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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Challenging dominant education paradigms: posthuman feminist inspirations towards alternate pathways for decolonising the curriculum

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Abstract
South Africa's curriculum, and education system at large, remains humanistic and dominated by Western Eurocentric ways of thinking, doing and being. The ongoing protest action in higher education has made explicit the inequalities that continue to keep epistemic violence, Eurocentrism, and human exceptionalism intact. Central to this protest action has been the need for curriculum inquiry to reinvent itself and go against the pedagogical grain by advocating for a decolonised curriculum. However, the decolonial turn has largely been a structural exercise of abstract and rhetoric intensity fueled by a language of critique that is entrapped in discursive tendencies that inhibit the type of radicalism needed for it to invigorate alternatives that can challenge dominant education paradigms. This article is inspired by posthuman feminist theory that troubles the logic of advanced capitalism, epistemic injustice and dominant education paradigms. Invoked by new materialism, intra-actions of our becoming within and as part of the world are the deep entanglements of ethics, knowing and being that can spur scholarly activism. Four curriculum studies scholar activists shared their narratives of how they are enacting their curriculum to challenge dominant education paradigms. Their lived experiences as material, relational, embodied and embedded incite posthuman tendencies of what it means to teach to transgress. Experimenting with transversal transgressions this article attempts at a non-anthropocentric, feminist inspired perspective for curriculum inquiry to find alternative pathways for decolonising the curriculum so that it can rise to the challenges of our time.

Keywords Posthuman feminism · Curriculum inquiry · Transversal transgression · Decoloniality · New materialism · Decolonising the curriculum

Introduction

Azoulay (Director-General of UNESCO) attests that to rise to the challenges of our time a "new social contract for education" is needed, "one that aims to rebuild our relationships with each other, with the planet, and with technology" (UNESCO, 2021, p. v). One aspect hereof is debunking the privilege of dominant ways of knowing, being and doing. The privileging of knowledge from the Global North regards "locally generated knowledge [as] non-existent or deficient", or even mere "objects to be studied," leading to the lack of recognition and even the omission of South perspectives from formal education all together (UNESCO, 2021, pp. 126–127). By decolonising the curriculum, possibilities are created to recognize the validity of diverse knowledges on just and equitable terms, because curriculum remains a vibrant platform to enrich how we come to know and understand our complex and interrelated world (UNESCO, 2021, p. 126). South Africa has prioritized decolonising the curriculum as part of its equity agenda in higher education through curriculum transformation and other initiatives (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2020, p. 14). This has come as no surprise after the 2015 iconic student protests that shook higher education, disrupting it and bringing it to standstill. Sparking this was the action of University of Cape Town's politics student Chumani Maxwele who emptied a bucket of excrement

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over the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, at the upper campus of the university, and demanded the removal of the statue to demonstrate his disgust in South Africa's segregated society premised on white supremacy, Eurocentrist and phallocentric knowledge 20 years into its democracy (Hall, 2015). Alarmingly (or not), it took this level of protest action to gain the attention of government officials and university leadership after knowingly inflating the concerns raised by students, who have a long history of revolts against injustices and inequality in education (Becker, 2019; Le Grange, 2022). It took only one month after Maxwele's activism for the statue of Cecil John Rhodes to be removed and this paved the way for immediate action from higher education government officials and university leaders. Their actions were seen through convened seminars, workshops, and conferences on decolonisation, establishing formal curriculum committees and task teams to search for effective strategies to decolonise disciplines, institutional cultures, and even management as well as involving international foundations to fund some of these developments (Jansen, 2019, pp. 51–52; Le Grange, 2016, p. 2). Higher education curriculum served as a crucial safety net for universities to ask what/whose knowledge is of most worth. Although an exciting time for curriculum scholars, many had not had much engagement with the nuanced meaning and meaningfulness of what decolonising the curriculum infers, or few have had to engage with this in all its complexity.

It would be distasteful to claim that there has been no change to the higher education curriculum after these initiatives. Le Grange's (2022) research on decolonisation and anti-racism and Chiramba and Motala's (2023) research on decolonial perspectives of poverty, are examples of how curriculum inquiry is being deepened. However, for the most part, due to the haste and urgency to respond to the concerns raised in the student protest movements, the South African higher education landscape has witnessed curriculum with instrumentalist and quick-fix solutions to the detriment of substantive change (Le Grange et al., 2020). At some institutions this involved cleansing the curriculum by removing Western content and replacing it with non-Western or African content, which Le Grange (2016, p. 10) warns has destroyed knowledge rather than decetering it and in turn misunderstanding the decolonial project. While at other institutions, accountability structures were developed to monitor academics by requiring that they provide evidence for what they were doing to decolonise their curricula, and this lead mostly to superficial applications of decolonisation (Jansen, 2019, p. 74). With so much attention on curriculum content, not much was done to disrupt institutional curriculum (Heleta, 2016), negating the need for new radicalism and failing to recognise that "radical change begins with an astute analysis of *institutions*" that keep "regnant knowledge in place" (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p. 230). It is because of responses such as these that Morreira et al. (2021, p. 6) opine: curriculum tends to accept its decolonial agenda on "abstract and rhetoric levels" without a deeper insight on the power relations it creates and/or sustains in terms of the "structural, cultural, institutional, relational and personal logics of curriculum and pedagogic practice".

