

TOWARD A COURSE OF BECOMING: AUTOBIOGRAPHY, KNOWLEDGE, MEMORY
AND (RE) CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

This major research paper will examine the concept of Toward a Course of Becoming: Autobiography, Knowledge, Memory and (Re) Constructing Identity. Throughout the discussion, significant considerations into possible contributions of William Pinar's (1975) *Currere* Method (regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical) juxtaposed against Stuart Hall's theory on *Identity* will further substantiate my discourse. In addition to Pinar and Hall, autobiographical writing will reflect on American Civil Rights Activist Frederick Douglass' autobiography *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave written by Himself* (1845). Canada's first Black Member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister and Lieutenant- Governor of Ontario; Lincoln M. Alexander's *Go to School, You're a little black boy* (2010) will also focus my discussion on conceptualizing autobiography, knowledge, memory and their interrelationships within the framework of (re) constructing identity. The main aim of this analysis is to derive a sense of the autobiographical course run by the Caribbean (migrant) subject constructing and re-constructing senses of identity, belonging, being, and becoming. The intention of the research is to indicate the potential contribution of specifically Caribbean and African descent, (im) migrant North American autographical experience to the *currere* approach to curriculum understanding.

KEYWORDS Autobiography, Course, *Currere*, Discourse, Identity, Image, Intercourse, Knowledge, Memory, Recourse

INTRODUCTION

My course toward becoming situates me within a triangulated space of negotiation and enigmatic connection to cultural traditions crosscutting my past, present and future. More precisely, who I am or have perhaps become, may be understood as a proposition concerning a series of converging and diverging tensions and resistance, each of which inform my becoming in time, space and geography. This paper inquires into how I and others involuntarily and voluntarily shape and reshape autobiographical narratives with images of our selves. In other words, my interest focuses on how my/our lived experiences capture and project images accessed through senses—our sense of hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch—and then become both materialized and preserved as sense- images. Here I will consider these sense images as our knowledge of our selves. In personifying our understanding of our imagined selves, our sense- images crystalize with detailed fragments of color, distance, form, light, lines, hues, shading, and texture on the elaborate and interconnecting canvas of our memory. My reference to the elements of autobiographical texts and images symbolically represents my/our interconnecting, intersecting, and overlapping personal narratives within a larger cultural, educational, and social paradigm.

CURRERE: AT THE CROSSROADS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY, KNOWLEDGE, AND MEMORY

To make sense of sense images, they must be considered at the crossroads of autobiography, knowledge, and memory. By autobiography I mean, the self- reflexive action of chronicling my lived experiences (past, present, and future) and utilizing these experiences as substantial to constructing and re- constructing my perceived identity. By knowledge I mean, possessing global awareness of the *self* within larger cultural, ethnic, and societal constructs; in addition, my

knowledge contemplates my internal and external self-awareness and familiarity with people, places, and things through direct and indirect contact or implicit and explicit experience. By memory I mean, the gathering or rather, the collecting and recollecting of consciousness to reconstruct my converging identity.

By traversing the axiomatic paradigms of its crossroads, I hope to produce a sequence of complex and interconnecting interpretations of belonging, being, and becoming. These transitory junctures position and reposition me to consider self-authored autobiographical narratives—my own and others. In a certain way, autobiographical narratives and identity (re) construction engage in an ongoing conversation with each other through perceived mental images of my internal and external self. For example, autobiographically speaking—these ongoing conversations occurred concurrently with the perceptions of others—significant and otherwise—during my primary, secondary, and post-secondary school years and subsequently the larger cultural and social context. In John Akomfrah's memoirist homage film, *The Stuart Hall Project* (2013) Stuart Hall states, "Identities are endless, ever unfinished conversations...I don't think that identity is some kind of essence which exists inside all the other things; I think identity is always constructed in a political conversation between who we are and the political ideologies out there." In analyzing Hall's position on identity as an "endless" and "unfinished" conversation, I propose an autobiographical framework to consider identity as a process but also a form of knowledge. In reconstructing my identity I position myself across the horizon of time to engage in ongoing internal and external conversations across a myriad of infinite possibilities within my past, present, and future time continuum. My identity conversation is not constrained within images apart from my personal narrative but rather; my identity conversation

encompasses an ongoing discourse within an educational framework, familial structure(s), larger social constructs, and societal ideologies.

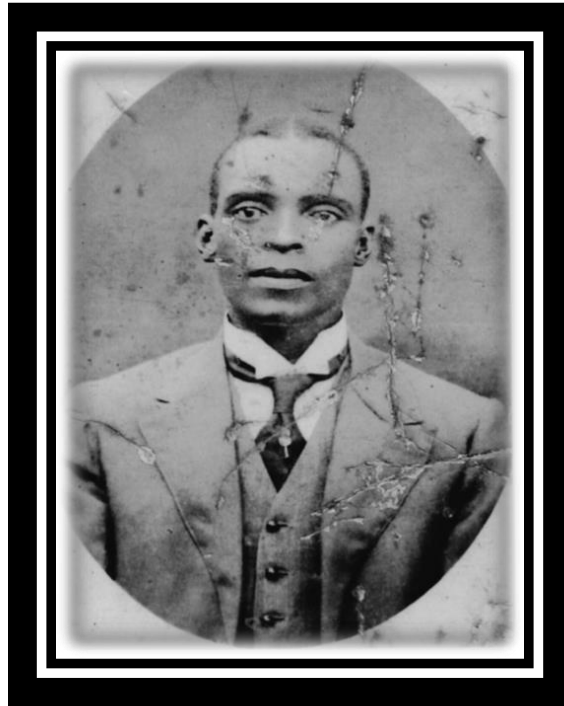


Image: My Great Grandfather Vincent (Circa...1890's)

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE METHOD OF *CURRERE* AND OTHER PERSPECTIVES

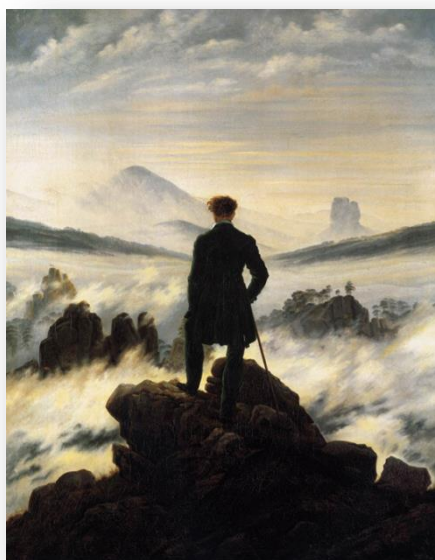
With specific considerations to William F. Pinar's seminal work *The Method of Currere* (1975), I turn toward understanding the structure of his method as a poignant exemplar for my overall discourse. From 1861- 1865 the United States plummeted into a devastating civil war; in the aftermath of uncertainty a period of reconstruction ensued from 1865- 1877 ushering in an era of optimism. One hundred years later William F. Pinar's article *The Method of Currere* (1975) proposed a reconstruction and reconceptualization of curriculum theory. Pinar's immediate

proposition addresses educators and advises them “to reconceptualize the meaning of curriculum,” for Pinar the *currere* method “consists of four steps: the regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical” (Pinar 1975, pg. 1). By definition, *currere* is the Latin word ‘to run’; more specifically, *currere* connotes a course or a race to be run. A brief departure to the following proposes an allegorical analysis of a runner running the race. By focusing, the runner remains resolute in the midst of distractions and unforeseen life circumstances. Exercising internal and external strength provides the runner with a sense of equilibrium while competing with personal anxieties, insecurities as well as the plethora of inconsistencies on the course. The runner must possess resilience and the ability to overcome adversity and pain; each misstep is an opportunity for growth allowing the runner move on and focus on their envisioned goal ahead. The runner’s vision of the future, their awareness of the present, and referencing the past coalesce with the runner’s ability to keep moving forward toward their objective. The runner’s ability to create a clear picture of their goal, visualizing it and imagining possible scenarios and outcomes and having a plan for moving through each one is paramount to their desired success. In the larger cultural and social context, the runner’s firm resolve and believe in themselves provides internal support even with the absence of outward support.

