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Aporias, Transcendence and a Curriculum of Hospitality

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Aporias, Transcendence and a Curriculum of Hospitality

Abstract

Engaging in dynamic encounters with the other and otherness in education—an issue of creating an aperture that welcomes "a newcomer" either as a new idea or new practice—is important for the field of curriculum studies. Complicating aporias as "various forms of other and otherness," this paper focuses on the encounters with other and otherness (as our understanding of transcendence or border crossing), in which transcendence (border crossing) becomes possible when a curriculum of hospitality is enacted. While culturally and historically informed, the curriculum of hospitality stresses the simultaneity of (1) ethical attentiveness to the encounters with other and otherness, (2) understanding the premise on which hospitality can be enacted—equality and humility and (3) autobiography as possible enacted form of the curriculum. As a curriculum counterpart (Pinar, 2011), curriculum of hospitality centralizes ethical attentiveness to encounters with other and otherness that makes transcendence (space carving) possible, the possible enactment of which is autobiography. It emphasizes the responsibility of educators for welcoming students into a particular world of ideas, knowledge, and skills that honors otherness with hospitality.

Keywords

Aporias, Currere, Transcendence and Hospitality

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A Chinese Myth – *Jing Wei* Filling Up the Sea

The paper begins with a Chinese myth called *Jing Wei* Filling Up the Sea in the Chinese Classic called *Shanhaijing*:

> Three thousand ninety *li* farther southeast, then northeast, stands Departing-Doves Mountain. On its heights are many mulberry trees. There is a bird dwelling here whose form resembles a crow with a patterned head, white beak, and red feet. It is called *Jing Wei* and makes a sound like its name. She is the younger daughter of the Flame Thearch named *Nüwa*. *Nüwa* was swimming in the Eastern Sea when she was unable to return to shore and drowned. She then transformed into the bird *Jing Wei* (meaning Spirit-Guardian) and regularly carries twigs and stones from the Western Mountains to fill up the Eastern Sea. (Strassberg, 2002, p. 111)

This Chinese fable resembles tragedy, rebirth, and new life—a life circle, depicting the moment of facing the impossible plight. The bird becomes radiant in its very particularity. For us, to transcend is to interrogate or re-envision an impossible situation imposed upon us, like the bird—*Jing Wei* in Chinese myth. Thus, to transcend, very possibly, is to face, to embrace, the other and otherness.

We have faced a pandemic that has widely and fiercely swept the world, during which we have been living a constrained life, unprecedented and unanticipated. Social distancing, self-isolation, and reduced chances of social communications and activities became daily routine for almost everyone, the constraints that surrounded us and saturated every aspect of our life. Even after the pandemic, we are still in various constraints, which may be in different forms, imposed by various structural and historical factors. We are, constrained, subjugated subjects as always (Pinar, 2017). As educators, how can we react to these challenges (pandemic and post-pandemic)? Also, can we learn from these constraints and boundaries imposed upon us?

In this paper, we endeavor to explore how teachers can dwell in/on/with aporias manifested as border or constraints, in which they encounters other and otherness, inviting lingering, intermingling and embracing. To transcend aporias, a curriculum of hospitality is thus called upon. While culturally and historically informed, the curriculum of hospitality would stress the simultaneity of (1) ethical attentiveness to the encounters with other and otherness, (2) understanding the premise on which hospitality can be enacted—equality and humility, and (3) autobiography as a possible enacted form of the curriculum. As a curriculum counterpart (Pinar, 2011), it centralizes ethical attentiveness to encounters with other and otherness, which gives enduring access to deepened understanding on other and otherness. It is the curriculum of hospitality that makes transcendence of aporias possible.

Engaging in dynamic encounters with the other and otherness in education—an issue of creating an aperture that welcomes a newcomer either

as a new idea or new practice—is important for the field of curriculum studies and teacher education. Complicating aporias as "various forms of other and otherness," this paper focuses on the encounters with other and otherness (as our understanding of transcendence or border crossing), in which transcendence (border crossing) becomes possible when a curriculum of hospitality is enacted.

As a result, we strategically walk across a given landscape, toward a new zone in which we may deconstruct the existing boundary, reconfigure constraints, re-compose the impossible with the very faith and hospitality.