Jansen (2019, pp. 61-62) proffers that the progress of decolonisation has been slow because South Africa's curriculum theory is not inventive, original, creative, or vibrant. He proposes that this is due to four principal effects. First is the misfortune of other academic disciplines such as the natural and political sciences dominating curriculum decisions, making its theories inferior and underestimating the work of curriculum scholars. Disciplines like sociology and anthropology of education, have to speak louder and take ownership of the intellectual work of university curriculum (Jansen, 2019, p. 61). Second, the intellectual project of decolonising the curriculum has been consumed by a language of critique. Curriculum scholars remain trapped in a language of critique, resulting in decolonisation as a "language of replacement" for the lack of transformation in universities and a "language of lament" of a world still divided in predominantly essentialist terms (North / South) (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p. 234). Third is the poverty of national and continental curriculum theory. Those who are producing curriculum theory in the aftermath of South Africa's apartheid era remain the progressive scholars who are white, male and privileged because, although student demographics have changed significantly, staff demographics have been less prolific under the guise of neo-colonialism's preservation of colonial academic organization (Le Grange, 2016, p. 4). Fourth, there has been a movement to indigenization in the name of decolonising the curriculum. It is known that indigenising the curriculum and other terms such as internationalisation, and Africanising do intersect with decolonisation (Le Grange, 2018, p. 6), and that there is great value in how local knowledge can challenge "regnant coloniality in resident knowledge systems" (Jansen, 2019, p. 62). However, if this suggests "a narrow Africanism bordering on racial essentialism" (ibid.) then it might fall victim to strong localism/nationalism and this could negate the transformative potential of deterritoralising curriculum (Simmonds & Le Grange, 2019, p. 8). These four principal effects remind us that curriculum scholars remain confronted with the legacy of coloniality.

This article first becomes inspired by posthuman feminist theory. In these musings, coloniality and decoloniality become vantage points from which to make connections between decolonisation and feminist curriculum inquiry. The generative possibilities of posthumanism feminist theory draw from new materialist thinking to invoke

transversality in curriculum inquiry through transversal knowledge formation and transversal curriculum conversations. Hereafter, the scholarly activism of four curriculum studies scholars is shared through their narratives. These narratives are the experiences of academics and are not intended to be an enactment of posthuman theory, rather the intention is to capture instances where academics invite posthuman thinkings, doing and being. The article then moves to thinking alongside hook's (1994) transgressive pedagogy as I experiment with transversality to imagine how transversal transgressions could open up alternative pathways for decolonising the curriculum.

Being inspired by posthuman feminist theory to challenge dominant education paradigms

Before my inspirations of posthuman feminism can be invoked, it deems necessary to outline that the decolonial project challenges dominant education paradigms by having an acute awareness of coloniality. Coloniality is a result of modernity, or as Mignolo (2011) attests, it is the darker side of modernity. Maldonado-Torres (2007) has provided key insights that demonstrate that coloniality lives on as the darker side of modernity, even after countries are liberated from colonial rule in the geographical and political sense and are being deemed postcolonies. Coloniality, as sustained patterns of power emanating from colonialism, define "culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243). As such, Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 243) believes that as "modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day", through the material and the discursive because coloniality is "maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience". This is very significant for curriculum scholars because it awakens decoloniality as central to challenging and dismantling coloniality, which is still so deeply etched into South African universities whose curriculum remains based on Western models of academic organization (Le Grange, 2019, p. 33). Decoloniality dismantles the continual coloniality of power, knowledge and being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019). Coloniality of power is attentive to "how the modern world works", coloniality of knowledge is premised on epistemological issues that reveal the "politics of knowledge generation", and coloniality of being observes human ontology and how "modern subjectivities" are (in)formed by coloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019, pp. 16–17). In this article, decoloniality is thus a verb, an action, because it is a choice of doing, knowing and being that can enable curriculum inquiry to rethink and reimagine the human, the world, and human relations in and with the world (Mignolo, 2018). In so doing, opening alternative pathways for the (im)possibilities vested in decolonising the curriculum.

