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Currere, community, and self: the work of understanding and becoming

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Abstract

In this inquiry, I explore the lived experience of learning to use *currere* and examine my intellectual interests. Drawing on Pinar's method of *currere,* the inquiry explores how meaning emerges across temporal moments to reveal new understanding about the self. Rather than offering generalizable claims, the inquiry contributes existential insights into *currere* as always becoming—an ongoing engagement with my lived history, embodied lived experience, and ethical responsibility. Using stream-of-consciousness writing, reflective and descriptive narrative, the inquiry reveals *currere* as a recursive, embodied, and relational practice rather than a linear method. Findings suggest intellectual interests are sedimented in lived experiences and traditions even when unacknowledged. The progressive moment of *currere* resisted me until I began writing in the present tense rather than the future tense. This exploration reveals the importance of an ethical, relational presence and complicated conversation in sustaining *currere* as praxis.

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Introduction

In this inquiry, I explore the lived experience of learning to use the method of *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 2015). My inquiry explores how meaning can emerge across temporal moments to reveal new understandings about the self. I am learning to ask myself to write about personal experience and aspirations. I am learning to be more open and sensitive to myself, while collecting data and analyzing it in a rigorous manner. I feel as if I can share meaningful stories about my educational experiences in engaging with the method of *currere*. "Solitary study reactivates [complicated] conversation, as [I reconsider] reading and writing [and reconstruct] conversation and [myself] through dialogic encounter with others" (Pinar, 2011, p. xvi). I had begun re-reading *Towards a Poor Curriculum* (Pinar & Grumet, 2015) to gain a clearer understanding of how to engage in the method of *currere*. In what follows, I describe my engagement with my lived experiences and offer insights into what emerged in the process. I juxtapose my own experiences with textual borrowings, especially from Pinar and Grumet's *Toward a Poor Curriculum*. Autobiographical in nature, I remind myself throughout this study that it is essential to treat myself with patience, kindness, and sensitivity, especially during the progressive phase of *currere*, which I found the most challenging.

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I first became aware of the method of *currere* while writing and researching my dissertation. Over the past decade, I had challenged myself to engage meaningfully with it but with varying degrees of success. After graciously serving on my dissertation committee, Bill Pinar encouraged me to attend the *Currere* Exchange Retreat and Conference. I attended faithfully—in person and virtually. When the event was held in person, I connected with colleagues, I learned, wrote, and shared, and my eyes opened to dormant "intellectual interests" (Pinar, 2015e, p. 76); it also introduced me to the importance of community in my experience of learning about *currere*. Since the pandemic, the *Currere* Exchange Retreat and Conference has often been held virtually and attendance has declined. Forming connections became challenging and I received little feedback as to how to more effectively engage with *currere*. As an independent scholar, I am an academic island of one, without a network of others who know about and use *currere*. In the absence of immediate, in-person relationships, it became more difficult to engage in conversations that "cross boundaries and create a space for intervention" (hooks, 1994, p. 129). It is one experience to email, converse via social media platforms, and engage in video conferences, yet entirely another experience to sit across from others in conversations that can confirm and challenge my understandings of *currere*. The digital format distances me geographically and intellectually, whereas sitting in the intimate context of the physical presence of others brings me closer to them as I emerge (learn and grow) from *currerean* reflection.

Presenting at a recent conference revealed other overlooked phenomena when engaging with and experiencing *currere*. This acted as a further catalyst to "look at [and explore] what is not normally seen, at what is taken-for-granted [to reveal more of] the present" (Pinar, 2015e, p. 73). This experience was like the regressive moment, as I travelled back, only to "find myself in the past, [which is] intact [and observe myself] functioning in [it]" (p. 73). Lack of temporal distance to a lived experience makes "it... difficult ... to reflect upon [and record] our work when we are engaged in it, [and] we usually postpone the process until we are removed from the specific situation and the conditions surrounding it" (p. 98). I am now removed from the lived experience of my presentation by days and months, rather than years and decades. Still, the distance is sufficient to reveal taken-for-granted phenomena of my intellectual interests; observed phenomena that have become as stepping stones, forming a path to explore my way through my lived experiences, particularly the most educational ones.