The Presence of Aporias

What is aporia? In Greek, as Wang (2005) argues, aporias describe "the states of impasse, non-passage, or logical contradiction that can never be permanently resolved, a state of constant dilemma with no general or final solution" (p. 45). It becomes affirmative "through the impossible movement of traversing — without crossing — the ultimate border" (p. 45), being an impossible passage with contradictory imperatives and conflicting gestures. Hence, it is an event of "coming without pas" (Derrida, 1993, p. 8), through which one becomes "attentive to otherness, to the alterity of the other, to something new and other" (Derrida, 1992, p. 7), while dwelling on an edge, the two sides of which are contradictory, "fully awakened" (Wang, 2005, p. 46) and awaiting for quest and answer. In attending to otherness, openness is called upon for the other and the future implied as uncertainty, "an unfinished openness to monstrous excesses that undo us, our positions, our certainties, and our relations to our field" (Kalin, 2013, p. 109).

Aporias as borders or constraints may continuously shift and transform; thus, the experience of approaching/crossing the border always "remains to come" (Wang, 2005, p. 46). The border may not be exceeded but one's trying-to-cross can be trajected and portrayed through which transformation occurs, both expected and unexpected. It may exist invisibly (such as one's own painful memory), but one's connection to them while trying to cross is a felt one, manifested in its own particular way: enhancing or hindering one's movement toward the crossing. The other that lies at another shore may change too, being open to new gaze and interpretation. The aporia may never be exceeded; however, the path to this exceeding can be tested, modified and transformed, which involves an interrogation and interruption into "pre-established norms, practices, and tradition as well as a shattering of the self as stable" (Kalin, 2013, p. 112). While in this impasse, Wang (2005) urges us to engage, to participate, saying that "active engagement with the impossible becomes imperative for creating new forms of life" (Wang, 2005, p. 119). Being with aporias, thus, becomes an imperative way that one contemplates and extends, from which one (re)connects with self and the world, a particular form of being and knowing where one recognizes "an ethics of unknown of becoming rather established forms of being" (Atkinson,

2008, p. 206), where aporetic encounter and entanglement render openness instead of "limiting the possibility of new modes of self-invention" (Kalin, 2013, p.107). As one shifts one's boundary acknowledging unpredictability of the complexity, one welcomes one's guest who may "change the space into which he or she is received" (Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 32). In the current context, aporias may refer to some types of problems manifested in teaching, learning and school, primarily brought by alterity and constraints, including misunderstanding between teacher and student, imposition of knowledge upon students, inadequate understanding on subculture(s) brought by students to school and so on.

As the aporia arrives, the event of approaching the border transforms the border itself. But, can the border not be exceeded?

The Lure of Transcendence

Aporias summon transcendence. Presented as "impasse" that can never be crossed, aporia implies one's endless unfolding, approaching endlessly to "the border," the process of which is both interminable, fluid, and decentered. Aporias invite us to transcend what we have been given, gesturing toward a novel space in which one encounters "innumerable mutations and unforeseeable possibilities, to incalculable ways of being and knowing, doing, and seeing, exposed to potentialities of which we cannot presently conceive, to things improbable and incomprehensible, unimaginable and unplannable" (Caputo, 2000, p. 6). Within various circumstances, aporias manifest themselves as constraints, borders, and difficulties. For us, to transcend aporias is to carve a space in which the impossible is unceasingly interwoven to the possible, constraints provoke unimaginable potentials, and self and other embrace each other in both continuous and unprecedented ways. The aporias may not exist physically, instead of transcending or traversing, we may want to create or carve a space, a non-physical one. It is with/in/within us, in which one becomes displaced however connected to a broader existence, bigger perspective, in associating with more possibilities, forming a new sense of belonging. One adds new repertoires to their "*living carved spaces*" and it has no order of successions.

The impossible interwoven into the possible

How can the impossible be interwoven into the possible? In our life, the impossible may exist in multiple ways: a dream that can never be realized, a perceived challenge or constraint that one conceives as "inconvincible," "insurmountable," or a daily difficulty that sustains us under certain unfavorable conditions. It takes various forms and achieves its particular content depending upon the contingent situation. In real-life setting, the impossible and possible may be braided with each other and "address" each other from time to time. How can the possible and the impossible or the two contradictory sides engage in a pleasant and friendly conversation? It may

happen, I argue, within a person in certain ways. For example, as time lapses, one may have fundamentally changed one's opinion regarding the same issue. One embraces contradictory opinions, yet not at the same time. One may, hence, dwell between the possible and the impossible, the in-betweenness constituted by continuous conversations, structured by temporality, the significance of which is to access truth about oneself instead of reaching a conclusion. For us, such a transformation in oneself can be an example of the "crossing the impasse" or border transcending. One embraces "the other" in oneself as one transforms over time. As one writes autobiographically (*currere*), one enters one's past, sees oneself in the past and converses with oneself in the past. During this process, one may realize one has changed, thereby beginning to embrace a different self. As a subjugated subject one might always live between the possible and impossible.