In brief, this article regards the posthuman condition as a convergence phenomenon which involves acute recognition of the intersection between posthumanism on the one hand and post-anthropocentrism on the other. Posthumanism exposes the limitations of humanist universalism by critiquing the Western humanist ideal of the 'man of reason' as the dominant figure of all knowing, and post-anthropocentrism rejects human supremacy, where species hierarchy position humans as exceptional (Braidotti, 2013). As explored by scholars (Du Preez, 2018; Le Grange, 2020; Murris, 2016; Zembylas, 2018) there are some links between decoloniality and posthumanism. The posthuman condition shifts what it means to be human and our relationships with the planet and its inhabitants (human and non-human) by urging "us to think critically and creatively about who and what we are actually in the process of becoming" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 12). This requires a rejection of human exceptionalism and Eurocentrism, where Western dominance centers 'Man' (male, masculine, white, able-bodied) as the measure of all things. While not the same as posthumanism, the intent of decoloniality to decenter Global North and Global South power relations is one example of how both posthumanism and decoloniality share critiques of modernity (Zembylas, 2018). Zembylas (2018, p. 254) opines that both (decoloniality and posthumanism) attempt to "challenge the epistemological and ontological dualisms of modernity" who silence and restrict others through manifestations of human exceptionalism and yearn instead towards social justice ideals. However, if some people have not been treated as humans in the first place, due to coloniality and other forms of prejudice (patriarchy, racism, for example) then the advocacy of posthumanist perspectives could further perpetuate the denial of humanity to certain groups of people (de Oliveira & Lopes, 2016). This is one of the ways in which these two perspectives do not always serve the same interests.

For curriculum inquiry, this could mean that these two perspectives have the potential to invigorate ways to challenge dominant education paradigms which infest curriculum with a narrow imagine of the human, as informed by western humanism, and the preoccupation with education as "a fundamentally humanist project, largely concerned with the betterment of humankind" (Zembylas, 2018, p. 256). Snaza et al. (2014, p. 41) regard posthumanism not as a new discourse, but one avenue to invoke various critical approaches (such as feminism, anticolonialism and antiracism) who all have in common: "directly challenging the ways humanism has restricted politics and education". For

Le Grange (2016, p. 9) a radical rethinking of Western curriculum, where knowledge is not only epistemic but also affective and sensory, can start the shift needed for curriculum to be more than what is observed and attained but embodied and embedded through incorporating the "tastes, pain, and hunger of our bodies and… expressions of anger, passion and desire". With emphasis on feminism, McKnight (2021, p. 305) reminds us that "feminist orientations trouble linearity" in ways that could imagine curriculum inquiry beyond its existence in a discursive, abstract realm. By troubling linearity "curriculum can be about moving outwards, not just moving forward" because "lines inevitably form webs of encounters with ideas, others, texts and things; they are not idealized as always single, or always straight" (McKnight, 2021, p. 311).

In her book *Posthuman Feminism*, Braidotti (2022) claims that even though feminist theory is one of the pioneers in the posthuman turn, it has largely been neglected in mainstream posthuman scholarship. She uses feminism to think with and through posthuman theory as both a marker of present conditions and a navigational tool. As an established and ever-growing movement, Braidotti (2022, p. 3) does not aspire to mark what feminism 'is' because it is not a unitary notion, but rather to invigorate what it can 'become' when regarded as a "transformative decolonial and radical struggle to affirm positively the differences among marginalized people(s)", invigorating alternative ways of knowing towards "creating other possible worlds". Difference is important here. Posthuman feminists acknowledge that although 'we' (as feminists and humans) are working together to confront the threats of *this* posthuman convergence[1], 'we' are not One or the same, as "historical conditions of power, entitlement and access" do not make us homogenous among ourselves (Braidotti, 2022, p. 7). In posthuman terms, 'we' must acknowledge all living entities "as a web of interconnections", who occupy the planet as our home while having "materially embedded differences in location" we share a terrestrial *milieu*, which means that 'we' are in *this* together: "'we'-who-are-not-one-and-the-same-but-are-in-*this*-together" (Braidotti, 2022, p. 8). As such, posthuman feminists

> …aspire to nurture and implement the ongoing process of unfolding alternative and transformative paths of becoming. We need to work together to reconstruct our shared understanding of possible posthuman futures that will include solidarity, care, and compassion. We need to do so while rejecting universal and fixed notions of who 'we' are, respecting difference of locations and power. The politics of immanent locations allows for a non-oppositional mode of critique and enables affirmative engagement. (ibid.)

Central to this conception of posthuman feminism is new materialism. New materialist thinking, although frequently Western, Northern and European/Anglo American in genesis does also draw on concepts familiar and central to many First Nations and indigenous belief systems and challenge humanistic presuppositions of what constitutes a human being. This includes the tendencies to reproduce race, gender, sexuality and ability as categories of social constructions to be studied and even critiqued, instead of being "the results of processes of mattering, specific material assemblages" and the new materialist incursion that does not lose sight of the materiality of intra-human political struggles (Snaza et al., 2016, p. xviii). By acknowledging power as multi-layered and materially embodied and embedded, Braidotti (2022, p. 185) yearns for dislodging power as "not a linguistic construct, but a thickly material one". This requires stripping humans of their ontological privilege and placing them on an immanent plane which rejects universal, hierarchical and fixed notions of what it is to be human (Deleuze, 2007). This thinking is formulated by Barad (2007, pp. 33–34) as agential realism, namely that we take account of "the fact that the forces at work in the materialization of bodies are not only social, and the bodies produced are not all human". What is at play is "knowing, thinking, measuring, theorizing, and observing [as] material practices of intra-acting within and as part of the world" because ethics, ontology and epistemology are not separate (Barad, 2007, p. 90). When separating ethics, ontology and epistemology inherent differences are created and binaries form (human/non-human, subject/object, mind/body, nature/culture and matter/discourse) which fails to regard the world as the deep intertwining of ethics, knowing and being (Barad, 2007, p. 185). Barad's (2007, pp. 184–185) 'ethico-onto-epistme-ology' reminds us that we cannot claim to stand outside the world as objective observers, rather we must embrace that "we know because we are of the world in its differential becoming… we are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity" (Barad, 2007, pp. 184–185). However, care should be taken not to conflate ideas from critical posthumanism and new materialism/agential realism, which although having overlapping ideas, are informed by different philosophical genealogies and ontological positions. Namely, as Braidotti (2022) for example describes, posthumanism is a historically located transformation of processes of being human, while new materialism is a philosophy for

