

Editor's introduction

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Introduction

This small issue – just three essays – makes a very large impression, as the publications within demonstrate the wide range of *currere* studies, from the alluringly literary and provocatively philosophical to the powerfully political, as well as to the profoundly personal dimensions of studying one's experience of what one undergoes in educational institutions, especially in courses of study and let's say their collateral effects, not only damage – the noun ordinarily following the use of adjective “collateral” – but also associated opportunities and even epiphanies that educational experience can afford. Let's take these dimensions in that order, arbitrary that order admittedly is.

So we'll start with Christopher Cruz's astonishing study of John Updike's tetralogy, wherein Cruz affirms as he enacts the epistemic and pedagogical significance of literature and philosophy for the field of curriculum theory. Literature, Cruz demonstrates, can be an inspirational site of study for curriculum theorists (as he puts it), “to begin reimagining teacher and student subjectivity and alterity as a spectral shaping of educational experience.” Either assigned in coursework as an undergraduate English major or a novel I chose to read on my own, *Rabbit, Run* – the first of the four novels Cruz insightfully examines – was and remains a riveting read, yes thanks to Updike's genius as a writer but also because its subject matter was for me generationally close to home. But whether generationally (or culturally) close or not, Cruz's point stands, namely that literature generally, not only novels but short stories and poems as well, “provide the capacity for thinking through a variety of education-related issues including existential, political, theological, and aesthetic aspects of experience.” To so think Cruz invokes Derrida's concept of “hauntology” to point to yes what is empirically the case, but also to what “goes unnamed, unnoticed, or unthought,” clearly the case in Updike's “Rabbit” novels, wherein the protagonist, Harry – again quoting Cruz – is “called toward the spectral justice which feels like it is coming, even at the very end of the novel series,” adding “that justice remains deferred, just as life seems to be.” Like Harry's very own lived course of study (as it were), “curriculum remains haunted by what cannot be fully captured within the linear flow of time, especially in its ethical, intellectual, and spiritual horizons,” and “only in the extension toward the limits of existence, and the rupture of our horizon of what exceeds those limits, can we imagine a future otherwise.”

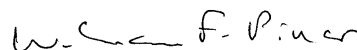
Imagining a “future otherwise” is very much implied in Sepideh Yasrebi's searing study of Bronxview, a South Bronx (New York City) charter school where she worked. That school – and her experience there as an educator – were haunted by the neoliberal reduction of educational experience to test scores, by the deeming of dress as a marker of “making it,” and

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the cosmopolitan aspirations of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum deformed into elitist performances of platitudes - the school's so-called "RISE" core values—Responsibility, Integrity, Scholarship, Excellence—that (quoting Yasrebi) "privileges symbolic prestige and institutional branding over students' lived histories, epistemologies, and material realities." Also implied in this powerful piece is Yasrebi's supercedence of her own particular "positionality," educated (she tells us) in a "state-controlled, ideologically prescriptive, and gender-segregated system that afforded little space for individuality or cultural difference" - that education in Tehran - then finding herself teaching in a somewhat similar school in New York City. It is that capacity to surpass one's multi-dimensional positioning (political, gendered, geographical, racialized, economic) that enlivens, even animates, the concept of *currere* and its praxis.

In contrast to *practice* - a term often associated with repetitive behavior - praxis has been defined as theory *and* practice, in part to emphasize how behavior is informed by thought, however forgotten that lineage can become. And "theory" here is not necessarily formal or finished, certainly not something to be "applied" to a situation to result in specified behaviors, but rather more akin to a first impression that forms over time into a relationship - itself fluid in its interactive intimacy - between what one thinks and feels and what one does. That is the sense of praxis the method of *currere* invites, one that Tamara Wiehe so expertly depicts in her recounting of meeting *currere*, first during her master's degree program in education, and "how" - quoting Wiehe - "like any meaningful friendship, we expanded each other's horizons." What also becomes clear is that *currere* found a friend in Tamara Wiehe, as she describes that the concept went "from being a feigned stranger to a companion, confidant, friend." While supportive, even loyal, *currere* declines complicity, a point Wiehe emphasizes by quoting Madeleine Grumet's insight that *currere* "is designed to create dissonance, to dislodge the comfortable fit of self-as-object, self-as-place, self-as-agent, for where there is a neat complicity between these three, there is no movement, personal or professional." And such movement is reciprocal, an insight Wiehe underlines by quoting Denise Taliaferro Baszile, namely (the "it" representing *currere*) "it shapes me, and I shape it," leaving Wiehe "curious about where this friendship may take me." So we in this issue, we learn more about *currere* and praxis in Africa, America, and Mexico. While acknowledging that the Estados Unidos y México are also América - as are all the nations in the Western Hemisphere - I'll proceed in that initial alphabetical order.

Welcome to this rather large edition of *Currere and Praxis*.



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Declarations

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