Pandemic challenges became concrete in the educational realm, manifested as various problems, such as how students can learn by themselves (as effectively as in person classroom learning) and teachers teach as they have experienced in classroom teaching. Is it possible to achieve this goal? Wang's personal experience (one of the authors), her conception of attunement (Wang, 2020) derived from my experience and writing *currere,* may help understand students' learning and teacher's teaching during the pandemic. For Wang (2020), attunement emphasizes the learning guided and experienced by oneself subjectively striving for deeper understanding, during which one can become an observer to oneself, a teacher to and with oneself, encouraging self-questioning and sustained academic study. "This self-self pedagogical relation becomes one instance—later reconstructed—of classroom teaching. It resembles classroom teaching in terms of its conversational character, no matter how loudly or silently in solitude that dialogue is conducted" (Wang, 2020, p. 2). Thus, students become their own teacher, engaging in a self-self pedagogical relation, particularly during this pandemic period when the teacher remains "distant" or "virtual"; at the same time, teachers teach themselves to adjust to the new situation. "In this sense, I am a teacher first to myself, then to others, although it may not be sequenced in a linear way" (Wang, 2020, p. 2). Not surprisingly, students can "teach" teachers too. "My students teach me, too, if I am open to being influenced, as I have asked myself to be in relation to myself as well as others" (p. 2). For instance, during our teaching as a university lecturer, students might express a perspective or experience that was new to us, and if we were open to this newness, instead of rejecting it, we would learn from it.

Both students and teachers, thus, enjoy a dual role. As Taubman (1992) describes his inhabiting the midpoint as a "dialectic … whose endpoints must be attended to but not submitted to" (p. 232). With a shift in focus from external to internal, students and teachers both engage in an inner-directed way of learning (Lee, 1996). Students become their own teacher through initiating self-self dialogue and teachers experience the students' role by way of self-observance and self-questioning; as a result, they both

transcend the border caused by the pandemic: not by engaging in face-to-face learning but by reframing or re-conceptualizing their learning and teaching. Though with the impossible (inability to meet in person), in-depth teaching and learning remains possible. To exceed the unexceed-able border, what we need is to reconstruct the border, reconstruct the relation of the border to us; at this moment, the border transforms itself. In reality, the border may be understood differently by different people, contingent upon one's unique perspective and prior experience. Teachers may consider the inability to meet in person as the border during the pandemic, whereas students may view inability to focus on internet learning as the border.

To embrace the wholly other

To transcend aporias, one is called to embrace the other external to oneself. Can each side of the border "gesture toward" each other with kindness at the same time? Where is the boundary between self and other? Is there a middle ground on which self and other can situate? What constitute such a middle ground? Can change on one side of the border lead to the transformation of the border for both sides? Can one's viewpoints be altered, more or less? As is known to all, there are no two identical leaves in this world though they all look similar. Differences exists everywhere.

To embrace the "other" in the field of education, students and teachers are encouraged to envisage lives and perspectives other than their own. However, knowing the "other" seems a challenging task. "Knowing the other is not technical, but personal and potentially entails self-transformation" (Heilman, 2007, p. 86). At the same time, "Understanding the 'other' is necessarily partial," Heilman (2007) continues, "and the boundaries of the known and unknown are hard to place" (p. 87). For each person who seeks to know, the boundary between known and unknown varies since our knowing might be limited by resources available and context from which knowing is derived. Thus, our knowing is "always political as well as personal and interpersonal" (Heilman, 2007).

Understanding difference and exploring cultures are difficult because they require not just a nod to the others' diversity, but, much more important, they may "implicate one's deepest self and create one's self anew" (Heilman, 2007, p. 89). Therefore, Heilman (2007) encourages cosmopolitizing encounter that facilitates self-understanding. A cosmopolitizing encounter, according to her, changes one's sight of a person and/or place, affecting one's vision of "how some aspect of the world works" (p. 89). She adds:

> Such an encounter may disrupt and rearrange my categories for seeing and being; it adds a new view that changes my thinking and my identity. My range of responses is enhanced. It is more and more possible for me to imagine things beyond myself. I become more complex. My inner gyroscope has more colors and angles (p. 89).