[1] The posthuman convergence is the present historical condition of the Anthropocene that is marked in three interconnected levels: social level (increasing structural injustices due to unequal distribution of wealth, prosperity, and access to technology), environmental level (climate crises and epidemics leading to the species and planet decay) and technological level (new information technologies, robotics, genomics nanotechnologies) (Braidotti, 2022, pp. 3–4).

grounding the practice of theorising subjects (with theorised posthuman subjects also materially embodied).

One way to bring these ideas to curriculum inquiry could be through transversality. Transversality has its origins in geometry but has been embraced in cultural theory, psychoanalysis, and philosophy by Guattari and Deleuze (1988). By challenging the dichotomous nature of transference, it implies a desire for interdisciplinarity in knowing, being and doing (Braidotti & Fuller. 2019). It is very complex with intricate meanings within varying contexts and fields, but for this article it resonates with intra-action as envisaged by agential realism (Barad, 2007) because intra-actions also dislodge transference or inter-action for its tendency to see humans as standing on the outside looking into the world as observers rather than part of its many entanglements. For curriculum inquiry, this means understanding that curriculum is becoming, in the sense of nomadic education invoked by Semetsky (2008) and premised on Deleuze's nomadic becoming (Semetsky & Masny, 2013). This sense of becoming could enable transversality in curriculum theory through inviting transversal knowledge formation and transversal curriculum conversations. Transversal knowledge formation can ignite curriculum theory as becoming-other through assemblages that displace binary oppositions such as teacher/student, classroom/outside, learning/playing, computers/books, and local/global. For Braidotti (2019) becoming-other in this transversal sense requires curriculum inquiry as entangled in non-human assemblages. Doing so will enhance the materialist practice of education and embrace knowledge production/transfer as collaborative and non-hierarchical. This is needed for curriculum inquiry to be "practically orientated and relational", making room for "non-human elements, technology, animal or other, to intervene as heterogeneous forces that connect the educational practice to the wider world" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 143). Snaza et al. (2016, p. xx) aver that new materialisms need to make more inroads into curriculum inquiry so that the curriculum does not lose sight of what/who is also "caught up in education *with* us". One starting point is the hidden and null curriculum that asks "how traditional humanist education teaches us anthropocentrism precisely by not attending to… nonhuman materialities and their agencies" (Snaza et al., 2016, p. xxi). An example of this is recognizing how objects (learning spaces, security cameras, chairs etc.) are more-than-human agents that directly intervene in educational encounters in ways that matter, because all matter has agency and "new materialist thought asserts the power of *all matter* to act" (Snaza et al., 2016, p. xvi).

Transversal conversations move beyond the humanistic tendencies of curriculum as (complicated) conversation (Aoki, 2004; Applebee, 1996; Pinar, 2011). The focus here is on relationality that is not confined within the human species but is expanded, placed on an immanent plane, with *zoe*, namely "the non-human, vital force of Life [that] is the transversal entity that allows us to think across previously segregated species, categories and domains" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 144). Braidotti (2019, p. 144) elaborates further that a "*zoe*-centred egalitarianism" is the core of a posthuman feminism educational practice because it can "inspire us to resist the trans-species commodification of Life by advanced capitalism". Curriculum scholars such as McKnight (2021) and Du Preez et al. (2022)[2] also take heed of the humanistic and colonizing tendencies of curriculum as (complicated) conversation. For McKnight (2021, p. 314) curriculum as (complication) conversation should "encompass multiple, distributed agencies and bodies, all calling each other into being as they 'speak'". Whilst Du Preez et al. (2022, p. 14) emphasise that these conversations should not be "predetermined in any sense, but… radically open intra-actions" that allow for self-criticism. What all these scholars have in common is the need for improvisation and experimentation so that curriculum can, through intra-actions, be entangled within and part of the world so that it can take heed of what matters for humans and non-humans.