Throughout the method, Pinar considers his “existential experience as a data source” and an avenue through which “one thinks through one’s life, one’s life is determined by one’s thoughts, rather than living through one’s life and thinking about that life” (Pinar 1975, pg. 2- 3). Pinar references René Descartes’ “I” to (re) position individuals within a first person autobiographical narrative of the *currere* method. According to Pinar, in the regressive step “one returns to the past, to capture it as it was, and as it hovers over the present. The present then becomes acting

out of the past, the superimposition of past issues and situations and persons onto the present...to ascertain where one is, when one is, one must locate the past. Location means, identification means, bracketing the past...As the past becomes present, the present is revealed...Thus we conclude the first step of the procedure, the regression to the past and the return to the present” (Pinar 1975, pg. 6- 7). Pinar continues his discourse on the method of *currere* by stating the progressive step as “what is not yet the case, what is not yet present. We have found that the future is present in the same sense that the past is present. It influences, in complicated ways, the present; it forms the present” (pg. 9). It is imperative to suggest the augmentative possibilities of converging and diverging mental images and photographs (re) constructed in the past and present experiences and an ensuing future of individuals. For Pinar the analytical step seeks to “juxtapose the three photographs: past, present, future. What are their complex, multi-dimensional inter-relation? How is the future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both” (Pinar 2010 pg. 12)?

Image: *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* by Casper David Friedrich, 1818
<https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/culture/arts-architecture/wanderer-above-the-sea-of-fog>



To substantiate Pinar's photographic analogy of *currere* I propose a brief analysis of the inserted image of Casper David Friedrich's 1818 painting *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* within the framework of toward a course of becoming: autobiography, knowledge, memory and (re) constructing identity. Friedrich's painting contributed to Romanticism ideologies in late eighteenth century Europe. According to Carol Scheidenhelm, Ph.D. (Director, Learning Technologies and Assessment Loyola University Chicago) Romanticism ensued from 1820-1865 and is "A European artistic and intellectual movement of the early 19th century, characterized by an emphasis on individual freedom from social conventions or political restraints, on human imagination, and on nature typically idealized form. Romanticism is more concerned with emotional than rationality. It values the individual over society, nature over city. It questions or attacks rules, conventions and social protocol. It sees humanity living in nature as morally superior to civilized humanity: glorification of the "noble savage." It conceives of children, essentially innocent by nature, as being corrupted by their surroundings" (Scheidenhelm, 2007).

In continuing my analysis of Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*, it is fundamental to acknowledge the significance of the Slave Narrative as an emerging sub- genre within American Romanticism. By definition, the slave narrative represented a self- representational "protest," that is, a struggle by the author for the "authors" self- realization/identity" (Scheidenhelm, 2007). In retrospect to the Slave Narrative, key passages in Douglass' autobiography *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave written by Himself* (1845) will be explored in further detail in sections below of my discussion.

In returning to Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*, it is vital to examine the foreground (the part of the painting closest to the viewer), the middle-ground (the part between the foreground and the background), as well as the background (the furthest part of the painting from the foreground) and their significance in establishing the interconnecting merits to Pinar's *currere* method—regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical. At first glance, the viewer cannot see the man's face; his back is toward the viewer (not to conceal) but to invite the viewer to participate in his experience(s) as well as consider their own experience(s) (within the autobiographic framework) prior to and after viewing the painting. The figure is dressed in a green frock coat leaning on his cane with his hand casually placed in his left pocket; he stands in poised self- reflection considering the rocky landscape shrouded by the mysterious fog and conceptualizes his indeterminate future. The viewers must commit themselves to question the man's journey prior to his current position on the rocky ledge and consider the following questions; Why is he standing there on the ledge? What is the purpose of the cane; is the cane used to assist him when walking as the result of an injury?—Was it purchased as a fashion aesthetic, or was it given as a gesture of appreciation? How did he acquire his clothing, what is or was his occupation?—Is he coming from or going to his intended destination? By exploring the aforementioned questions, the viewer positions the man within his past—in,—Pinar's method, the *regressive* step.

It is plausible to propose the figure in the painting is standing contemplatively on the rocky ledge after turning towards his past and making a conscientious decision to be in the present and look at a possible and imagined future; subsequently the foreground of the painting correlates to Pinar's *regressive* turn in his *currere* method. The foreground's duality situates the man in the

regressive turn and the *progressive* turn—in the *progressive* turn the man “looks toward what is not yet the case, what is not yet present” (Pinar, 2010 pg. 36)—the *progressive* turn positions the man in the intermediary phase where he ponders how “the future inhabits the present” (Pinar, 210 pg. 36). Additional considerations of Pinar’s *progressive* turn within his *currere* method behooves me to consider Frederick Douglass *progressive* turn in his autobiography, particularly when he contemplates the perilous possibilities of his emancipation from slavery on his own volition; on this issue

Douglass states:

On the one hand, there stood slavery, a stern reality, glaring frightfully upon us—its robes already crimsoned with the blood of millions, and even now feasting itself greedily upon our own flesh. On the other hand, away back in the dim distance, under the flickering light of the north star, behind some craggy hill or snow-covered mountain, stood a doubtful freedom—half frozen—beckoning us to come and share its hospitality. This in itself was sometimes enough to stagger us; but when we permitted ourselves to survey the road, we were frequently appalled. Upon either side, we saw grim death, assuming the most horrid shapes. Now it was starvation, causing us to eat our own flesh;—now we were contending with the waves, and were drowned;—now we were overtaken, and torn to pieces by the fangs of the terrible bloodhound. We were stung by scorpions, chased by wild beasts, bitten by snakes, and finally, after having nearly reached the desired spot;—after swimming rivers, encountering wild beasts, sleeping in the woods, suffering hunger and nakedness;—we were overtaken by our pursuers, and, in our resistance, we were shot dead upon the spot! I say, this picture sometimes appalled us, and made us “rather bear those ills we had, Than fly others, that we knew not of (Douglass 1895, pg. 85- 86).

In the middle-ground of Friedrich’s painting, wisps of fog converge and diverge with the rocky landscape juxtapose against the hidden valleys, the quiet streams, the rocky crags, and the rolling hills. In retrospect, thinking with Pinar’s *currere* method, I position the man within the *analytical* turn where he “...examines both past and present. Bracketing what is, what was, what can be...” (Pinar 1975, pg. 11). In the background of the painting the distant mountains and endless sky suggest Pinar’s *synthetical* turn of the *currere* method. In the *synthetical* turn, individuals “look

at oneself, as in a mirror. Attention on the breath, to underscore the concreteness of being” (Pinar 1975, pg. 12). Friedrich brilliantly composes the man in the foreground, middle- ground, and background of his painting establishing his interrelationship and interdependence with his past (*regressive* turn), present (*progressive* turn), and future (*analytical* and *synthetical* turn).

Pinar’s later work *What is Curriculum Theory* (2012) offers a definitive definition of the method of *currere* as, “— the Latin infinitive form of curriculum means to run the course, in the gerund form, the running of the course” (Pinar 2012, pg. 35). To further support my discussion on toward a course of becoming: autobiography, knowledge, memory and (re) constructing identity I will investigate the interplay and significance of the words course and race. In addition to Pinar’s seminal work, Robert J. Graham’s article *Currere* and Reconceptualism: The progress of the pilgrimage (1992) written for the *Journal of Curriculum Studies* contributes to the conversation around Pinar’s *currere* method. Without hesitation, Graham methodically constructs his discourse with William H. Schubert and John Dewey as antecedents to his objectives within the theoretical framework of Pinar’s notion of *currere*. Graham analyzes Pinar’s *currere* method by considering “its emergence historically within US curriculum studies...the kinds of criticisms and objections which persist to the present time in dogging its trail, sketch out briefly those aspects of reconceptualism incorporated in both Pinar's and Grumet's notions of autobiographical method, follow a consideration of the intellectual sources of the method in continental philosophy, and evaluate and discuss some residual problems that have arisen since the method was first formulated, as well as some recent thinking on the topic” (Graham 1992, pg. 27- 42).

Graham's quadratic dialogue first, re-tells the educational experience: constructing the usable. Second, he considers the initial responses to *currere*; third; the change in the field: an intellectual framework for *currere* and fourth, the existential and phenomenological foundations with his audience (Curriculum Theorists and Curricularists) is supported by an avalanche of Pinar's contemporaries and critics (Grumet, M. R., Schubert, W. H., Smith, S.), to name a few. By generously employing encyclopedic vernacular, Graham's consideration to communicate with a comprehensive audience focuses his discourse and reiterates his overarching argument for *currere* and reconceptualism proposed by Pinar and Grumet. It would be very remiss of me not to consider Graham's exclusion of culture and race within the framework of his *Currere* and Reconceptualism article.