Method

Currere "requires autobiography, a review of the subject's educational experience; a phenomenological [and hermeneutic] description of the subject's present situation, [a] historical, social, physical life-world; a record of the subject's responses" (Grumet, 2015c, p. 43). It critiques objective research as the only source of accurate knowledge in academia, establishing there is "no such thing as a universal subject" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 218). Regardless of whose autobiography is explored, what emerges is unique to them and offers only potential themes to be considered. *Currere* "works in an experiential way to shift the ontological center from exterior to interior. ... The method must help further the cognitive development of those employing it and give understanding of educational experience in its political, social, and psycho-social dimensions" (Pinar, 2015c, p. 10). Explicitly, *currere* points to an imagined future. The past and future merge in the always emergent present, albeit in each passing moment, and are reexperienced as best I can with an imagined future, one that is fueled by the past and the present.

Currere is a practical, discursive method to consciously explore and interpret the meaning of lived experiences and related phenomena, including understanding autobiographical stream-of-consciousness experiences. *Currere's* "phenomenological dimension is revealed as we discover what kinds of experience and phenomena are the foundations of our forms" (Grumet, 2015c, p. 42). I tentatively enter an imagined future in this phenomenological dimension. For its part, "hermeneutics [is] the search for meaning … a demystification of what is external [and] what is internal" (p. 149). Hermeneutics is interpreting to understand how lived experience might inform an imagined future and how I might feel entering that future. How do the past and present inform my imagined future? What gaps emerge in imagining that future? How can it be better than the present? There needs to be a fusing of past and present, gradually expanding my "range of vision ... 'to have a horizon' [and] being able to see beyond it" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 305). To see beyond my horizon has to include the progressive moment in the phenomenological event. How I move beyond reflective and imaginative musings to undertake concrete actions is at the forefront of my thought in writing this paper.

Within my historically affected consciousness, understanding is situated within a particular tradition to be explored continuously and rigorously. "Knowledge of [myself] can never be complete" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 302). Meaning is approached not as a static essence but as something disclosed through temporal movement and recurring interpretive return. The method of *currere* is "dialectic ... I don't know, and I must study and [re-search]. I must be open to my experience, open to others', and be willing to abandon what I think in the face of what I see" (Pinar, 2015b, preface, p. xv). Gaps emerge in my understanding of certain phenomena to be re-lived as existential experience. Observing myself and my lived experiences as research objects "obliges [me] to sever [my] bond with life, to attain distance from [my] history, which alone makes it possible for that history to become an object" (Gadamer, p. 6). I create distance to better understand what particular historical experiences, aspirations, and taken for granted phenomena make up my present. I observe myself "as data from [my] viewpoint. Thus the basic premises of phenomenology: the idea of bracketing what is observed, the typically taken for granted, and *seeing* [and experiencing] it as it is" (Pinar, 2015c, p. 23). Bracketing sets aside immediate judgement and interpretation until enough data, in the form of lived experience, is gathered. Through bracketing I leave "the present to enter the past [and future, detaching] from [my] acculturated character [disclosing] a non-static, non-arrested character always in transition" (Pinar, 205e p. 73). I am always becoming.

Hermeneutics interprets meaning emerging from my lived experiences and their texts, pretexts and subtexts. Through interpretation, I hope to gain "the capacity to see ... with fresh eyes ... a special sensitivity"; interpret in meaningful ways that lead to ethical action (Gadamer, 2004, p. 14). In this project (Pinar, 2015b, preface, p. xvi), I hope to add to existing discourse related to how each person engages idiosyncratically with the method of *currere*. I hope this is practical and results in profoundly human and humanizing themes. I read and interpret emerging text "with a discerning ear and respond faithfully to the personal implications of what [emerges] not [as] slavish, mechanical adherence" (Palmer, 1983, p. 89). Hermeneutics interprets my "public and private, internal life, [the] externally discernible observable and the contents of [my] stream-of-consciousness [making] it all whole" (Grumet, 2015b, p. 99). Through honest discernment, I hope to enact praxis as moving through reflective, imaginative moments to engage in critical understanding and ethical action subject to further reflection. It calls for enacting ethical responses in new actions and practices.