Such an encounter has implications beyond oneself. Ethnocentrism, both as "an exaggerated preference for one's own group and a concomitant dislike of other groups" (Aboud, cited in Heilman, 2007) and an emotional need to enhance self-esteem, interfere with our cross-cultural understandings (Heilman, 2007). For Heilman, teaching students facts about equality has little influence on emotional orientations. Quoting Moreland (cited in Pate, 1988, p. 288), "we need to realize that, although sound knowledge is necessary to combat false information, it is not sufficient to change attitude. Facts do not speak for themselves; rather they are interpreted through the experiences and biases of those hearing them." Hence, we can see that changing attitudes involves changes in how one understands one's experience, how one understands how one has formed one's viewpoints on various issues such as identity, race, and gender. Without these changes, one cannot change one's opinion on others and the world. As argued by Kalin (2013), the question "who are you?" is interwoven within curriculum and pedagogy; maybe, this question has been deeply embedded throughout one's life and learning. Hence, Kalin (2013) posits, "we need to articulate a contextualized sense of individuality that is both socially situated and personally creative" (p. 110). Such sense of individuality acknowledges that self always engages in dialogical interactions with self, other and the world, a situated webbedness that fosters a richer, deeper, and fuller sense of self—a more lived sense of self—in oneself.

The aporia between self and other, and between identity and nonidentity in a multicultural classroom urge us to create a space in the middle, a space of cosmopolitanism – "a global culture of open-mindedness and mutual regard" (Hansen, 2008, p. 207). Concurrently, inhabiting in the between, is to embrace the spirit of cosmopolitanism reverencing each other's distinctiveness. Sometimes we are attuned more to the global than the local (Heilman, 2007, p. 96). Thus, we are lured to engage in non-dualism, in which structural and non-structural, limit and potential and possible and impossible are not totally separate categories, a situated webbedness (as shown previously) that may capture the real scene, the essential configuration, through which a more authentic, holistic understanding can be rendered.

It seems that to embrace the other is to reconsider self first. Possibly Jung's theory on shadow can provide meaningful interpretation or the Chinese notion of *Yin* and *Yang* works perfectly here. The "shadow" is a concept first proposed by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung that describes those aspects of the personality that one tries to reject and repress. "The shadow of the individual is the negative side of the personality, the sum of all those unpleasant qualities we like to hide, together with the insufficiently developed functions and content of the personal unconscious" (Jung, cited in Zweig & Abrams, 1991, p. 3). Jung argues that the collective shadow is "what historically has often been labeled as evil" (Kremer & Rothberg, 1999, p. 1). Jung (1963) identified the principle of evil as involving "naked injustice, tyranny, lies, slavery and

coercion of conscience" (p. 328). This collective shadow is linked with oppression and suffering, as argued by Kremer and Rothberg (1999). When a group, society, or nation strongly believes in its own moral righteousness, superiority or entitlement, the collective shadow is present (Hancox, 2011). Shadow traits (usually undesired ones) that are repudiated by a collective mass of one group are usually projected onto another group or population, as argued by Hancox (2011). "In the projection of darkness and inferiority, in violence and oppression, in romantic projections, in the invisibility of current sufferings, in the denial of current responsibility, we find the collective shadow" (Kremer & Rothberg, 1999, p. 2). The Other within and among us is a culture's collective shadow—the flip-side of its conscious values (Odajnyk, 1976). As argued by Mayes (2005), nations, families, communities, political parties and ethnic groups have "collective shadows that are the underside of their conscious, normative values" (p. 39). Left unexamined and unintegrated, these shadows perform negatively and narcissistically.

Hence, to face the shadow, and to integrate the shadow into our conscious is critically important. Allowing one's unconscious at the personal and collective level to surface and manifest is to achieve the psyche of wholeness and balance—a process of making the unconscious conscious and eventually achieving integration. For us, this collective shadow remains central to understanding why and how we conceive and embrace the wholly other.