It is evident that Graham omitting the aforementioned does not negate their relevance for future discourse; in other words, "*currere* is a method for giving voice to private experience within a public setting and speaks to the developing structures of students' personality as it interacts with social and institutional forms and structures" (Graham 1992, pg. 27- 42). Graham's article *Currere* and Reconceptualism significantly contributes to "one of the best hopes for keeping the human factor alive in education..." (Graham 1992, pg. 27- 42). In keeping the human factor alive in education, there is opportunity for students to consider an autobiographical paradigm within their educational experience. These experiences are lived and re-lived within specific cultural and ethnic histories subsequently producing heterogeneous narratives with intersecting memories—more specifically, the African- Caribbean migrant subject.

AFRICAN- CARIBBEAN MEMORY, IDENTITIES, AND COMMON HUMAN REALITIES

Memory generate a sequence of complex and interconnecting interpretations that positions and repositions individuals of African- Caribbean ancestry to consider self-authored narratives.

Roberts (2008) reminds us of this constant positioning and reposition of identity construction within human societies when he writes; “Human societies are not static—not only are identities constantly being modified but new ones also come into being. The two fundamental processes through which new identities come into being are genetic change and ecological change. This is so because one of the most common human realities is that social and economic pressures in a population often results in migration, which in turn leads to contact across ethnic groups”

(Roberts 2008, pg. 10). The role of colonialism in the shaping of African thought and the identity of peoples in the Caribbean encompasses multiple interconnecting narratives and representations of culture, ethnicity, and language.

Stuart Hall understands the aforementioned interconnecting narratives within an African- Caribbean paradigm establishes that “...the question of Caribbean cultural identity might be has been of extraordinary importance, before but especially in the twentieth century. Partly because of the dislocations of conquest, of colonization and slavery, partly because of the colonial relationship itself and the distortions of living in a world culturally dependent and dominated from some centre outside the place where the majority of people lived” (Hall 1995, p. 4). In addition, a common misconception regarding African- Caribbean peoples is that of a homogenous cultural identity throughout the chain of islands situated in the Caribbean Sea and the Americas. Roberts (2008) writes, “in order to understand the vision fashion by later writers of different nationalities and the way in which this vision in turns shaped identities and concepts

of ethnicities in the islands, it is necessary to understand the first hundred years of settlement by the Spanish in the islands, the relationship between these settlements and Spain, and the role of these settlements in the wider history of the Americas. From the beginning of the first hundred years, there has been a continuity in ideation, ideology and culture in European expansion in the New World because language was at its core” (Roberts 2008, pg. 14). A growing body of literature documents a more complex and diverse history that characterizes African- Caribbean thought within the framework of cultural, ethnic, and racial identity. For Stuart Hall African- Caribbean identity is, “a notion of the continuous, self- sufficient, developmental, unfolding, inner dialectic of selfhood. We are never quite there, but always on our way to it, and when we get there, we will at least know exactly who it is we are. Identities are never completed, never finished; that they are always as subjectivity itself is, in process” (Hall 1997, p. 42). In understanding African- Caribbean identity, it is fundamental to establish the ongoing journey through pre-colonial—colonial—post-colonial memory within the African- Caribbean subject. The common reality of constructing and re- constructing identity establishes multiple representations of race produced from meandering historical narratives. In pursuing further insight into understanding racial identity, I turn to Frantz Fanon in the preceding methodology.

METHODOLOGY

I will now consider the contribution(s) of race, (more specifically) individuals with African- Caribbean ancestry, advancing methods for re- constructing an identity. For example, Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Mask* states, “I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I

found that I was an object in the midst of other objects...Now the fragments have been put together again by another self” (Fanon 1967, p. 109).

In considering autobiography as a framework to (re) construct an identity, William Pinar states “I am in a biographic situation...I see that there is a 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 1975, pg. 1). In comparison, Stuart Hall explicates identity as “...a matter of becoming as well as being. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture...like everything which is historical; identities undergo constant transformation; identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past” (Hall 1990 , p. 34). Taking a comparative approach, I will employ William Pinar’s *currere* method (regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical) juxtaposed against Stuart Hall’s theory on *identity* to tease out contributions of autobiographical method for “reading” Caribbean identity; and vice versa, Caribbean identity for (re) reading the curriculum as a course to be run, particularly with respect to the Caribbean migrant, colonial-post-colonial subject. I will focus on, in particular, two autobiographical authors as exemplars: Frederick Douglass and Lincoln M Alexander.

Building upon the theoretical texts above, the main analytical focus of the major research paper will consider passages from two autobiographical texts: American Civil Rights Activist Frederick Douglass’ autobiography *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave written by Himself* (1845); and Canada’s first Black Member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister and Lieutenant- Governor of Ontario; Lincoln M Alexander’s *Go to School, You’re a little black boy* (2010). These two autobiographical texts will serve as points of comparative

analysis for discussion on conceptualizing autobiography, knowledge, and memory and their interrelationships within the framework of William Pinar's *currere* method.

THE CROSSROADS OF *CURRERE* AND IDENTITY

Thus far, my discussion has built upon William F. Pinar's *currere* methodology situated within curriculum theory. Extending from Pinar, my discussion proposed has also drawn from Stuart Hall's work in cultural theory. In John Akomfrah's 2013 film *The Stuart Hall Project*, Stuart Hall brilliantly argues that, "...identity is always constructed in a political conversation between who we are and the political ideologies out there." Pinar's *currere* method and autobiographic paradigm are critical components to the analytical framework and discussion throughout the paper. For Pinar, "*currere* seeks to understand the contribution academic studies makes to one's understanding of his or her life (and vice versa), and how both are imbricated in society, politics, and culture. As a student I at any given moment am in a "biographic situation", that is to say, that she or he is located in historical time and cultural place, but in a singularly meaningful way, a situation to be expressed in one's autobiographical voice. Biographic situation suggest a structure of lived meaning that follows from past situations, but which contains, perhaps unarticulated, contradictions of past and present as well as anticipation of possible futures" (Pinar 2010, pg. 36). In other words, autobiography is a self- reflexive course toward an imagined identity.

A COURSE: ETYMOLOGY OF A CONCEPT

In examining the word *course* etymologically, it is fundamental to differentiate the duality in the meaning of the word *course*. The origin and history of the word *course* is late thirteenth century French vernacular and defined as an “onward movement.” This onward movement is a transitive verb ran [*regressive* turn], run [*progressive* turn], runs [*analytical* turn, and running [*synthetical* turn needing a definitive noun (course, path, route). In other words, the movement is characterized by an interdependent relationship between the runner who engages in running and the course; subsequently, the movement is a deliberate and directional activity carried out by the runner on the course. In addition to the aforementioned, it is vital to consider a myriad of converging and diverging destination possibilities and tensions within the framework of toward a course of becoming. By comparison, twelfth century Latin defines *course* as “running race or course” in addition the past participle form *currere* means, “to run.” In contrast to the course or race run by a runner it is necessary to outline the significance of a course as it relates to an academic activity. For Pinar the course unfolds within the process of education when he states,

The method of *currere*—the infinitive form of curriculum—promises no quick fixes. On the contrary this autobiographical method asks us to slow down, to remember even re-enter the past, and to meditatively imagine the future. Then, slowly and in one’s own terms, one analyzes one’s experience of the past and fantasies of the future in order to understand more fully, with more complexity and subtlety, one’s submergence in the present. The method of *currere* is not a matter of psychic survival, but one of subjective risk and social reconstruction, the achievement of selfhood and society in the age to come (Pinar 2004, pg. 4).

In retrospect, I propose a brief examination of course within the framework of education, schooling, teaching, learning, and their interrelationship(s). By definition, education derives from the root verb *educate* with the final vowel ‘e’ contracted and modified with the suffix ‘tion’.

Educate indicates the process of acquiring information through specific instructional

methodologies. The heterogeneous elements associated with education behoove me to acknowledge the suffix '*tion*' as it relates to education. The suffix '*tion*' frequently occurs with words of Latin origin indicating an ongoing action or process ensued by an individual endeavoring to engage in an activity with a specific goal or objective. Moreover, the suffix '*tion*' forms abstract nouns.

Abstract nouns are nouns that cannot be experienced with the five senses—the senses of hearing, seeing, smell, taste, and touch. It is plausible to suggest the course of learning through education is an abstract activity expressing concepts, experience(s), and ideas; it is the process of moving from ignorance to enlightenment. The abstractive idiosyncrasies akin to education propositions a series of converging and diverging autobiographic paradigms represented in diverse narratives. These narratives situate individuals from multiple cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic histories to consider and contemplate their past, present, and imagined future within the framework of toward a course of becoming. In addition to education being an abstract noun, it is necessary to outline the irony and significance of the interconnectedness with the senses (hearing, seeing, smell, taste, and touch) and education. Although education in of itself is an abstract noun, the senses are required to access and acquire knowledge within varied courses and academic disciplines; in addition, the senses affect the acquisition of knowledge. In acquiring knowledge, the learner (student) positions himself or herself to receive knowledge from the learnt (the teacher).