Due to the subjective nature of *currere*, its primary limitation is that its conclusions are not generalizable to a larger population, geography, and context. The only generalizable feature is not to generalize (van Manen, 2014, p. 352). I bring my lived experiences to inform how I might better experience *currere*, its moments, and the origins and aspirations related to my intellectual interests. Developing "a system of hermeneutics for the explication of [emergent] text [follows] attempts to describe immediate, preconceptual experience, and the distancing of bracketing required to these ends" (Grumet, 2015c, p. 51). Bracketing is essential in creating awareness of my biases to avoid coloring my responses, to understand how I have been assimilated into dominant cultural understandings of knowledge, education, and educational experiences while pursuing my intellectual interests.

Although *currere* does not offer generalizable results, themes may resonate with others. These themes can orient others to make meaning of particular phenomena recurring in their lived experiences. My explorations allowed me to hear my voice, share who I am revealed by my stories emerging, and make meaning from my lived-educational-experiences and nascent *currerean* scholarship. I attempt "to forsake the statistic and consult the educational experience of one person" Grumet, 2015c, p. 48). My hope is to add participants in collective projects, thus merging individual stories so as to offer a potential for deeper future research.

Stream-of-Consciousness Experience

After presenting in November, 2025 at a conference, I recognized that I had experienced a stream-of-consciousness moment while presenting. In preparation, I had read notes, advanced slides, and visualized presenting a prescribed script. I felt ready. Then I stepped from behind the podium, improvising, making eye contact, and moving. I felt animated, energized, and free. One improvisation was describing the genesis of my intellectual interests. Even in the moment, I wonder where this came from and its relevance. The spontaneity includes describing how, as a junior high student over 50 years ago, I wrote a poem—*Win or Lose: What Difference Does It Make*? —from the perspective of a dying soldier only a few years older than me. Drawing their last breath, they question war and why they are there: "Will we learn? /I pray /For human survival."

The poem is part of me and my teaching, although teaching now looks and feels very different than it did when I was in K-12. I turn to an overlooked question: "who is the self that teaches" (Palmer, 2007, p. 4). This has historical implications for the person asking it, me. Through artistic expression and symbolism of my words and gestures, the poem surfaces to take on deeper meaning. I engage in visceral self-representation. While presenting, I experience a stream-of-consciousness moment as thoughts flowed through me directly to the audience. During that moment, I felt "I am experience" (Pinar, 2015b, preface, p. xiii). In theatre and drama, gestures add to what is spoken and I abandon myself to this kind of in-the-moment "self-formation" Grumet, 2015b, p. 86). I express who I am, describing my lived experiences through words and gestures. Without veering from the topic, I move closer to the audience. I step around a metaphoric podium of "words [that] fill up space" (Palmer, 1983, p. 77). I move toward a "poor curriculum [a naked] experience ... that is [my] historical present ... a symbolic expression of myself" (Pinar, 2015b, preface, pp. xii-xiv). The poem becomes essential to who I am in this present moment, emerging from my autobiography where it has always been.

When I step back to consider this experience, I recognize that theatre and drama are "integral to life, not [as] a spectator sport, but [as] a soul-making force" (Palmer, 1983, p. 23). The poem is embedded in a personal self-narrative—my curriculum—revealing itself as a stream-of-consciousness event, without prior reflection and rational thought. In this form, it emerges in a "pre-reflective [moment], antedating the self-representation in actions [requiring] an immediate, non-verbal response" (Grumet, 2015b, pp. 102-103). It reveals a taken-for-granted phenomenon related to my intellectual interests—their origins—which I feel are significant. The lived experience of the presentation and the poem become "raw material for reflection, self-representations, and actions" (Grumet, 2015b, p. 87), which became as bridges between this pre-reflective moment and post-reflective autobiography. Writing the poem was a taken-for-granted phenomenon, buried within me, one of my "idiosyncratic educational experiences" Grumet, 2015c, p. 41). With its emergence, perhaps other phenomena will beckon me to explore them as part of my intellectual interests. I need to take time to learn to be a reflective practitioner using *currere* as more than idle reverie and fantasy, eventually taking practical steps towards action via praxis.