Similarly, the Chinese notion of *Yin* and *Yang* provides insight too. In Chinese philosophy, *Yin* and *Yang* (also, yin-yang or yin yang) describes how opposites or contrary forces are actually complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world (Fang, 2012). *Yin* and *yang* prompt each other as they interrelate with one another. Similarly, teachers do not make any sense if not relating themselves to students. They are interconnected, yet in seemingly "contradictory" positions (Wang, 2020). In Chinese culture, everything has aspects of both yin and yang (for instance, shadow cannot exist without light). *Yin* and *Yang* can be deemed as symbiotic entities that intertwine to form a dynamic system. This dynamic system becomes a new place where new forces or configurations can be formed. The *Yin* and *Yang* sides or conflicting sides embody the whole process. In this case, constant change places one in between the "new" and the "old," allowing one to reconsider and re-examine the otherness in oneself and the other. The evolving process is dynamic, with contradictions and harmonies representing a unity in multiplicity.

It is a dialectic process/space/movement that invites perspective-taking and resonance discovering. *Yin* and *Yang* does not mean that there is no right or wrong; instead this notion allows a more holistic, balanced understanding. We may engage in an expanding zone of surprises, through one or various thresholds that is identified by oneself, simultaneously moving toward a new realm with shifting focus and boundary, instead of dwelling in yes or no dualism.

Practically, in real-life settings, the unity of *Yin* and *Yang* might be understood as "finding similarities (*yang*) between differences (*yin*)." For example, different cultures may still have certain similar elements. Difference and similarity may correspond to *yin* and *yang* respectively. As a result, differences (*yin*) and similarities (*yang*) perfectly unite together. Such understandings result in "ethical relationality" (Donald, 2009), an "ecological" conception that "does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other" (p. 6). For Donald (2009), such consciousness represents "an ethical imperative to recognize the significance of the relationships we have with others, how our histories and experiences are layered and position us in relation to each other" (p. 7). We live in the world together with others with varied cultures and knowledge systems and "must constantly think and act with reference to these relationships" (Donald, 2009, p. 7).

The border, then, immerses itself in the movement to exceed.

Reaching for one's potential

The process of reaching for the border or coming to pass might be a process of reaching for one's potential or expanding one's potential during which one "rewrites one's story." As one endlessly approaches toward the impossible, it (the impossible) is no longer a goal or a border but an invitation for more possible and impossible unscripted journeys. Consequently, one constantly encounters the expected and unexpected events and engages in a spiral flow of transformation.

In the Chinese myth, *Jing Wei* faced the impossible task—filling up the sea as a bird. *Jingwei* may know very well that it is a mission impossible; however, she still undertook the task starting from scratch, from picking up the first small stone. She flew over the "boundary," her move (gesture) making explicit her potential. While attending to the "goal to cross," the border has been changed.

While reaching for one's potential (or certain goal), there may not exist a protocol or formula to be followed. But something such as "a thread" that can connect among and between things can help, a thread to "navigate the difficult passages of one's journey in life" (Doll, 2017, pp. xii-xiii), a thread that "connects one not only to the exit but to the entrance, to one's beginnings, even to the cord spun while in embyro, even to the archetypes found in myth" (Doll, 2017, p. xiii). In this paper, this thread can be understood as "awakening inwardness," a term proposed by Wang (2020). This awakening inwardness refers to a complex "inwardness" that is unique and yet comprehensive, underlying one's thinking and behavior (Wang, 2020). It is something that one has evolved (and vice versa), a state of subjectivity consistently working in and through self. This inwardness can be manifested through one's way of thinking, one's reflections on experience, crystallized perhaps in a sense of mission, but not limited to these. Awakening inwardness

tends to take scattered forms; it is rarely a systematic congregation or set of ideas since sense of mission may not be systematic in real life. It is a state that might trigger one's deep thinking, awaken one's underlying consciousness, and engage one in a socially and culturally meaningful way (Wang, 2020). It allows one to think and reflect. This concept—awakening inwardness—essentially involves two aspects: reflective and anticipative. Being reflective means that one identifies something that one may not be aware of and engages oneself in reconstructive thinking, thus leading to meaningful action; being anticipative means that one looks forwards to something greater than what is, which one transcends. The method of *currere* (Pinar, 2019) orients one to access (or discover) one's awakening inwardness—a continuously formed thread that weaves through one's life, as argued by Wang (2020).