The aforementioned analysis of education presents a plethora of shifting and problematic paradigms and theories garnering endless conversations and scholarly debates; in hindsight, I propose turning my discussion to consider John Dewey's Article I *What Education Is* in his *My Pedagogic Creed* (1897) when he states,

I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. This process begins unconsciously almost at birth, and is continually shaping the individual's powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions. Through this unconscious education the individual gradually comes to share in the intellectual and moral resources which humanity has succeeded in getting together. I believe that the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself. Through these demands he is stimulated to act as a member of a unity, to emerge from his original narrowness of action and feeling, and to conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs...I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living (Dewey, 1897 pg. 77- 80).

In continuing my brief examination of course as an academic activity, I will reflect on schooling. Schooling derives from the noun school indicating an institutional organization designated for the scholastic instruction of students. The suffix 'ing' indicates an "action or process connected with a specified thing, something related to a specified concept." Schooling thus indicates a teaching and learning process students undergo through collaborative partnership and participation with their teacher. In support of the preceding discussion, I propose considering Dewey's Article II *What the School Is* of his *My Pedagogic Creed* when he states,

...the school must represent present life-life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground...the school, as an institution, should simplify existing social life; should reduce it, as it were, to an embryonic form. Existing life is so complex that the child cannot be brought into contact with it without either confusion or distraction; he is either overwhelmed by the multiplicity of activities which are going on, so that he loses his own power of orderly reaction, or he is so stimulated by these various activities that his powers are prematurely called into play and he becomes either unduly specialized or else disintegrated. I believe that as such simplified social life, the school life should grow gradually out of the home

life; that it should take up and continue the activities with which the child is already familiar in the home (Dewey, 1897 pg. 77- 80).

Turning towards examining teaching, it would be remiss of me not to explore the transitory verb and root word *teach* as it relates to *course* within the framework of an academic activity. To teach is to impart knowledge by instruction; teach(ing) entails a transitory interrelationship between the teacher and student. This transitory interrelationship establishes an ongoing conversation of teaching and learning, positioning and re-positioning between the teacher and student; this exchange of knowledge is co-dependent on the student learning from the teacher and the teacher learning from the student. Dewey's Article II *What the School Is* of his *My Pedagogic Creed* substantiates that,

The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences. I believe that the teacher's business is simply to determine on the basis of larger experience and riper wisdom, how the discipline of life shall come to the child. I believe, finally, that the teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life. I believe that every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth (Dewey, 1897 pg. 77- 80).

In continuing my analysis of a course in relationship to an academic activity, I turn toward examining *learn* within the framework of education. Etymologically, *learn* originates in the middle twelfth century France with Gothic undertones signifying, "to follow or find the track." In hindsight, I propose examining the aforementioned meaning and consider the track to pursue and the interrelationship of a traveller going and coming on a specified journey. As previously stated, Dewey conceptualizes the traveller's journey beginning "unconsciously almost at birth, and is continually shaping the individual's powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his

habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions” (Dewey, 1897 pg. 77- 80). By comparison I consider Frederick Douglass’ position of learning when he states, “Though conscious of the difficulty of learning without a teacher, I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read” (Douglass, 1895 pg. 37).

Additional examination into Douglass’ resolve “I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose...” affirm his awareness of his perpetual engagement on a course, a race, a track. In offering a supplementary discussion to learn(ing) I acknowledge a shift in the meaning of learn in early twentieth century education from “to follow or find the track” to the acquiring of knowledge through study, formal or informal instruction, and experience subsequently distancing the runner from the autobiographical track (course) to be followed. By etymologically examining the word *course* it is self-evident that Pinar’s *currere* method possesses the characteristics of a conscientious runner (male or female) engaged in an ongoing action of emotional, mental, physiological, and psychological proportions. The course positions the runner to consider not only converging and diverging tensions but also interconnecting and overlapping possibilities of the aforementioned elements (education, schooling, teaching, and learning) as integral to the runner (re) constructing their autobiographical identity. As stated previously, Pinar understanding of the course is that “*currere* seeks to understand the contribution academic studies makes to one’s understanding of his or her life...the student at any given moment she or he is in a “biographic situation” that is to say, that she or he is located in historical time and cultural place, but in a singularly meaningful way, a situation to be expressed in one’s autobiographical voice” (Pinar 2010, pg. 36).

In proceeding with my discussion, it is vital to provide a more detailed examination of course and its prefix variations. Returning to the runner on the course it is vital to consider the runner's recourse. A runner's recourse (for Pinar the *regressive* turn) allows the runner to return to their past and consider a possible future. On the intercourse or rather what Pinar considers the *analytical* turn, the runner communicates back and forth, he or she exchanges and a runs between their past, present and future. The intercourse allows the runner to consider self- intervention on the course and introspection during the discourse. The discourse presents an affinity to Pinar's *synthetical* turn in his *currere* method. The discourse is the runner's process of understanding and reasoning, the runner considering his or her thought(s). In the discourse of the course, the runner engages in conversations with their past and present; the runner encounters intersecting cultural and societal narratives, their internal and external self, and histories. In retrospect to the aforementioned recourse (*regressive turn*), intercourse (*analytical turn*), and discourse (*synthetical turn*), a supplementary examination of toward a course of becoming in relation to the contributions of autobiographical method for "reading" Caribbean identity; and vice versa, Caribbean identity for (re) reading the curriculum as a course to be run, particularly with respect to the Caribbean, migrant, colonial-post-colonial subject.

In continuing my discussion, I propose a paradigmatic shift and consider the notion of emigrating and immigrating toward (re) constructing identity. Emigrating and immigrating chronicles implicit and explicit undertones locating individuals within specific cultural and global narratives. Explicit emigrant narratives are synonymous with individuals leaving their native country of origin; the leaving is a voluntarily or involuntarily to relocate to a completely different country. By leaving their country of origin, emigrants look hopefully towards

acknowledging the significance of their familial historical narratives and indenture their present self and future self to (re) construct their identity.

Explicit undertones of immigrant narratives suggest an individual coming into a country to which they are not a native of that country; their innate core values brought with them into their relocated narrative. An immigrant coming into a relocated narrative addresses preconceived ideologies of the relocated narrative; immigrants consider a moving away, a moving from, and a moving to. In immigrating the adapting, the negotiation process of acclimatization occurs within the framework of emigrating and immigrating. Explicit emigrant and immigrant narratives affix themselves within time and space through cohesive cultural and familial artifacts, ceremonies, heirlooms, relics, and traditions. Implicit emigrant and immigrant narratives positioned themselves within close proximity of each other thus inaugurating interconnecting experiences, knowledge, memories, and traditions within the framework of a course toward becoming.

The process of emigrating and immigrating within the framework of toward a course of becoming and re-constructing identity connotes the simultaneous and ongoing process of leaving and coming, coming and leaving. According to Stuart Hall, “identities are never completed, never finished; they are always as subjectivity itself is, in process. That itself is a pretty difficult task. Though we have always known it a little bit, we have always thought about ourselves as getting more like ourselves everyday...Identity is always in the process of formation” (Hall 1997, p. 47). Emigrating and immigrating within the framework of toward a course of becoming is analogous to defining the self and negotiating the self with the other; in retrospect, the self belongs to, is becoming, and is being in relation to the other; and the other belongs to, is becoming and is being in relation to the self. There is a constant going towards

(emigrating) and coming to (immigrating) a desired identity. Emigrating and immigrating towards identity is in constant flux, the imagined self is other as the other is the imagined self.

BECOMING, BELONGING, AND BEING

The verb belong positions an individual as a distinct member of a larger heterogeneous whole; more specifically, the human race—a taxonomy that will be discussed subsequently. Innately flawed, the human race is circumscribed by our thoughts, ideas, actions, ambitions, desires, dreams, imaginations; the complexities of the human race situates the imagined self in place, in space, and in time. Becoming is any process of change whereas being gives self-consciousness. Being is existing towards the best possible self; being in character and personality; being for a desired purpose; being in relation to others as part of and apart from.

In (re) constructing identity it is imperative to consider Stuart Hall when he states, "...identity is not only a story, a narrative which we tell ourselves about ourselves, it is stories which change with historical circumstances. And identity shifts with the way in which we think and hear them and experience them...identities actually come from outside, they are the way in which we are recognized and then come to step into the place of the recognitions which others give us.