Routine and Ritual of Writing – Solitude and Silence

As I began to engage more with *currere*, I wrote about how I experienced reading for, writing, and researching my dissertation. The routine and ritual of solitude and silence helped to structure time and focus effort. In healthy solitude and silence, I detach myself "as far as possible, from ... normal routines, reliances, and roles" (Palmer, 1983, p. 121). Spaces of solitude and silence allow me to read and write in deeper, profound ways. In these spaces, I experience "ongoing attentiveness [as a form of] prayer [and] an ongoing act of openness to reality [that is] a spiritual, secular, even practical undertaking" (Pinar, 2015d, p. 192). I break from normal routines and conscientiously organize to engage with others, as the dissertation was my top priority.

Solitude and silence offer spaces to step into, let sediment settle so new ideas might surface, and I discern as much meaning as possible. I am better able to bracket "what is, what can be [loosening myself], hence [freer] to freely choose the present, and future" (Pinar2015e, p. 77). In routinized and ritualized ways, solitude and silence appear to calm my mind's waters.

Pre-Rational and Irrational

Unaware, I engage with *currere*. Emerging from solitude and silence, I come "face to face with the irrational" (Camus, 1955, p. 28). The prerational and irrational are spaces to describe lived experiences without interpreting them as they emerge. I have begun to feel more at ease in stream-of-consciousness writing and how I respond. What is emerging is "coherence. Not necessarily a logical one, but a lived one, a felt one. The point of coherence is the biography as it is lived" (Pinar, 2015e, p. 66). Barriers and boundaries appear to dissolve. I feel closer to a breakthrough, affirming solitude and silence as meditative and contemplative spaces where the unexpected emerges. I modify my use of *currere*, allowing myself to explore the origins of my "intellectual interests [and] where they are going, the relation between those evolving interests and [my] private life, between those two and evolving historical conditions" (Pinar, 2015e, p. 76).

I began with predetermined objectives in the use of *currere*, resulting in interpreting, analyzing, and questioning whether I was on the right track. I needed to interrupt "ceaseless

swimming [and] appreciate [my] educational experience" (Grumet, 2015b, p. 99). Now I engage in "walking meditation ... walking not in order to arrive, but just to walk ... not thinking of the future, not thinking about the past, just enjoying the present moment" (Hanh, 1991, p. 27). I allow "what is [troubling] [to] grow clear" (Le Guin, 1997, p. 20). As I read, I write short passages that resonate with me, re-read them several times, and write in a stream-of-consciousness manner. If meaning does not emerge, I repeat the process. I engage with *currere* as more than a "reflective retreat from the world" (Pinar, 2015e, p. 76).

The Genesis of Intellectual Interests

I am 14, attending school in a much larger city, and experiencing culture shock. My favorite class is Humanities, with its non-conventional seating configurations and project-based learning. Until now, my experience with teachers is stand-and-deliver style, with them, for the most part, distancing themselves from students. This class is different. The poetry unit inspires me. I write *Win or Lose: What Difference Does it Make*? about a soldier, not much older than me, conscripted into a war he does not understand, a half-world away in Vietnam.

A second change I am experiencing is the music I listen to. Woodstock is happening. In Alberta, radio stations play country music. Songs I now listen to contain anti-war themes, sex, drugs, etc. I enjoy this; it informs my poetry, and it is about lyrics. One song that resonates is "*Where Have All the Flowers Gone*" by Pete Seeger (1962). The closing lines, "When will they ever learn, when will they ever learn," give rise to the dying soldier's words in my poem. The music is impetus to explore who I am and who I am becoming, raising questions, and inspiring conversations with my mother as we discuss interpretations, our faith, and the role of religion in condoning violence and war.