However, this thread might be beyond "causality." Causality "is an early form of our classical idea of causality, while the development of Chinese philosophy produced from the connotation of the magical the 'concept' of *Tao*, of meaningful coincidence, but no causality-based science" (Jung, 1955/2013, p. 118). The thread does not describe why one has made one's choice but shows how one has struggled with various thoughts along the process of one's making of one's thoughts and behaviors. As argued by Wang (2020), awakening inwardness refers to the sense of self, many times crystalized as a sense of mission, which goes beyond the logic of causality.

In addition, while reaching for one's potential, one may need to connect with, through the method of *currere* (Pinar, 2019), one's unconsciousness, the dimension of our experience that one has not noticed or realized before. Being attuned, one becomes revealed, recalling and recollecting past experience and present thoughts, thus attunement becomes a site in which people access oneself, awaken oneself, engaging oneself in "moreness" (Huebner, 1999, p. 15).

At this moment, the border changes into a surrendered enemy, waving hands to us. We shake hands with the "border."

The Call for a Curriculum of Hospitality

What is the curriculum that is attuned to this call? What is the canonical curriculum counterpart for the call? For us, it is a curriculum that permits a space carving in which the possible and impossible are interwoven with each other, self and other embrace each other and constraints provoke one's potential. It is a curriculum of hospitality. While culturally and historically informed, the curriculum of hospitality would stress the simultaneity of (1) ethical attentiveness to the encounters with other and otherness, (2) understanding the premise on which hospitality can be enacted—namely, equality and humility and (3) autobiography as a possible enacted form of the curriculum. As a curriculum counterpart (Pinar, 2011), it centralizes ethical attentiveness to encounters with other and otherness, which makes transcendence (space carving) possible, the possible enactment of which is autobiography. In what follows, informed by various scholarly work,

especially that of Rutenberg, I will illustrate my sense of curriculum of hospitality.

First, a curriculum of hospitality provides “an open aperture” (Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, & Leggo, 2009) to other and otherness requiring ethical attentiveness. According to Ruitenberg (2015),

> A hospitable curriculum, then, pays explicit attention to the voices that have been excluded from its development, and the effects of their absence. Furthermore, it asks how it can give place to, or would be undone by, the arrival of new ideas—for new ideas do not necessarily sit comfortably in the existing home of the curriculum. (p. 34)

In responding to the unfathomable, a curriculum of hospitality leaves space for those new comers and new ideas (Ruitenberg, 2010). Therefore, such a curriculum is an “affirmation of something to come, something deeply futural, that we cannot foresee” (Caputo, 2000, p. 177). “The unforeseen must be met with a hospitality that desires and affirms the surprise for which we can never be fully prepared” (Kalin, 2013, p. 109). Emerging disruptive encounters in our seminar rooms and classrooms allow for “an aporetic encounter” that gears toward “the prolific and polymorphic diversity” (Caputo, 2000), each of them exceeding our expectations and altering the social field (Langmann, 2010, p. 343). Thus, such encounter beckons “a call from the other that we may reach out beyond ourselves and enter into life….” (Huebner, 1999, p. 360). In responding to the call, teachers and students are both strangers and “newcomers” (Greene, 1973; Huebner, 1999). For teachers, students are strangers, who join with distinctive background and understanding; for students, teachers are strangers too since they might be new to students and bring various perspectives to students. Huebner (1999) suggests that the contents of the curriculum are “strangers” or “the strange otherness,” with which both student and teacher are confronted. Thus, encountering otherness and responding to it with ethical attentiveness affords us the opportunity to open up to “forms of life, of being, other than our own, yet not disconnected from our own.’” (Beck, 1993, cited in Quinn, 2010, p. 105).

However, for Ruitenberg (2015), the absence of ownership and the necessary interruption of any perception of ownership on the part of the one who provides hospitality remain central to hospitality. As posited by Derrida:

> To dare to say welcome is perhaps to insinuate that one is at home here, that one knows what it means to be at home, and that at home one receives, invites, or offers hospitality, thus appropriating for oneself a place to welcome [accueillir] the other, or, worse, welcoming the other in order to appropriate for oneself a place and then speak the language of hospitality…. (1999, p. 60).