Without the others there is no self, there is no self-recognition" (Hall 1997, p. 49). In relation to the aforementioned discussion of 'be' and 'ing' within the framework of toward a course of becoming, additional considerations to the first position of identity belonging is pivotal. Identity belonging positions us the human race in varied geographical locations across the globe subsequently constructing multiple interpretations of our belonging to and within specific cultural, ethnic, and racial groups. Celebrations, ceremonies, customs, memorials, rituals, and

traditions demarcate our global belonging; pre-existing legacies construct a sequence of heterogeneous biographical narratives informed by fragmented memoirs contained in our birthright. In contrast, an autobiographical narrative (re) positions the protagonist within a self-authored space whereas biographical narratives are (re) constructed within and by dominant cultural and social ideologies.

Identity belonging also situates us within a predetermined time, a specific time informed by the results of biological forces in nature carried out by our parents defining our humanity and gender. The joining of our parents' genetic codes has pre-disposed specific character traits and pre-assigned specific physical traits leaving us to construct and reconstruct mental images of ourselves internally and externally. Identity becoming is by nature transitional, a process, and an unfixed metamorphic journey. The third position identity being is predicated on an interrelationship between identity belonging and identity becoming. From this vantage point it is therefore essential to consider Stuart Hall when he states, "instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices than represents, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall 1997, p. 45). My conceptualizing of toward a course of becoming perpetually engages the desired self with dominant culture; subsequently emerging intersecting and often blurred lines of belonging, being, and becoming engender shifting narratives encapsulating knowledge and memory that become the catalysts for (re) constructing identity.

Here I want to offer a brief departure from the aforementioned three positions of identity as belonging, identity as becoming, and identity as being in order to turn toward a discussion of racial identity. This discussion is, as I will attempt to show, vital to conceptualizing toward a

course of becoming: autobiography, knowledge, memory and (re) constructing identity. In discussing racial identity, examining the taxonomy “human race” is necessary. By nature, the human race is the dominant specie with complex representations, according to Omi and Winant, “Nothing handed down from the past could keep race alive if we did not constantly reinvent and re-ritualize it to fit our own terrain. If race lives on today, it can do so only because we continue to create and re-create it in our social life, continue to verify it, and thus continue to need a social vocabulary that will allow us to make sense, not of what our ancestors did then, but of what we choose to do now” (Omi and Winant 1993, p. 6).

In (re) constructing identity through the interrelationships of autobiography, knowledge and memory, Stuart Hall reminds us that identity “...is a matter of becoming as well as being. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture...like everything which is historical; identities undergo constant transformation...Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past” (Hall 2010, pg. 74). In considering the implications of Hall’s insight for my project, I propose an understanding of identity re-construction far from being disassociated images or fragmented pieces of isolated historical events. Rather, our identity is an amalgamation of past historical narratives overarching our present life- story thus informing an autobiographical future. To this end, I now turn to discussing the significance of autobiography for this inquiry.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Autobiography is the combination of two words, the prefix auto meaning “*self*” and the suffix biography meaning “*an account, a description of life, a record.*” In the autobiographic narrative, the writer’s lived experiences coalesce as source material for writing their autobiography, the protagonist engages in ongoing conversations with and negotiations of childhood memories. In an autobiography, descriptive details chronicle conflicts and resolution, failures and success, joys and tragedies of the protagonist’s journey throughout their lives. A window into the protagonist’s interrelationships with different characters (antagonists, friends, parents, teachers) reveal the true-to-life details of what people do and say in the narrative. Mental images and milestone events provide historicity subsequently authenticating the protagonist’s autobiographic narrative. Personal memoirs of the protagonist’s physical and psychological development establish his or her humanity averting ambiguity and distance.

In an autobiographic account, the autobiographer acknowledge themselves as an object among other objects, they take into consideration their cultural, ethnic, and social framework—the autobiographer is the protagonist in the narrative; their sense of self is predicated on their (re) construction, interaction, and perception of reality. The protagonist in an autobiographic narrative commits themselves to contentious contemplation of their own consciousness and sense of being. According Sigmund Freud’s “*Ego*” in his psychoanalytical theory the “*ego*” or self is,

...that portion of the human personality which is experienced as the “self” or “I” and is in contact with the external world through perception. It is said to be the part that remembers, evaluates, plans, and in other ways is responsive to and acts in the surrounding physical and social world. The ego gives continuity and consistency to behavior by providing a personal point of reference, which relates the events of the past (retained in memory) with actions of the present and of the future (represented in anticipation and imagination). The ego is not coextensive with either the personality or the body, although body concepts form the core of early experiences of self. The ego, once developed, is capable of change throughout life, particularly under conditions of threat, illness, and significant changes in life circumstances (Britannica 2015).

For Lincoln Alexander the self in the autobiographic narrative is understanding, "...in our consciousness we all know we are accountable to ourselves, and within us the motivating force— our own versions of the three hooded figures in black, with their gowns swaying as they walk— will be there to remind us of that" (Alexander 2010, pg. 16). In comparison, Frederick Douglass' autobiographic narrative constructed his understanding of the *self* within the framework of slavery when he states,

Master, however, was not a humane slaveholder. It required extraordinary barbarity on the part of an overseer to affect him. He was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slave- holding. He would at times seem to take pleasure in whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart- rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine...no words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from his bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped...I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember anything. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood- stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass (Douglass pg. 5).

In addition to (re) constructing the self, the autobiographer gives a comprehensive and often elaborate description of his or her life nearing the end of their lives. For Lincoln Alexander in the autobiographic narrative, "There will be a series of memorable, critical, and invaluable experiences and events in our lives that will positively shape our outlooks, reinforce our beliefs, give us life goals, and guide us through our life journey. Fortunately, I had learned early not to fear being ahead of the pack. My determination was fueled by my recognition from a very early age that education was the path to limitless possibility..." (Alexander 2010, pg. 14- 15).

According to Albert E. Stone's critique of Frederick Douglass' autobiography, he argues that Douglass "writes both as experiencing boy and experience adult. This double vision is managed

with considerable skill throughout the book; Douglass is a very youthful autobiographer, with a young man's vivid memories instead of an older writer's dairies or reminiscences as resources" (Stone 1990, pg. 69). In (re) constructing his identity and sense of self-hood Douglass embarks on a deliberate autobiographic journey from slavery to a free man through his slave narrative; whereas, Alexander recalls personal memories and experiences to construct his autobiography. In retelling of his trip to Africa Alexander states, "The experience was an eye-opener for me, not only as a lawyer, but also as a human being, because I began to realize what black people could do, I saw that, unlike the Hollywood version, these Africans were men and women of significant talents. I became conscious of my blackness; I had come from a white world. Now we were in Africa, and I realized we are people of skill and creativity. I was a black man and I was a somebody. I started to stand tall" (Alexander 2010, pg. 75).

In continuing my discussion on the *self* within the framework of autobiography I propose analyzing the autobiographical course run by the Caribbean (migrant) subject constructing and re-constructing senses of identity, belonging, being, and becoming. As previously stated, a common misconception regarding African- Caribbean peoples is that of a homogenous cultural identity throughout the chain of islands situated in the Caribbean Sea and the Americas. Unlike the aforementioned, peoples of the Caribbean are the direct result of colonial- post- colonial thought affecting the definition of selfhood. The Caribbean (im)migrant subject engages in constructing an autobiography as "...a lonely act of self- definition and self- affirmation that performs its own distinctive mediation of otherness in the colonial and postcolonial Caribbean... the Caribbean is never a matter of subtracting, but always of adding, for the Caribbean discourse carries, a myth or desire for social, cultural and psychic integration to

compensate for the fragmentation and provisionality of the collective Being” (Paquet 2002 pg. 194). In addition to understanding the autobiography of the Caribbean (im) migrant Stuart Hall states, “everybody there comes from somewhere else, and it is not clear what has drawn them to it. That is to say, their true cultures, the places they really come from, the traditions that really formed them, are from somewhere else. The Caribbean is the first, the original and the purest diaspora. What is more, not therefore just a diaspora and living in a place where the centre is always somewhere else, but we break with those originating cultural sources as passed through the traumas of violent rupture” (Hall 1995, pg. 6).