As an organizing principle of posthuman feminist curriculum inquiry, transversality exposes the hierarchies and pyramids of power in education (Cole & Bradley, 2018). Curriculum cannot challenge dominant education paradigms feeding anthropocentrism and coloniality with "authoritative control, commodification and bureaucratization" (Zembylas, 2018, p. 255) at its core. As a possible antidote, transversality "introduces a model of relationality and affect in education" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 144), inspired by transversal knowledge formation and transversal conversations. Curriculum scholars inspired by posthuman feminism "situate themselves in and as part of the world, defending an idea of knowledge production as embedded, embodied, affective and relational" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 143). By not experimenting with affirmative inspirations such as these, Cole and Bradley (2018) argue that curriculum will continue to feed neoliberal education's advanced capitalist motives that proclaim Eurocentric dominance and anthropocentric naivety in times when social and planetary injustice is threatening the lives of all (human and non-human).

[2] Varying forms of curriculum conversations have also been published by other South African scholars. Examples of this include a special issue titled, *Posthumanist curriculum studies and post-schooling: Contemplations from the South* in 2023 issue of the South African Journal of Higher Education. This special issue is available at: https://www.journals.ac.za/sajhe/issue/view/322.

Curriculum studies academics scholarly activism

Feminist curriculum inquiry spurs different forms of scholarly activism because of its distaste for dominant and exclusionary systems. In 2021 during online interviews, four curriculum studies academics shared their narratives on being academics during a period in South Africa that is experiencing a growing distrust in the university curriculum. A historic period of student unrest under the banner of #MustFall protest movements, gave rise to the call for a decolonised curriculum and the need to reinvent the curriculum. These four scholars were employed as curriculum studies lecturers during the protest movements of 2015 (and ongoing) and still held their employment at the time of the interviews. They all come from the same institution. The three female and one male curriculum studies scholar activists experienced their schooling and some of their post-schooling years under Apartheid rule in South Africa, recognizing their upbringing as deeply engrained in class, race and gender power struggles. The academics bring with them various insights as two of them are white and the other two are non-white. In addition, two of them are late-career academics while the other two are mid-career. Pseudonyms (Camilla, Hannah, Nenita and Samuel) are used to ensure the anonymity of the participants, and in adherence to the ethical clearance protocols of the participating university.

This section of the article invites you to experience the stories of scholarly activism shared by these curriculum studies academics. They are not self-acclaimed posthuman or decolonial theorists, but their narrative accounts provide insight into how/why curriculum studies scholars are challenging dominant education paradigms, especially in times of social and planetary injustice. Their accounts are not intended to mirror any form of theory or positioning, the intention is rather to share lived experiences and acts of activism so that alternative pathways for decolonising the curriculum can be invigorated.

Camilla

Camilla's entry into teaching was due to family circumstances, which she describes as being "by chance, not by intention". She only taught in a school for two years before entering academia where she has been teaching ever since. Occupying different university spaces both in South Africa and aboard, her career entails Deanships and other forms of scholarly activism. She shares that in her years as an academic, she has witnessed various forms of protest and that outcries for curriculum change are not new in South Africa, they remain ongoing. She regards these as pursuits for social justice.

Thinking back to the momentous 2015 protests, Camilla explains how she and some of her colleagues mobilized to form what she calls a "reading group" who together "read systematically through literature on decoloniality… ran some seminars across the university and… published a paper". She believes that this scholarly engagement inspired her to think differently about her teaching and students. She recollects her deepfelt appreciation for students who protested but also associated with those students who chose not to participate in the protest action. It was during this time that she decided that instead of teaching in university lecture rooms, she mobilized with her students outside: "we had a series of informal lectures and things outside… we handed over to the students [for them] to lead the discissions… it was great to see that in other spaces of the institution fun things can happen and important decolonial moments can take place". This points to the recognition of others and possibilities of multiples knowledges that rest on "a deep respect for the other in a philosophical, moral and ethical sense", she elaborates: "if we are respectful of other people, we will respect where they come from, what they bring into learning and in teaching situations. We won't insensitively parade our own positions as if they are the only ones, knowing full well that they are not". Another concern of hers is the fixation of academics to want to provide solutions and rational proposals without a material connection to what is going on around them and without an openness to see curriculum as something that cannot be predetermined because together with our students "we have to create it, we have to shape it, we have to build it". Unlike "the old transmission mode" curriculum creates alternative knowledges when academics "understand themselves and their students in a relationship of reciprocity", when academics "shift from teaching to learning how students are learning" so that academics experience the curriculum through a "much more textured engagement with learning". To decolonise the curriculum and challenge dominant education paradigms, is "about working with this incredibly entangled border situation that we are in, and just trying very hard to understand and push forward for something better all the time". This requires "an ethical stance".

Hannah

Hannah entered curriculum studies through a post graduate certificate that enabled her to gain a teaching qualification after her bachelor's degree. She taught in a school for six months while she was waiting for research funding needed to pursue her PhD and this also created opportunities for her to work on research projects which were engaging with core curriculum matters of the time. These matters took place in the curriculum reform period of the late 1990s

and early 2000s, a very critical but also uncertain time in South Africa as curriculum was a core pillar in redressing the past inequalities and building democratic education system. After completing her PhD, she entered higher education because she believed that her scholarship and activism could give voice to "the most educationally marginal".