Therefore, an ethical attentiveness, which is toward both guest and host (when host become temporary guest sometimes), other and otherness in self and other, and the impossible and constant change, is needed. With an ethical attentiveness toward that which is not expected, "I become in relation to the Other" (Kalin, 2013). At this moment, others or otherness emerge. "An ethics of hospitality," Kalin continues, provokes us to "occupy our field as a more temporary structure, provisional categorization, and less restricted to hybrid formations of knowledge generation" (p. 114). Guest (other) and host (self) are engaged with each other, therefore, both are implicated within "an ethics as unconditional hospitality"(Kalin, 2013)—a non-judgmental meeting (may include welcoming and visiting) that requires non-mastery, a relinquishing of control of self and other. We are residing in "an inviting abode" (Quinn, 2010, p. 102). Huebner (1999) argues that love is needed in this uncertain encounter with the unknown stranger as well as in schools dominated by careless structures which seems inhospitable to students. Ethical attentiveness fostered through the curriculum gives access to understanding otherness and alterity.

The apertures allows teachers to be open to influences of students, dwelling in a place of inviting abode. Teachers may consider themselves as a provisional "host," engaging in constant attentiveness toward students. Schools are no longer places dominated by teacher or certain protocols, instead inviting abodes in which they recognizes otherness in students through endless encounters with them.

Second, such a curriculum of hospitality is grounded in the value of equality and humility. The non-oppressive relationship breeds hospitality. We share an ancient Chinese story:

> This story is called Six Feet Alley. In the southwest of *Tongxian* County, Anhui Province, China, there is a small alley with a length of 200 meters and a width of 2 meters. There are stone archways on both ends of the roadway, and the word "comfort" is engraved on them. This is the famous "Liu Chi Alley" in China. It was first built in the *Kangxi* period of the Qing Dynasty and has a history of about 300 years. During the Kangxi period of the Qing Dynasty, Zhang Ying was a scholar and Minister of Rites. His old family in his hometown and the neighboring Wu family had a dispute over the homestead issue. The Zhang family wrote a letter to Zhang Ying, and after Zhang Ying read it, he wrote a poem to his family: "The family letter of thousands of miles away is only for the wall, so why not let him have three feet. The Great Wall is still there today, and *Qin Shihuang* of the past is not seen." After receiving the letter, the Zhang family did not understand at first, thinking that Zhang Ying would use some means to solve this dispute. But they took Zhang Ying's advice and moved back three feet. Finally, the Wu family was touched and stepped back three feet too to build a wall, forming a six feet wide alley between the two

> families. Let him have three feet, this is the only way for neighbors to live in harmony. "Liu Chi Alley" was derived from this story, and the mutual humility of the two families has since been passed on as a good talk. (Translated by one of the authors)

Between the two walls sits mutual understanding, respect and hospitality. Zhang Ying utterly showed his faith toward and embraced the Other (the neighbour). His behavior expresses his respect and understanding toward the neighbour—a symbol of hospitality. Zhang Ying as a government official refused to exercise his political power over the Wu Family, withdrawing from such a conflict. In ancient Chinese society, government officials were regarded as being privileged with higher social status. Nonetheless, he positioned himself as an equal party, compared to Wu Family, through taking the initiative to step back first. Hospitality may mean that one still attends to others and otherness while being aware of one's privileged situation or position. At the same time, the Wu family also showed their hospitality by stepping back the same distance later on. As argued by Ruitenberg (2015), equality or non-oppressive relationship is the premise of the ethics of hospitality. If one is forced to show hospitality, this hospitality cannot be regarded as hospitality. Zhang Ying enacted his hospitality by positioning himself as equal with Wu family and asked his own family to step back three feet. Hospitality is, thus, solely enacted between two equal sides.

As such, the spirit of hospitality is built on the principle that "people are equal as speaking beings who have lives and relationships" (Ruitenberg, 2015, p. 124), on the principle of democracy which recognizes that "we are capable of formulating and carrying out our lives with one another" (May, 2009, p. 7). Without equality and respecting host and guest's singularity or being aware of relational togetherness, hospitality is nonsensical. In other words, embracing this otherness repudiates inequality.