In an autobiographic narrative, traversing from one particular understanding of a believed and perceived reality to another engenders a paradigmatic shift. The protagonist encounters a journey of epic proportions subsequently altering their reality and sense of self- perception. In retrospect, I will examine Plato’s *The Allegory of the Cave* in Book VII of his Republic within the framework of re- constructing Identity. Plato constructs the dialogue between his mentor Socrates and Glaucon. To begin his dialogue, Socrates asks Glaucon to imagine a cave with prisoners immobilized (from childhood) by chains shackled to their legs and necks. Throughout their lives, the prisoners are hoodwinked (by puppeteers) into believing that animal and human images appearing on the wall in front of them are real and not merely shadows created from a glowing fire situated between the prisoners and an elevated walkway engineered by the puppeteers. Socrates continues by personalizing the allegory by introducing Glaucon to a solitary prisoner’s journey from darkness to light, deception to enlightenment, and climactically self- realization. In journeying from darkness to light, the prisoner experiences physical light for the first time; the light from the sun illuminates perception to light and darkness. In journeying from

deception to enlightenment and climactically self- realization, the prisoner's reflection of himself in water and visual understanding of different shapes in the outside world, re- constructs his reality and identity.

It behooves me to consider the myriad of possibilities in committing to a more sophisticated analysis of Socrates' dialogue with Glaucon, but I hesitate to perform such an undertaking. Prior to being dragged from the cave, the prisoner's fate was confined to what Plato refers to as "meaningless illusion." Outside the cave, the lone escapee "... would need, than, to grow accustomed before he could see things in that upper world. At first it would be easiest to make out shadows, and then the images of men and images reflected in water, and later on the things themselves...he would be able to look at the Sun and contemplate its nature, not as it appears when reflected in water or any alien medium, but as itself in its own domain...he would begin to draw the conclusion that it is the Sun that produces the seasons and the course of the year and controls everything in the visible world, and moreover is in a way the cause of all that he and his companions used to see" (Plato 1945, pg. 229- 230).

There is no cause for speculation that the prisoner's ascent from the cave leads to his transient emancipation allowing him to deconstruct the illusions of the shadows cast on the wall of the cave by the puppeteers and to reconstruct a new reality informed by the world outside the cave. By deconstructing the illusions in the cave and reconstructing a new reality, the prisoner transcended the presupposed paradigm, unearthed his individuality, and became fully aware. Now enlightened to the dissimilarities of illusion and reality he would contemplate his existence and remember, "...that the eyes may be confused in two ways—by a change from light to

darkness or from darkness to light; and he will recognize that the same thing happens to the soul. When he sees it troubled and unable to discern anything clearly, instead of laughing thoughtlessly, he will ask whether, coming from a brighter existence, its unaccustomed vision is obscured by darkness, in which case he will think its condition enviable and its life a happy one; or whether, emerging from the depths of ignorance, it is dazzled by excess of light” (Plato 1945, pg. 229- 230).

In maintaining cohesion throughout my discussion on autobiography within the framework of toward a course of becoming and (re) constructing identity I return to Pinar’s *currere* method when he states, “the student at any given moment she or he is in a “biographic situation”, that is to say, that she or he is located in historical time and cultural place, but in a singularly meaningful way, a situation to be expressed in one’s autobiographical voice” (Pinar 2010, pg. 36). The protagonist autobiographic voice allows them to express their lived experiences within the context of self-awareness; subsequently their self- awareness produces knowledge vital to re-constructing identity.

KNOWLEDGE

For Pinar, knowledge is framed within his *currere* method (regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical) wherein it “provides a strategy for students of curriculum to study the relationship between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self- understanding and social reconstruction” (Pinar 2010, pg. 35). Pinar’s regressive turn in his *currere* method mirrors a priori knowledge or prior knowledge; in contrast, a posteriori knowledge is knowledge derived from experience, knowledge acquired from what comes later. A posteriori knowledge

within the framework of Pinar's *currere* method is akin to the progressive where the subject "looks toward what is not yet the case, what is not yet present. Like the past, the future inhabits the present. Meditatively, the student of *currere* imagines possible futures" (Pinar 2010, pg. 36). In considering the preceding discussion on autobiography, I propose an interconnecting correlation of an autobiographical narrative and knowledge thus constructing what Conway calls autobiographical knowledge. According to Conway, "The life story contains general factual and evaluative knowledge about the individual. It may also contain self- images that divide and separate the self into several different selves. These divisions may be supported by the way in which different self- images contain cues that differently access other knowledge in the autobiographical knowledge base" (Conway 2005, pg. 608).

Knowledge connotes a global awareness of the *self* within larger cultural, ethnic, and societal constructs. Knowledge contemplates internal and external self-awareness; a familiarity with people, places, and things through direct and indirect contact or implicit and explicit experience; moreover, knowledge is obtained through a plethora of learning possibilities demarcated by a myriad of circumstances inaugurated at birth and subsequently carried on through to infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Each stage of our global and ontogeny (infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood) are bombarded by interconnecting, overlapping, and shifting knowledge encoding and decoding physical stimuli thus constructing our perception of self- awareness within a specific geographical and physical space.

Knowledge in of itself underscores the innate functions of our senses (our sense of hearing, seeing, smelling, taste, and touch) giving us a glimpse into the sense images akin to personal

narratives constructed and reconstructed by memory; it is therefore plausible to consider the implications of knowledge as a specified concept affecting our autobiographical journey in (re) constructing identity. The autobiographic journey moves us from an abstract and intangible understanding of the *self* to tangible representations of fragmented and interconnected images. Furthermore, knowledge as an acquisition propositions a return to these fragmented and interconnected mental images to recover and reconstruct these sense- images into representations of the self. The recreation and reformation of the mental images positions the protagonist at the forefront of the ensuing autobiographical narrative.

Additional considerations into an epistemological analysis of knowledge will further substantiate my discussion. Knowledge originates from the word *know*; to *know* is to perceive and have an undimmed understanding of a specified fact with unambiguous certainty and resolve. To know is an active process wherein the knower (subject) decodes cultural, ethnic, emotional, mental, physiological, and sociological constructs to (re) construct their perception of the self. For French Philosopher René Descartes (1596- 1650), his empirical knowledge (knowledge gained from the senses) and conceptual knowledge (knowledge gained from understanding meaning) are akin to acknowledging one's existence, in his second of six meditations Descartes states,

I suppose, accordingly, that everything that I see is false; I convince myself that nothing has ever existed of all that my deceitful memory recalls to me. I think that I have no senses; and I believe that the body, shape, extension, motion, and location are merely inventions of my mind. What then could still be thought true? Perhaps nothing else, unless it is that there is nothing certain in the world... without doubt I existed if I was convinced or even if I thought anything. Even though there may be a deceiver of some sort, very powerful and very tricky, who bends all his efforts to keep me perpetually deceived, there can no slightest doubt that I exist, since he deceives me; and let him deceive me as much as he will, he can never make me be nothing as long as I think I am something. Thus having thought well on this matter, and after examining all these things with care, I must finally conclude and maintain that this proposition: *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true every time that I pronounce it or conceive it in my mind (Baird 2000, pg. 397).

For Frederick Douglass his situational knowledge (knowledge gained from experience) positioned him to consider the brutality of slavery inflicted on his mother, his fellow slaves, and those before him and envision his pathway to freedom from the cruel and barbaric practice of slavery. Douglass understood the perpetuation of slavery depended on slave owners depriving their slaves from acquiring knowledge through education; in acquiring knowledge through education, mental and physical emancipation would illuminate slaves to the dehumanizing chains of ignorance. Douglass expressed his resolve by writing in his autobiography, “Very soon I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read” (Douglass 1895, pg. 36).

Douglass continues describing his journey to understanding the significance of knowledge as the path towards his freedom. In reference to Mr. Auld’s determination to maintain his position of dominance over his slaves, Douglass goes on to say and to quote him, “To use his words, further he said, “if you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master—to do as he is told to do. Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world...if you teach a nigger (speaking to myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy” (Douglass 1895, pg. 36).

Douglass continues by articulating the virtues of his self- education and awareness of seeing himself as a man and not the ill-gotten gain as the possession of slave owners. For Douglass, Mr.

Auld unknowingly illuminates his understanding of the cruel irony of acquiring knowledge, the injustice of slavery, his humanity, and the possible dangers of freedom presented themselves as pitfalls on his autobiographic journey. Douglass states, “These words sank deep into my heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence an entirely new train of thought. It was a new and special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things, with which my youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain. I now understand what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty—to wit, the white man’s power to enslave the black man. It was a grand achievement, and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood that pathway from slavery to freedom. It was just what I wanted, and I got it at a time when I the least expected it” (Douglass 1895, pg. 36). Lincoln Alexander’s knowledge of the past, his present, and the forthcoming future of African- Caribbean migrants within a colonial- post- colonial North American context precipitated his speech in the House of Commons when he states,

The negro has to struggle. Some say I have it made. Let me, standing here, be no indication that all negroes in Canada have It made. Let me say this: the negro has awakened with a new soul. He knows he is somebody. He is Thurgood Marshall, supreme court justice, he is Dr. Ralph Bunche, diplomat extraordinaire. He is Carl Stokes, mayor of Cleveland. He is Dr. Martin Luther King, whose passive resistance has changed the nature of thinking of the whole free world. This is an impressive list, I know, but I wonder how many men of such caliber we have lost because of the deliberate rejection of people of color. I am not the spokesperson for the negro; that honour has not been given to me. Do not let me ever give anyone that impression. However, I want the record to show that I accept the responsibility of speaking for him and all others in this great nation who feel that they are the subjects of discrimination because of race, creed, or color (Alexander 2010, pg. 109).