The 2015 student protests movements had a "radical impact" on Hannah personally and on her teaching. She always believed that the best way to serve her students was to "maintain very strong boundaries, high expectations and be quite rigorous and almost uncompromising" in her teaching. This has shifted to recognizing that her students come from "very different backgrounds with very different life experiences" and that she needs to be "flexible" and not so "unrelenting". One way in which she has challenged dominant education paradigms is by debunking abstract theory and the more Western tradition of theoretical dominance in curriculum that views the world rationally. She tries to debunk abstract theory by making students critical of the "problematics of the local", making them aware of what knowledge means for their context and raising arguments about "indigenous concerns" rather than teaching about abstract theory devoid of its local and material applicability. In addition, she also teaches with "subtitles" meaning that she "explains" and translates theory while she is teaching it. She believes that this is "decolonial" and "mindful" as it is premised on a "historical approach" which requires that academics ask "why" they teach what they do and "to what extent it is appropriate for [their] context, for [the] society in which [they] are living and working". She believes that by teaching in this way "access is broadened" because "more cognizance of the varied life experiences that people bring to their classroom, the different linguistic experience… and different ways of approaching this thing called academic study" can be considered.

Nenita

Nenita' grandparents and parents are all teachers, so entering education was "the right thing to do". Nenita's grandmother was one of the first black women to obtain a teacher qualification, "I have a picture of her certificate" she boasts and explains that "the certificate says he and him because at that point, black women were not trained as teachers". She also shares the activism of her father who was "imprisoned and banned in 1981/2 [by] Apartheid police… because of the kind of teaching he was doing" and his activism through a "14-day hunger strike". She remembers as a young child that he "spent quite a long time in prison" and later "under house arrest" for his activism against injustice in education. Besides being attracted to education through her family, Nenita explains that "back then you could get teacher bursaries easier than other" bursaries because the "kinds of jobs allowed during Apartheid are teachers, nurses and so on". She is attracted to curriculum studies because it creates a portal for her to grapple with the "power and social justice" issues that transpire through education.

Nenita challenges dominant education paradigms through her activism spurred in a "pedagogy of discomfort" and the importance of "intense and charged conversations [of a] social justice orientation" that are "progressive and focused on challenging power". For her this requires recognizing that "the classroom and the curriculum is not neutral", it needs teachers who "see difference" so that teachers do not "uncritically and sometimes unknowingly reproduce power dynamics, privilege and oppression". Part of the reason for this is because "universities are reproducing societies fairly uncritically… or maybe critically in word but not in action". To deepen this type of critical action Nenita believes that the curriculum needs to experiment with "expanding the idea of what a classroom is" because "learning is not confined to the classroom and the curriculum", although she expresses with concern that many people won't "recognize this as education work" because it is untraditional. Untraditional by promoting epistemic and affective approaches which also take heed that "what you are teaching is not outside of you", it is embedded and embodied. This can involve building "different kinds of relationships that are more loving, that are more caring, and that are more critical". This can also involve alternative pathways to sharing and building knowledge such as getting students to participate in "free writing", "write poetry", "write short stories", "interviews with people" and other unconventional approaches that go against the grain of "assessment and essays… you know you are going to have to be tested on". Dominant education paradigms are challenged to move beyond a measurement culture focused on performativity and look critically at oneself, to understand one's "own position, understand privilege and oppression".

Samuel

After being a schoolteacher for almost a decade, Samuel entered higher education in the 1980s. He attests that his entry into higher education was in search of "a new experience" because he "was beginning to get restless" in the schooling sector and found this space "too overwhelming". It was during this time, namely the years leading to the end of Apartheid, that "teaching was very political" and schools were "a very active political space". These schooling and teaching years made Samuel very attuned to the "issues of poverty and inequality" in South Africa. Although his career path has been politically charged and turbulent, Samuel regards himself as "the most privileged person in the

world" based on his experiences. He ascribes this, in part, to "always being receptive and being open to seeing differences". Difference is "a wonderful thing, rather than a thing to be afraid of" and is expressed not only linguistically or through gender but also in the essence of ones being, namely their "style", "dress", "expression" and "sensory" experiences.

To challenge dominant education paradigms, Samuel believes that universities need to be spaces that "care critically". This involves providing curriculum moments where "students meet together in ways that are productive" so that students can "fulfill themselves in positive, pleasurable kinds of ways". Curriculum must take students outside of lecture halls. Samuel shares how he invites students to experience university spaces like the library by encouraging student to "look around" and "watch what is going on around them" to experience the "hundreds of extraordinary pieces of South African art on those walls". For him this can be an unconventional and prolific way to "transform the physical environment and the learning environment into environments that are nurturing, stimulating, provocative [and] make you think". But he warns that this is not possible if academics "look down on [and] patronize their students" rather than experiencing learning alongside their students in ways that embrace learning as deeply entwined with lived experience and not as "separate things". When learning and teaching is a "humble" undertaking where people can be "more vulnerable" then different ways of intellectual "experimentation" are possible. Experimentation unlocks the beauty of "making mistakes" and "trying new things" so that curriculum can create alternative pathways of knowing, doing and being and not fall prey of "nationalistic protectionism". Samuel is attracted to ideas of "planetary citizenship", which challenge "a very humanistic way of thinking" about curriculum and decoloniality. A planetary approach comes to "acknowledge that it's not just human beings, its all of life" that need to be considered in times where we encounter "global warming, climate change… [and] catastrophes that we do not properly understand".