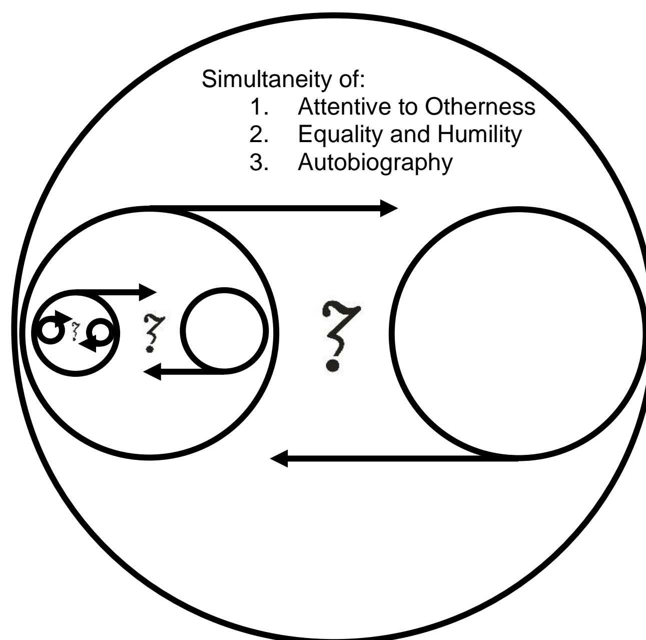
In the context of education, "the teacher is in the role of host" (p. 138), Ruitenberg (2015) argues, and they "ought to be primarily concerned with their own condition of having been received and the hospitality they can now offer" (p. 138). Therefore, for Ruitenberg (2015), the ethics of hospitality is not to shape students into a moral subject; on the contrary, it emphasizes the responsibility of educators for receiving students hospitably, and welcoming them into a particular world of ideas, knowledge, and skills. For us, this hospitality is also conditioned by humility—mutual respect and understanding.

Third, such a curriculum fosters the acquisition of self-knowledge on alterity and otherness that can be enacted through autobiographical writing such as *currere*. At this time of post-pandemic, understanding on alterity and otherness seems imperative. Autobiography provides one means to issue invitations, register who is present, what vows are made, and how they might be honored (Kalin, 2013). Autobiography, for example, guided by theory of *currere*, provides this subjective structure (Pinar, 2009) through which one cultivates one's understanding on alterity and otherness.

Autobiography allows one to struggle with some of their own boundaries and reflect on their source. Through autobiography, teachers and students acquire unparalleled opportunities and multiple possibilities for self-reflection and self-critique. Thus, autobiography may present itself as a form of curriculum of hospitality, which can be illuminated through study, personal growth and persistent thinking. Autobiography allows one to grapple with the problem of one's life and flesh, functioning as vehicle that takes one to the "goal." Through writing autobiographically, teacher begins to consider or reconsider how he/she has experienced otherness, during which he/she develops and acquires deepened understanding on otherness and alterity. Similarly, students' attitude change involves changes in how they understand their experience, how they have formed their viewpoints on various issues such as identity, race and gender. Through writing autobiographically, students can engage in these changes.

Hence, autobiography presents itself as an enacted form of curriculum of hospitality. Teacher's practice of *currere* (writing autobiographically) is then an example of a curriculum of hospitality, for teacher develops understanding of oneself, others (students) and the world which they inhabit. We can envision a curriculum of hospitality emanating from nested layers of aporias that affords carved spaces of dialectical interlocutions for the purposes of self-reflection and self-understanding of alterity. Figure 1 provides a gestaltist representation of the metamorphosis of nested layers of aporias leading towards a curriculum of hospitality. The symbol ? refers to the aporia that is formed from the competition of a concept and its antithesis.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for a Curriculum of Hospitality



To sum up, informed by *currere* and related scholarly works, we have elucidated how teachers can engage in meaningful discourses with students when they are in aporias, thus calling attention to encounters with otherness (during the pandemic and post-pandemic). The ways in which teachers perceive curriculum, their specific roles, and engagement with students impacts their teaching practice. Through the lens of curriculum theory, which informs, provokes and disrupts our mindset about teaching (Grimmett, 2017), we can acquire a revitalized and re-energized understanding of teaching and teacher education.

Conclusion and Implications

While transcending aporias, teachers can dwell in a carved space inviting lingering, intermingling and embracing, open to various lived experiences, curriculum texts and narratives generated thereafter, in which teachers echoes, searches, wanders, back and forth, encountering other and otherness with mutual hospitality and acknowledging self-other togetherness, and finally dwelling in the endless possibility of unfolding. Through understanding and questioning the structural, contingent conditions in which teacher's experiences are embedded and the particular memories and commitment in which teacher's experiences with alterity are located, teacher engages in one's curriculum of hospitality.

As a result, we strategically walk across a given landscape, toward a new zone in which we may deconstruct the existing boundary, reconfigure constraints, re-compose the impossible with the very faith and hospitality.

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