For Alexander toward a course of becoming and re- constructing identity is the ongoing organic process of writing an autobiographical narrative with the understanding of the past, present, and the possible future. In Stuart Hall’s understanding of Caribbean knowledge he states, “I don’t want to speak about the nature of this rupture, with the majority of the population wrenched from

their own cultures and inserted into the cultures of the colonizing plantation relations of slavery. I don't want to talk about the trauma of transportation, of the breaking up of linguistic and tribal and familial groups. I don't want to talk about the brutal aftermath of Indian indenture. I simply want to say that in the histories of the migration, forced or free, of peoples who now compose the populations of these societies, whose cultural traces are everywhere intermingled with one other, there is always the stamp of historical violence and rupture" (Hall 1990, pg. 6). For Fanon his knowledge of himself is,

A slow composition of my *self* as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world—such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather, a definitive structuring of the self and of the world—definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world. All I wanted was to be a man among other men. I wanted to come lithe and young into the world that was ours and to help to build it together. I wanted to be a man, nothing but a man. Some identified me with ancestors of mine who had been enslaved or lynched: I decided to accept this. It was on the universal level of the intellect that I understood this inner kinship—I was the grandson of slaves... (Fanon 1967, pg. 111, 112- 113).

In addition to the aforementioned discourse, it is essential to consider the possible implications of the Caribbean (im) migrant's colonial- post- colonial knowledge in relation to a course toward becoming and (re) constructing identity. The plight of the Caribbean (im) migrant constitutes an ongoing tension of coming and going and vice- versa as well as converging and diverging pre-existing narratives. These narratives overlapping subsequently garner implicit knowledge (knowledge implied and often hidden); according to Roberts, "...when Europeans began to write about the New World, they already had an exotic vision of people, places, things and events elsewhere that had been formed by Greek mythology and beliefs about 'the Indies'. Colonial societies in the Caribbean were artificially, in the sense that they were imposed on the land and controlled from outside. In addition, the islands themselves seemed to have encouraged

movement, nomadic and migratory, even before the advent of Columbus. Thereafter, though rigid systems remained in place, the rate of population replacement was consistently high, especially where sugar and slavery thrived” (Roberts 2008, pg. 2- 3).

In comparison, Hall argues that explicit knowledge (knowledge easily transmitted to others by observation or verbalization) positions the Caribbean migrant to “belong to the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the ‘Other’. We are at the outer edge, the ‘rim’, of the metropolitan world—always ‘*South*’ to someone else’s *El Norte*. The common history—transportation, slavery, colonization—has been profoundly formative. For all these societies, unifying us across our differences. But it does not constitute a common origin, since it was, metaphorically as well as literally, a translation” (Hall 1990 pg. 228). In other words, the Caribbean migrant encounters an ongoing process of deciphering implicit and explicit knowledge of their colonial- post- colonial past in conjunction of re-constructing identity.

MEMORY

What is Memory? An etymological definition of memory is the “recollection of someone or something; awareness, consciousness” (Harper 2015). For Beatrice Culleton Mosionier, “Memories. Some are elusive, fleeting, like a butterfly that touches down and is free until it is caught. Others haunting: you’d rather forget them, but they won’t be forgotten. And some are always there. No matter where you are, they are there to. I always felt most memories were better avoided, but now I think it’s best to go back in my life before I go forward” (Mosionier 2008, pg. 1). In going back to (re) collect or rather reanimate or lived experiences, we proposition our past to (re)construct an authentic present; there is an ongoing dialogue with the present as an

antecedent to conceptualizing an anticipated future. In our re-collective experience we manipulate and negotiate our cultural and ethnic identity; our sense- memories accessed through our sense of hearing, seeing, smelling, taste, and touch to (re)construct autobiographical images. Our memories position us within a polarized space where we encounter a going to and coming from; our current experiences in of themselves confide in the past; subsequently, our imagined self alters within the current space of becoming. In seeking to acquire cohesion within our polarized memory- space, we construct a schema of memory that encapsulates an event(s) that ties our lived experiences together.

Our life story and memories are characterized by interconnecting narratives that are selectively strung together within our autobiography. For Conway, memory is, “a major component of the self... memories may be altered, distorted, even fabricated, to support current aspects of the self. Coherence is a strong force in human memory that acts at encoding, post- encoding, and re- encoding, to shape both the accessibility of memories and the accessibility of their content. This is done in such a way as to make memory consistent with an individual’s current goals, self- images, and self- beliefs. Thus memory and central aspects of the self form a coherent system in which the healthy individual, beliefs about, and knowledge of, the self are confirmed and supported by memories of specific experiences” (Conway 2005, pg. 595). In hindsight, we are perpetually accessing, creating, and recreating memories simultaneously with the past, present, and imagined future. In addition, memory should be considered “not as an ability to revive accurately impressions once obtained, but as the integration into the whole personality and their revival according to the needs of the whole personality” (Conway 2005, pg. 595). Turning

towards defining memory within the framework of the Caribbean migrant subject Stuart Hall states, that memory is

the retention of old customs, the retention of cultural traits from Africa; customs and traditions which were retained in and through slavery, In plantation, in religion, partly in language, in folk customs, in music, in dance, in all those forms of expressive culture which allowed men and women to survive the trauma of slavery. Nevertheless, in everyday life, in so far as it was possible, maintaining some kind of subterranean link with what was often called 'the other Caribbean', the Caribbean that was not recognized, that could not speak, that had no official records, no official account of its own transportation, no official histories, but nevertheless that oral life which maintained an umbilical connection with the Africa homeland and culture (Hall 1990, pg. 7).

Memory for the Caribbean migrant is an ongoing process of deconstructing imposed ideologies to (re)constructing representations of the imagined self within a larger social and societal context. The Caribbean migrant engages with their past, present, and future and consider "the representations of the conceptual self" that are "socially constructed schema and categories that define the self, other people, and typical interactions with others and the surrounding world. These schema and categories are drawn largely from the influences of familial and peer socialization, schooling, and religion, as well as the stories, fairy- tales, myths, and media influences that are constitutive of an individual's particular culture" (Conway 2005, pg. 597). The goal for the autobiographer is to consider the images represented in their memory as the building- blocks to (re)constructing their identity within the framework of Pinar's *currere* method regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical turn. These "self- images are mental models of the self in relation to past, current, and future goals and form part of the conceptual self" (Conway 2005, pg. 600). Memories situates us within specific cultural, ethnic, and social narratives; "...each individual has a set of 'self-defining' memories which contain critical knowledge of progress on the attainment of long- term goals" (Conway 2005, pg. 600). The goal

outlined in toward a course of becoming through autobiography, knowledge, and memory and (re) constructing identity positions the autobiographer to take into account their self- defining memories. These self- defining memories contain critical knowledge of progress on the attainment of conceptualized goals. The memory process of encoding, consolidating, storing, and retrieving our lived experiences inaugurates the (re) constructing of identity.

IDENTITY

By definition identity is “the state of being the same in substance, nature, qualities; absolute sameness” (Barber 2005, pg. 403). A supplementary definition of identity provided by Dictionary.com is “the state of remaining the same one as under varying aspects or conditions, the condition of being oneself and not another, the state of having unique identifying characteristics held by no other person, the individual characteristics by which a person is recognized.” The aforementioned connotes identity with cohesive and innate fundamental components representing a holistic narrative; however, according to Stuart Hall “...identity is not only a story, a narrative which we tell ourselves about ourselves, it is stories which change with historical circumstances. and identity shifts with the way in which we think and hear them and experience them...identities actually come from outside, that are the way in which we are recognized and then come to step into the place of the recognitions which others give us. Without the others there is no self, there is no self- recognition” (Hall 1996, pg. 8). In (re) constructing identity within the framework toward a course of becoming: autobiography, knowledge, memory; it is imperative to consider the merits of Pinar’s *currere* method (regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical).

