze (1987, p. viii) suggested (cited in Aoki (1992, p. 269). This multiplicity takes the focus from "noun-oriented entities" to place oneself in the midpoint, "the between, a site of relations which are not separable from each other" (p. 269). This opening, invites one to "the midst, between and among the cultural entities" (p. 269). In this study, *the between* reveals itself as a complex hybrid space, forged through the taken breaths in the exchange between Farsi and English words.

The second + sign in this terrain expands this notion of "between as a place of difference" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 21, cited in Aoki, 1992, p. 270). I hear Aoki, who encouraged us to listen

more carefully to Deleuze, saying not "to see difference in degree where there are differences in kind" (p. 270). The focus on *between as a place of differences* not only explains the appearance of the second +sign in C++, but it also justifies the appearance of cosmo before *currere* since the world, *place,* has an ontological priority over *currere.*

The word "cosmo" comes from the classical phrase of "*he oikoumene (ge)*" meaning "the inhabited (earth)" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, n.d.), as noted in the footnote of the second page of this article. The terrain of cosmo-*currere* is not just for understanding social policies and/or ethical ideologies, neither is its focus on the means that lead to a specific end. Nor does cosmo-*currere* make pretentious claims of de-humanizing when the whole world is thoroughly colonized by the human language of greed, competition, and commercial imaginations of wanting more. Cosmo-*currere* understands that the being of one is entangled with that of the others. It underscores: the two worlds of historical and natural are different, so it views their equality existing in their contrasts. Differences "becomes intelligible within relations of resemblances, as Kaja Silverman specifies through the concept of *analogy*" (Pinar, in press/2015, p. 36 reflecting on Silverman, 2000). Silverman also explained that *analogy* "links us to other beings—what makes all of our stories part of the same great book" (p. 36). The resemblances here are taking *part in the same great book* of life, benefitting from the same atmosphere, and living in one shared world, that is, the Earth. With that hindsight, co-respondence does not allow the othering of the other, i.e., the natural world.

Conclusion: Cosmo-*currere* & its Implications

Via study, with research as "the human activity that maintains the vitality and viability of man-made form" (Huebner, 1975/2008, p. 228), I have unfolded my lived experiences through the method of *currere*. I analyzed my own experiences in the world while also studying *currere* itself. I focused on "the unformed," my own lived experiences, and moved forward flexibly and freely through the "unconditioned" (Huebner, 1975/2008, p. 227) quality that the method of *currere* provided me with. That freedom and openness enabled me, as Heubner elucidated, "to develop new conditions" and "to create form" (p. 227). Through highlighting place as bio-geospheric via my own breaths, the value of the world itself as a place for the Being, *hayat,* and the being, *hayat,* of every being (non-human and human) came into focus. The consciousness achieved via disclosing my embodied experiences as a woman in the world, indicated the next step of drawing those knowings into "the epistemological systems and curricular forms that constitute the discourse and practice of public education" (Grumet, 1988, p. 3). The following paragraphs reiterate more explicitly why we have to open a fresh chapter in curricular discourse through cosmo-*currere*.

Currere has remained focused on the theoretical framework of place as historical and faithful to the relations between subjectivity and sociality (Pinar, 1972; Pinar, 2009; Pinar; 2019). For cosmo-*currere,* though, place is viewed through a more inclusive lens, which unveils the belonging of historical and natural worlds to one place, the Planet Earth. While within the threshold of *currere,* the focus remains on the intrinsic value of each individual with regards to the historical world, cosmo-*currere* expands this intrinsic value to relate it to all kinds of beings in the natural world. Openness is the key for the revival of the individual beings' meanings and values.

The environmental threshold of cosmo-*currere,* which I have attached to the basic structure of *currere,* is additionally concerned with the relations that exist between environmental catastrophes and the social calamities. Cosmo-*currere* suggests consideration for all sorts of physical interchanges and dialogues that occur between *all* kinds of beings on Earth. It proposes that the "world speaks through us" (Cheney, 1989, p. 119). Within the inclusive portal of cosmo-*currere*, language, which etymologically translates to a "conversation" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, n.d.), achieves its proper meaning through "listening" (Cheney, 1989, p. 119), by which silence completes a reciprocal cycle of communication. What we need to listen to is: the voices that emerge from the natural world related narratives. For example, listening and attuning to the roses, and drawing anology between the self and the roses offered me embodied comfort and emotional regulation. Additionally, the profound stillness in the appearance of the dragonflies, coupled with their astonishing beauty and flying dexterity, creates a sense of awe and intellectual humility in the observer. Cosmo in cosmo-*currere* represents a precursor in its Latin form of "pre" "beyond, in front of, before" + "*currere*" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, n.d.). Viewed in this way, cosmo reveals its precedence in time, in importance and meaning, over *currere*.

The outcomes of such comprehension are numerous. After all, "*mindscapes"* are, as Cheney (1989) mentioned, as various as "the *landscapes* which ground them" (p. 126). The findings from autobiographical research in relations with the natural world can re-structure cultural views, as cosmo-*currere* rests on a re-conciliatory ground, on which everyday encounters are inextricable from spiritual experiences. Within the terrain of cosmo-*currere,* language can expand its parameters from being a public form of exchange for humans to comprising the larger background of environment for all forms of beings. Within such a perspective, one is able to move away from the Cartesian language of "I think, therefore I am", which has the effect of withdrawing the mind from its immediate and distant environments. Hence, the body and the world, both of which are the repository and the source, appear as the elemental structures.

Education and curriculum have always been concerned with refinement and progress. Cosmo-*currere* is also concerned with the re-evaluation of our knowings and norms and especially, in its addressing of the natural world, revealing the cruel means humans have taken to their ends, so as to disclose the invisible side of 'civilization' and 'greatness.' We need to advance understanding differently. As this research reaches its final destination, the whispers of the ghosts of my past and the voices of those who came before me into the field of curriculum, become clearer. Acknowledging those voices requires re-membering Pinar and Reynolds, who mentioned: a "thought, a field, a relationship is never ours alone; it is theirs as well" (2015, p. 93). Looking carefully, I can see more what the hyphen between cosmo and *currere* suggests. The bridge-like line discloses an inclination: the inter-relations of the worlds of natural and cultural. The hyphen, through its triple action, differentiates, relates, and reveals an expanded range of values.

In an era when humanity is pre-occupied with the surpluses and/or the insufficiencies to manage the market; when a formal logic tries to determine and to control the undeterminable, the real world; when the doctrine of transcendence and superiority, once again, practices its power over the world; and when new apparatuses of the market make humans, cog-like, turn the wheels of consumerism, re-understanding and respecting the relations and the delicate balances that exist between the two worlds of natural and cultural, and trying to comprehend the base of B/being are urgent matters that may humble the present humanity.

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