Spiritual Companions to *Currere*

The animating spirit of my youth and education occurred during the 1960's "counter-culture" (Pinar2015c, p. 16). My mother often described me as "the child who walked to the beat of his own drummer." I carry this feeling into adulthood. The authors I turn to explore challenging questions through a spiritual lens, offering "spirituality that respects other traditions and is eager to learn from them" (Palmer, 1983, p. iv). Parker Palmer has been a companion in the forming of my self, my teaching, and my intellectual interests. I read *Toward a Poor Curriculum* together with Palmer's *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey* (1983). Through parallel reading, *currere* kept me "from fleeing into ungrounded opinion, wishful thinking, or irrelevant facts" (Palmer, p. 76). Guided by these texts, I tried to avoid "dangerous subjectivity ... a reality [consisting] of little more than [my] private perceptions [where I lose] touch with the critique of [my] illusions" (Palmer, 1983, pp. 54-55). In *currere*, I discover that exploring who I am contains the risk of falling into illusions.

I can feel more comfortable transgressing and moving "against and beyond boundaries. In this movement education is the practice of freedom" (hooks, 1994, p. 12). I transgress institutional and personal boundaries: systemic injustices, biases, inequities as well as my wishful thinking and illusions. "It is important to be aware of [my biases], so that the text can present itself in all its otherness" (Gadamer, 2004, pp. 271-272). Education begins at home, so as to reach out to others. Transgressing boundaries is "designed to challenge the myths and habits that impose limits on [my] personal perception of the world by requiring [me] see [myself] seeing"

(Grumet, 2015b, p. 89). The discomfort of learning about myself in deeper, authentic ways is experiencing "the 'spiritual' discipline of displacement" (Palmer, 1983, p. 115). This can lead to understanding my teaching as more than teaching. It is learning and keeping my spirit fresh and energized.

"To learn and educate, is a vocation of humanization" (Pinar &, 2015a, p. 120). Introducing *currere* to others, I describe my lived experiences as a 14-year-old writing poetry. I ask them to use their educational experiences as data, to reflect on their educational experiences, and how their reflections might inform their classroom practices.

I experience being "the absolute source, my existence does not stem from my physical and social environment; instead, it moves out towards them and sustains them, for I alone bring into being for myself the tradition I elect to carry on" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 162). Traditions I carry on are embedded in my intellectual interests, including their geneses. Through this exploration, I "choose to escape the ordinary of academia and its intellectual, moral, and spiritual morass" (Grumet, 2015c, p. 53). My experience suggests academia discourages this autobiographical exploration. I am ready to take an uncomfortable plunge to become a research subject and object. "The autobiographical process is designed to create dissonance, to dislodge [me from a] comfortable fit [without] movement, personal or professional" (Grumet, 2015b, p. 101). Re-experiencing the conference presentation enabled me to return to sedimented memory and add meaning to my intellectual interests. I discovered new avenues, detours to write, and use *currere* and its moments to explore myself and how I intersect with "ongoing education [through] critical reflection [and] ... makes possible the improvement of tomorrow's practice." (Freire, 1998, p. 48). Through *currere* and critical reflection, the spirit of who I am and how I teach can be animated and renewed daily.

In educating student-teachers, I need to ask open-ended, nonthreatening questions, without immediate answers. Questions "found in [the] past, present, [help form] images of the future [when used] as surgical instruments to cut through the accretions that are culturally-conditioned [and self-imposed,] hence super-imposed answers" (Pinar, 2015b, preface, p. xv). Questions that dig deeper into taken-for-granted structuring phenomena, including the meaning of spirituality, are essential. Otherwise, I am unable to "re-member the body [of work], to reunite the whole [rather than] dismember" it (Palmer, 1983, p. 103). Deep questions lead to a deeper use of *currere*, beginning with the regressive and, now, gradually extending to the progressive. "The biographic past is ... usually ignored. Ignored but not absent" (Pinar, 2015e, p. 72). Ignoring my past, I was unable to understand how the poem informs my present and the future I wish to imagine. To enter the past and the future, to live in them is to "observe and record. ... recording ... via words; conceptualizing" (pp. 73-75). What I imagine and aspire to emerges from the past to form the present, which "contains all that there is. It is holy ground" (Whitehead, 1967, p. 3). Despite progress, "getting 'all' the information is impossible. ... there'll always be a (w)hole of some important sort" (Briggs & Peat, 1999, p. 170).