The autobiographical narrative is an ongoing internal and external conversation the protagonist engages in with themselves and other, their understanding of their past, present, and imagined future. Identity for Frederick Douglass was a series of antecedent circumstances leading to his eventual freedom from slavery. Douglass describes his mental resolve to assert his humanity and free himself from the cruel brutality of slavery after a violent physical confrontation with his slave owner Mr. Covey,

This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self- confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long- crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place, and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing me (Douglass 1895, pg. 74).

The Caribbean migrant's identity is a hodgepodge of historicity, a collage of (re) collected memories, a stitching together of fragmented stories that are rooted in multiple representations of the colonial- post- colonial African within the North- American framework. The herculean task of the Caribbean migrant is (re) constructing an imagined self within the complexities of interconnecting cultural, ethnic, and social narratives. In illuminating the possibilities of (re) constructing identity from fragments, Stuart Hall states "identity is always in part a narrative, always in part a kind of representation. It is always within representation. Identity is not something which is formed outside and then we tell stories about it. It is that which is narrated in one's own self" (Hall 1997, pg. 49). In narrating the self, the narrator acknowledges their duality as the autobiographer and protagonist; employing Pinar's *currere* method (regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical) contributes significantly to navigating the changing

landscape of the course allowing the protagonist to synthesize decisions constructing and re-constructing their desired identity.

DISCUSSION

This major research paper represents an attempt to work with ideas, theories and autobiographical texts that inform my thinking about the process I have named a *Toward a Course of Becoming: Autobiography, Knowledge, Memory and (Re) Constructing Identity*. Throughout this major research paper, I have employed Pinar's *currere* method as a quadratic paradigm in understanding the significance of autobiography for tracing and (re)constructing identity as *synthetical* turn. Within this *currere* framework, my interests concern interconnections among complexities vital to deriving a sense of the autobiographical course run by Caribbean (and other migrant) subjects constructing and re-constructing senses of identity, belonging, being, and becoming elsewhere beyond "origin" or "home".

The intention of my discussion is to indicate the potential contribution of specifically Caribbean and African descent, (im) migrant -North American autographical experience to broaden and expand the *currere* approach to curriculum understanding. By employing the notion of "understanding curriculum," I have aimed to underscore the dynamic—though often absented—course toward self-awareness traversed by the Caribbean migrant subject within shifting nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century historical contexts of North America. In understanding the curriculum as a Caribbean migrant subject, I position myself to consider the plethora of interconnecting and overlapping historical narratives of my past and present and their contributions to imagining futures—my future—which is not yet. In imagining my future as practitioner and student of *currere*, it is essential to re-construct my identity within the place

where I live my life now, a North American geography, while simultaneously looking through the lens of my African Caribbean ancestry. Moving through regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical modes, I contemplate the significance and effect of colonial post-colonial thought for expanding curriculum practice.

In examining the course run, it is necessary to consider the complex interrelationships within a past, present, and future characterized in onward, though non-linear movement.

Autobiographical movement is deliberate and directional but it is also uncertain and contingent, subject to revision and redirection given new insight offered by attentiveness to experience—although what experience will mean can never be known in advance. For Pinar the “course” as curriculum comes into being through autobiographical activity wherein the curriculum practitioner—“the student of *currere*”—engages in regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical modes of inquiry to construct and re-construct self-narrative. Here the practitioner takes seriously the autobiographical-self, particularly to consider questions of past and belonging—what I have identified via Pinar as the *regressive* turn. In a subsequent step, *progressive* turn, the practitioner/student seeks out a vantage point from which to consider, “what is not yet the case, what is not yet present.” Like the past, as Pinar notes, “the future inhabits the present. Meditatively, the student of *currere* imagines possible futures” (Pinar 2010, pg. 36). In addition, this state of becoming positions the practitioner/student to act at a deeper level, the level of *analytical* turn, where it become possible to examine “both past and present” and to consider “how the future is present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both” (Pinar 2010, pg. 37). Finally, the *synthetical* turn of becoming allows the practitioner to engage in introspective investigation and “look at oneself concretely, as if in a mirror.

However, in the autobiographic turn, as Stone reminds, “one must not forget that autobiography depends upon memory as much as on imagination, [and] all remembered events do not fit readily into neat structural or imagistic patterns...” (Stone, 1990, pg. 73). The turn towards knowledge positions the practitioner/student to consider ontologically that “Human societies are not static.”

Here Robert makes an observation that is central to my thinking in this research paper:

not only are identities constantly being modified but new ones also come into being. The two fundamental processes through which new identities come into being are genetic change or ecological change. This is so because one of the most common human realities is that social and economic pressures in a population often result in migration, which in turn leads to contact across ethnic groups. In such cases there is both change of environment and infusion of new genetic material into a population (Roberts 2008, pg. 10).

Additional considerations into a quadratic understanding of Pinar’s *currere* method I explore have focused on “memory” as the *regressive* turn. For Paquet, in the *regressive* turn the narrator “returns to native space as one who has inscribed its particulars and his relationship to its various parts in any number of books of history, fiction, and travel. The territory to which he returns was crisscrossed in previous journeys extensively inscribed in a series of widely read texts. He returns to this space again, pen in hand, to retrace previous journeys and reinscribe his relationship to native space from a different perspective” (Paquet 2002, pg. 200- 201). Turning in another way towards (re) constructing identity, this time as a *synthetical* turn, Stuart Hall affirms,

Histories come and go, peoples come and go, situations change, but somewhere down there is throbbing the culture to which we all belong. It provides a kind of ground for our identities, something to which we can return, something solid, something fixed, something stabilized, around which we can organize our identities and our essence of belongingness. No cultural identity is produced out of thin air. It is produced out of those historical experiences; those marginalized experiences, those peoples and histories, which remain unwritten. Those are the specific roots of identity. On the other hand, identity itself is not the rediscovery of them, but what they as cultural resources allow a people to produce. Identity is not in the past to be found, but in the future to be constructed (Hall 1995, p. 14).

In other words, for Hall history is an unending pilgrimage of constructing and reconstructing intersecting personal narratives unfolding across the past, present, and future. Histories are stories revolving from within lived experiences, stories that evolve intrinsically within a cultural, ethnic, and social framework. History is fundamental to the structural integrity of humanity; without history, there is no present and subsequently no future. In addition, I propose a possible reinterpretation of history to an understanding of history as, his-story and her-story. By conceptualizing history as a personal narrative, my story underscores the human experience as an autobiographical paradigm wherein identity is a process of becoming.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some additional thoughts are in order in respect to discussing *Toward a Course of Becoming: Autobiography, Knowledge, Memory and (Re) Constructing Identity*. The main aim of this analysis is to derive a sense of the autobiographical course run by the Caribbean (migrant) subject constructing and re-constructing senses of identity, belonging, being, and becoming. The intention of the research is to indicate the potential contribution of specifically Caribbean and African descent, (im) migrant -North American autobiographical experience to the *currere* approach to curriculum understanding. In mediating the interconnecting relationship of protagonist and *currere* contained within an autobiographical narrative of *(Re) Constructing Identity* Stuart Hall considers, “a notion of the continuous, self-sufficient, developmental, unfolding, inner dialectic of selfhood. We are never quite there, but always on our way to it, and when we get there, we will at last know exactly who it is we are” (Hall 1997, p. 42). Now that we have considered the interrelationship between autobiography, knowledge, memory, and (re) reconstructing identity

within the framework of toward a course of becoming, it would be plausible to suggest that William Pinar's *currere* method contributes significantly to the Caribbean migrant subject (re) reconstructing their identity through autobiographic inquiry.

Albeit the curriculum is a legal written document that prescribes teaching and learning outcomes; however, for the Caribbean migrant, "travel is constructed as a universal trope: a discourse, a genre, and a basis for comparing the different cultures that traverse and constitute the Caribbean. Native place is a site of arrivals and departures, of local- regional- global encounters involving domination, resistance, commerce, intercultural penetration, and ideological appropriation. The native traveler leaves home and returns in ongoing interaction with a variety of different cultures. He is islander and exile, dweller and traveler; in him the intercultural figure of the native and the intercultural figure of the traveler overlap and intertwine...the Caribbean is never a matter of subtracting, but always of adding, for the Caribbean discourse carries, a myth or desire for social, cultural and psychic integration to compensate for the fragmentation and provisionality of the collective Being" (Paquet 2002, pg. 195- 197). I want to suggest an ontological inquiry and collaborative dialogue within contemporary education, learning, schooling, and teaching. I trust that this research paper offered insight on the interconnectedness between Pinar's *currere* method and Autobiography, Knowledge, and Memory and (Re) Constructing Identity within the framework of Toward a Course of Becoming.

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