Discussion: Posthuman feminist curriculum inquiry towards alternate pathways for decolonising the curriculum

The participants have expressed the centrality of curriculum inquiry as dedicated to the pursuit of challenging dominant education paradigms. What is evident is that all these scholars teach to transgress, albeit in differing and unique ways, and not explicitly invoked by posthumanism but inciting posthuman tendencies.

bell hooks (1994), was prolific in her feminist thinking on teaching to transgress as going against the pedagogical grain to challenge institutional norms and traditional forms of doing, knowing, and being in curriculum work. She avers that transgressions are potentiated when we go beyond a mind/body split and "open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions" that shape education as a practice of freedom (hooks, 1994, p. 12). With the intent for freedom as empowerment and agency, the curriculum is transformed into engaged spaces of self-actualization and heighted responsibility towards other humans. Although this radical openness and engaged pedagogy is liberatory, it remains human centered. I realize that hook's (1994) work predates posthuman theories drawn on in this article but recognize the possibilities vested in posthuman inspirations to (re)think her feminist curriculum inquiry image of transgressive pedagogy. I become inspired by the participants narratives and their posthuman tendencies that do not only assume humanistic/Eurocentric and anthropocentric imperatives and approaches. Also inspired by posthumanism, new understandings of teaching to transgress become possible through my curiosity with the affirmative possibilities of *transversal transgressions* as this can provide one avenue to explore alternative pathways for decolonising the curriculum. Transversal transgressions are assemblages of human, non-human actors and the earth as a whole with generative possibilities to go against the pedagogical grain and challenge dominant education paradigms (Braidotti, 2013). While I use curriculum inquiry as my reference point, Braidotti (2013) uses subjectivity, but still her three points of transversality are significant and provide some insight into how academics can think differently about decolonising the curriculum.

First, transversal transgressions require curriculum inquiry to not be the exclusive prerogative of *Anthropos*. Samuel's attraction to "planetary citizenship" to go against the norm of "a very humanistic way of thinking" is what he attests is needed for decoloniality to thrive, especially because we live in uncertain times and times of global crises. Gough (2006) debunks our preconceived ways of thinking about decolonisation by regarding transversal transgression as the need to get lost. For Gough (2006, p. 640) there is an urgency to get lost by strategically straying off the beaten path, understood to mean "not as 'losing *one's* way' but as losing *the* way– as losing any sense that just one 'way' could ever be prefixed and privileged". This disjuncture from fixity forms part of the plea of Mbembe (2019, p. 10) for "planetary entanglement" as the inhabitation and interconnection of the human, non-human and more-than-human world to provoke alternative pathways for thinking about who and what we are becoming. It invites posthuman

feminist curriculum inquiry to ask what it could mean to "re-member" (Mbembe, 2019, p. 5) who and what constitutes our planetary entanglements so that we may invigorate alternative and non-anthropocentric perspectives of decoloniality.

Second, transversal transgressions require curriculum inquiry to not be based on transcendental reasoning. Framed by Eurocentric thinking, the humanistic vision of Man as the measure of all things, an iconic image as the "emblem of Humanism" because it projects a "doctrine that combines the biological, discursive and moral expansion of human capabilities into an idea of teleologically ordained, rational progress" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 13). This form of classical humanism creates a hegemonic cultural model and humanistic arrogance that devalues non-Western others to subhuman status, by reducing their knowledge, being and doing to "disposable others" who are "different from" the dominant norm and "less than" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 28). In terms of knowledge, this form of reasoning objectifies reality and holds it at a distance perpetuating Descartes' mind-body distinction and other binaries. Camilla believes that academics fixations on providing solutions and rational proposals without a material connection further feed transcendental reasoning. Transversal transgressions shift beyond rationality and discursive privilege to what Hannah regards as the "problematics of the local", recognizing material realities and prioritizing historicity. Braidotti (2013, pp. 177–178) supports empirical imperatives that "think global, but act local" attesting that "confronting the historicity of our condition means moving the activity of thinking outwards, into the real world, so as to assume accountability for the conditions that define our location". This is needed to transgress decoloniality beyond its limits of "abstract and rhetoric" language (Morreira et al., 2021, p. 6), towards multiple knowledges that are materially embodied and embedded.