The Impasse of the Progressive

The progressive remains a work in progress. I am not alone in feeling uncertainty using the progressive. When we gather for *Currere* Retreat and Conference events, we each describe challenges we face with its use. Maybe I feel freer to return to the past, to re-member lived experiences. I feel more at ease describing how I felt as a 14-year-old in a new school and city, approaching adulthood, questions conflicting with me, and understanding how this informs

my intellectual interests. Imagination is just emerging, a gradual returning to childhood where imagination flourished. It is the "capacity to imagine what is not the case, which brings with it radical freedom [and] is at the heart of what [it] is [to be] human" (Pinar, 2015c, p. 11). I turn back to the regressive to inform my reentry into imagined futures. In the regressive, I had learned to write in the present tense rather than the past tense. I realize that I need to write in the present tense in the progressive as well, situating myself in the future rather than sitting outside it as an observer.

When I engage in the progressive, my emerging and merging intellectual interests appear untethered from my past and it is challenging to imagine concrete, practical ways to move forward. Perhaps I feel conditioned to live "in the concrete present ... a common consequence of dwelling in environments consistently incongruent with existential reality" (Pinar2015c, p. 13). Once again, the regressive hints at ways to move ahead: by questioning student-teachers about vocation, what calls them to teach, what it means to each of them. I introduce *currere* as a visceral presence in an existing teacher education syllabus.

A conversation at the recent conference further informed how I might engage with the progressive. We discussed how to promote and advance my intellectual interests. I mentioned I transgress boundaries one student-teacher at a time. I encourage aspiring teachers to subvert current notions of school: who schools belong to and who schools serve using "social, political, and cultural criticism" (Postman & Weingartner, 1969, p. 2). I understand this criticism as directed towards emancipating speech and actions so as to embrace and imagine a future different and better than one schools currently represent. Still, I experience an imbalance "between being in the concrete present and being in fantasy [which] if we reflect, we can trace partly to [our] schooling experience" (Grumet, 2015c, p. 11). My "imagination is 'schooled'" (Illich, 1970, p. 1). To overcome this, I practice patience as glimmers of hope emerge. I let go of my unrealistic fantasy of taking great leaps forward.

Tentative Progressive Moment

It is mid-January 2026. I meet informally with 6-8 second-year student-teachers assigned to me. They are beginning their second practicum experience. Some know of me, as the school is small with about 120 Education students in the after-degree program. There will be 4-6 first-year student-teachers assigned to me in early February. Depending how I feel the 2nd years' experience goes, I may repeat the process with the first-year group. I want expectations to be achievable.

We introduce ourselves and discuss a letter of introduction they are to prepare for their mentor-teacher. They talk about themselves and their interests to help them write the letter. I ask them to describe their previous practicum experience. Some student-teachers tell of how learning to teach is a challenge when their primary focus is on behavior and classroom management. They describe how there appears to be little hope for some students and how their mentor-teachers describe learning apathy as a significant issue. They describe how some mentor-teachers suggest getting through the day, week, month, and year are their primary goals. Education faculty at the university point fingers and blame the mentor school, teachers, and administration. When student-teachers describe their challenges, I feel my responses are inadequate.

Questions about what their vocation and calling are for each student-teacher are essential, as is deep listening when they respond. I ask each student-teacher to describe their own understanding of vocation and teaching, using open-ended questions, rather than inserting my understanding. Assigned activities, such as the letter of introduction to their mentor-teacher, outline how each student-teacher chose teaching. I ask them to reflect on how they might teach even in difficult moments, in challenging situations. How do they answer their calling in moments where they feel they are giving up on certain students? What brings them back to teaching each day? What offers them hope in their teaching and learning in those difficult moments?

Thematic Mapping of Recurring Questions

The *currerean* journey offers opportunities to learn as recurring questions emerge. "Recurring [questions] of the subject [are] posed ... reconstructed by solitary study and complicated conversation" (Pinar, 2011, p. 144). Subject is twofold: the historical and aspirational human subject and their intellectual interests. These questions can pull a person "up short" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 270). They call on me to reflect and explore them more deeply, without guarantees of answers. These questions recur as part of a larger quest, and which can be mapped thematically as: *currere* as an idiosyncratic journey, a feeling of professional isolation, and solitude and silence as generative spaces.

Idiosyncratic Journey

How we each come to identify and share our intellectual interests through *currerean* reflection and imagination is predicated by personal history, geography, and political factors. My intellectual interests can be informed by others who share similar interests about how to make the world and education better. "The theme of my current situation [and interests differ] from [others], but the fact we are ... facing an issue is the same" (Pinar, 2015e, p. 81). As noted, when we gather for in person events, some *currerean* scholars share how the progressive is challenging. "*Currere* is about seeking the unrecognized aspects of one's inner life [through understanding that] educators are the midwives to a world renewed daily" (Wang, 2024, p. 260).

Currere calls me to situate myself in my historical past and imagined future in better ways, as recurring "self-formation ... through ... engagement with the world [and its] particular dimensions ... that are potentially the most educational and aesthetic in nature" (Pinar, 2011, p. 67). In writing, I discover my spirit has been animated by re-experiencing and imagining. Interpreting educational experiences, how they inform self-formation, and how they inform intellectual interests are imaginative and aesthetic acts. The lived-narrative is "inspired by the imagination [as a] consequence of complicated conversation" (Pinar, 2011, p. 16). I interpret and experience the world in new ways. Imagination and aesthetics invite "transgressions against historical [and personal] limitations, emphasizing the cultivation of creativity and its production of new existential possibilities" (Pinar, 2011, p. 109). In my eighth decade, existential possibilities have a short horizon. I quote poetry in presenting, writing, and conversations. "Tell me, what is it [I] plan to do with [my] one wild and precious life? (Oliver, 1990, p. 60). This question, which I often ask myself and share with others, is taking on greater importance for me.

Professional Isolation

I experience professional isolation related to the *currerean* community. The pandemic impacted in-person attendance at the *Currere* Retreat and Conference, leading to virtual events. The Internet and its rapid growth flatten the world, making contact available 24/7, giving the appearance that time can be overcome. "Information technologies ... [flatline] temporality and [ensure] subjective dissolution of agency, will, and even consciousness" (Pinar, 2011, p. 128). The absence of face-to-face interaction reduces the potential to form community, share intentionally, and deepen relationships. Education is "fashioned ... around a cosmology of fragmentation [and] a culture of individualism [rather than being] cooperative and communal" (Palmer, 1983, p. xv). Overcoming this culture of individualism calls me to expand my networks locally and engage in face-to-face communication. Dialogue as "ongoing social ceremony [aspires] to shared understanding while engaging difference and protecting dissent [contributes] to the creation of community" (Pinar, 2011, p. 19). Through dialogue, we listen to the words and observe gestures to learn from each other. In these intimate moments, we share in "communion [that] urges us to come again and again to the place where we can know joy, to come and celebrate, to join the circle of love" (hooks, 2002, p. xix). The intimacy of face-to-face can form community, as we learn from each other.

Sharing what I learn about *currere* is essential to forming community. Community draws members into "personal responsiveness and accountability to each other and the world we are a part of" (Palmer, 1983, pp. 15-16). It is incumbent on me to discover ways to reach out to others, to share, and to learn. Despite this demand, I acknowledge *currere* also needs solitude and silence as creative generative spaces to enter into community.

Solitude and Silence as Creative Spaces

When I return to and modify reading and writing habits related to my dissertation, I rediscover that solitude and silence are creative spaces. Accompanied by walking meditation, they dampen an urge to force something to happen. In *currere's* moments, there is an injunction to "sit alone [and write] for as long as it is comfortable; … not force the process. ... Describe not interpret" (Pinar2015e, pp.75-76). Like education, *currere* is "a dialectic between [humans] and [their] world, a dialectic that holds all the mysteries and ironies of paradox [dissolving] into reciprocity" (Grumet, 2015c, p. 47). In the tension of paradox, I situate creative spaces. Solitude and silence form spaces for more heightened awareness "than [I] ordinarily possess [and] in [the] creative tension [of] paradox [which holds] opposites together [to] create an electric charge to keep [me] awake" (Palmer, 2007, p. 76). Letting go and just being, pathways emerge to better understand tasks at hand and move forward.