Third, transversal transgressions can unhinge curriculum inquiry from the dialectics of performativity, towards relationality. Nenita attests to the measurement and assessment culture at her university. This speaks directly to Braidotti's (2013, p. 82) dialectics of performativity engulfing curriculum inquiry into what Nenita experiences as "neutral", where academics do not "see difference" and as a result "uncritically and sometimes unknowingly reproduce power dynamics, privilege and oppression". Transversal transgressions can emerge when Nenita goes against the grain of traditional assessment regimes of tests, assignments and essays and advocates unconventional approaches such as "poetry", "free writing" and "short stories". Alternative pathways for decolosining the curriculum can transpire through these unconventional approaches as they stimulate "different kinds of relations that are more loving…caring and…critical" (Nenita) and receptive to what Camilla regards as "an ethical stance"- because curriculum inquiry is an "incredibly entangled border situation". Camilla's insight reiterates Barad's (2007, p. 185) recognition that the world's becoming is a "deeply ethical matter". This is important because, as Barad's (2007, p. 91) agential realism advocates, "making knowledge is not about making facts but about making worlds" because "we too are part of the world's differential becoming" in our intra-actions within and as part of the world. These material entanglements enact the world's ongoing becoming through relationality, stripping humans of their ontological privilege, placing them on an immanent plane with technology, animals, and all other non-humans (Braidotti, 2019, p. 158). As immanent (always in-becoming), relationality can be the alternative to individualist autonomy, so that shared understandings of our posthuman futures are embodied, embedded, and affirmative entanglements of solidarity, care and compassion. Alternative pathways for decolonising the curriculum open-up when the world is deeply intertwined in ethics, knowing and being (ethico-onto-epistem-ology), in ways that appreciate that our aspirations to challenge dominant education paradigms must come from a position where we recognize that "we are of the world", and only when we are inside and of the world through our relationality, can we begin to imagine a embodied and embedded decoloniality (Barad, 2007, p. 185).

In addition to Braidotti's (2013) three positions on transversality, the participants' narratives have sparked yet another dimension to consider, namely the need to dislodge the privilege given to certain physical spaces/places. Camilla, Nenita and Samuel all challenged dominant education paradigms by moving learning from conventional to unconventional physical spaces. This involved debunking the longstanding authority given to classrooms as the dominant learning space/place and (dis)placing or (re)placing learning into worldly spaces. Samuel expressed this as the need to "transform the physical environment and the learning environment into environments that are nurturing, stimulating, provocative [and] make you think". For Samuel, this includes engaging the senses through experiences and entanglements with artwork in the university library as a form of intellectual experimentation. From the perspective of students, it is also worth mentioning research done by Kruger (2020) and his pedagogical experiment of the entanglements of pedagogy, walking, place, and knowledge-growing towards movement of thought in space and place as a decolonial practice. Transversal transgressions potentiate curriculum inquiry as "a mode of experimentation that occurs through… intra-actions and the radical openness of such processes creates possibilities for thinking curriculum otherwise" (Du Preez et al., 2022, p. 16). A form of radical repositioning is needed for these types of experiments and transversal transgressions. Braidotti (2019, p. 140) offers

"defamiliarization" as the "active processes of becoming that enact in-depth breaks with established patterns of thought and identity formation" through a generative and affirmative type of "conceptual disobedience". Dis-identification or disobedience of this kind can trigger fear, loss and pain but it can also be liberatory. I argue that these forms of displacement could trigger the types of embodied and embedded materialities needed to imagine alternative pathways for decolonising curriculum that incite a radical rethinking of dismantling coloniality as not only an epistemic knowing, but also an affective doing and being. Or as Higgins (2016, p. 203) puts it, opening-up multiple "ways-of-knowing-in-being can be(come) fruitful steps in knowing and being with space, time and matter otherwise".

Although these scholars are not self-proclaimed posthumanist theorists, their scholarly activism does provide some posthuman tendencies which invoke the type of tinkering needed to imagine the affirmative possibilities of posthuman feminist curriculum inquiry, through transversal transgressions, so that it can invigorate alternate pathways for decolonising the curriculum.

Concluding as a way of opening-up

The scholarly activism of curriculum studies scholars has provoked the need for curriculum inquiry to reinvent itself. This is particularly dire in times of growing distrust in the curriculum to rise to the challenges of our times. Although this article has used the decolonial moment as example, other challenges of our time include disease, war, xenophobia, technological advancements, environmental crises, as well as academic freedom and institutional autonomy that is under threat in the neoliberal university.

This article has experimented with four transversal transgressive 'moves' through posthuman feminist inspirations as a means to challenge the dominance of education as humanist and Eurocentric. It is hoped that this will be a generative and affirmative way of opening-up alternative pathways for decolonising the curriculum. This is one avenue to address the concern raised by Jansen (2019, p. 61) that the progress of decolonisation has been slow because South Africa's curriculum theory is not inventive, original, creative, or vibrant. Instead of concluding, this article invites ongoing intra-actions as entangled in ethics, knowing and being so that 'we' (all Life including pedagogical lives) can co-create a shared understanding of our posthuman future and confront the threats of the posthuman convergence together.

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