As I modify the approach used in other scholarly activities to one better suited to my *currerean* journey, I discover understandings and directions to explore the past, present, and future. "Through imagination, [I] visit the past, contemplate the present, and anticipate the future [doing] something else of profound and unique significance" (Robinson, 2009, p. 58). With *currere*, I read passages and write about them repeatedly. The process takes time, and autobiographical text is "an arena of exploration [where I] dwell on a page or a passage or a line for hours and days at a time" (Palmer, 1983, p. 76). Imagination occasionally needs rest to animate a beleaguered spirit. This is spiritual work. It is vital to provide "provocative answers to the recurring question of the subject [and] academic disciplines are ... spiritual disciplines

[forming] human subjects who reconstruct ... who they are and can be socially and subjectively ... informed by subjective purpose that animates academic study" (Pinar, 2011, p. 124). As such, study is my recurring form of prayer.

Discussion

I feel as if I am just beginning to learn how to use *currere*. Using an autobiographical method, I am growing to understand what I experience and throwing "light on it is a task that is never completed" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 301). Emergent phenomena were always there, taken-for-granted, and enacted upon only if they became visible. With *currere's* regressive moment, I identified the genesis of my intellectual interests. This led to recurring questions about music, faith, and war. As a 14-year-old, I wrote a poem which continues to inform the ethos of my intellectual interests. It is more than a sentimental feeling. I enter the past, which still exists. The past is embedded in my present to inform a future I choose to imagine. Although my future resists me, my past and present inform it, so I gradually embrace the progressive. It readies itself to be entered and experienced, it and its mysteries. It is essential to imagine a future that is better for my community and discover how to invite others into and contribute to that conversation. The imaginative progressive strives "to construct a common conversation about what is possible in this place and this time for the greater diversity of people who live in this community [glimpsing my historical, embodied] subjectivity [by] still making things up" (Grumet, 2015a, p. 237). Writing in the present tense and imagining modest, situated actions allows the future to tentatively appear—not as certainty, but as possibility. Humility enables me "to hear the truth of others [and] stand in creative tension with the faith that empowers [me] to speak [my] own" truth (Palmer, 1983, p. 109). The process of subjective formation is holistic, enacted in the company of others.

I have also attested to how the method of *currere* risks becoming impoverished without dialogic relationships to confirm, challenge, and deepen personal understanding. "Running the course—*currere*—implies a conversation complicated by multiple interlocutors, multiple references, and temporal moments, as well as almost infinite possibilities [requiring me] to reconstruct the character of complicated conversation as ethical" (Pinar, 2011, p. xiii). Although *currere* involves a complicated moving through temporal moments and turning inwards, it also involves taking ethical action, inviting others into conversations, and listening in ways that expand my subjectivity.

Conclusion and Implications

Currere is a practice of becoming—being unfinished, vulnerable, and deeply human. Becoming is an "ontological ... vocation, a calling to humanization ... of [becoming] more" (Freire, 2014, pp. 88-89). *Currere* embraces the uncertainty of being asked and asking of one's self challenging open-ended questions leading to more questions. "The essence of the *question* is to open up possibilities and keep them open" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 298). It is a personal and shared quest that employs recurring questions. Re-experiencing lived experiences reveals how intellectual interests persist as sedimented, unacknowledged phenomena, meaning, informing the present and a tentatively imagined future.

The themes emerging from my experience of *currere* caution against making *currere* a formulaic, instrumentally applied method. Rather, they invite ongoing openness to return to lived experience, to being unsettled, and the courage to act without certainty. *Currere* calls for

patience. It is living with questions with uncertain answers. Imagination and creativity can result "in something new, surprising, and unique [where] individual [subjectivity] converges with something larger [rediscovering] something old or [retrieving] the freshness of everyday" (Briggs & Peat, 1999, p. 30). Writing in the present tense, imagining modest futures, and allowing fantasy to emerge gradually is generative, keeping my currerean journey alive.

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