Currere's Active Force and the Concept of *Ubuntu*

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William Pinar avers that the internationalization of Curriculum Studies is about complicated conversations that occur across national boundaries. In this chapter, I open up a conversation that draws on insights from North American scholars including William Pinar and Jason Wallin and the African concept of *Ubuntu* (humanness) in exploring the becoming of pedagogical lives in a post-humanist era. I do not perform this work within a single interpretive community but draw on insights from post-structuralism, indigeneity and post-colonialism.

I borrow the words of Michel Foucault: "Each time I have attempted to do theoretical [academic] work it has been on the basis of elements of my experience – always in relation to processes that I saw taking place around me" (Foucault in Rajchman 1985, p. 36). And so I begin this chapter by referring to recent instances of xenophobia in South Africa. In 2015, we witnessed a second wave of xenophobic attacks in post-apartheid South Africa. Although incidences of xenophobia date back to the Union of South Africa (1910–1948), it has intensified (or has perhaps taken on a new form) in post-apartheid South Africa. In the period from

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2003 to 2008 at least 67 people are reported to have died in xenophobic attacks, with another 62 people dead from xenophobic riots in 2008. In 2015, we saw a nationwide spike of xenophobia in South Africa, which prompted several foreign governments to repatriate their citizens (see South African History Online 2015).

Since 1994, the number of foreign nationals entering South Africa has increased as a consequence of, among other reasons, people fleeing war-torn countries such as Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and hardships in countries such as Zimbabwe, with others leaving African countries to seek a "better life." The number of foreigners from other countries such as China, Thailand and Pakistan has also increased, but it is Africans in particular that have been the targets of xenophobic attacks. In such attacks local South Africans claim, that "*kwerekwere* are stealing our jobs."[1] The invocation of *kwerekwere* in xenophobic attacks is significant. Boitumelo Magolego (2008) points out that *kwerekwere* is a word that has been in use long before 1994 (so it is not a post-apartheid word) and that his grandparents say that the word has been in use as long as they can remember. He writes: "From what I gather it has undertones which speak of how black Africans are believed to be sub–human, too dark and have a pungent smell."

Since its first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa has achieved much. The Bill of Rights of the South African constitution guarantees the right of every citizen to receive basic services, access to education, freedom of association, protection from harm and so forth. But challenges remain: the gap between rich and poor has widened, and violent crime of all kinds is prevalent, including close to 50 murders per day; environmental degradation is on the increase; youth unemployment is rising; corruption of politicians and public servants is rife, incidences of xenophobia continue and so on (for details see Republic of South Africa 2014).

South Africa is a microcosm of the world. Globally, growing inequalities are evident among and within nations; environmental problems

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[1] *Kwerekwere* is the common word used by many South Africans to refer to foreign nationals from African countries. Depending on the language spoken, a different prefix is used for the singular and plural forms. In the Nguni languages, the prefix i—is used for the singular being and ama—for the plural, therefore *ikwerekwere* and *amakwerekwere*, respectively. Nguni languages are a group of Bantu languages spoken in southern Africa. Nguni languages include: Xhosa, Zulu, Hlubi, Phuthi and Ndebele.

have reached unprecedented levels (Le Grange 2016); youth employment is prevalent (Cahuc et al. 2013; Azeng and Yogo 2013); in mainstream USA, for example, the life of an African-American is less valued than that of a white American (Edwards and Harris 2016); in Europe racism towards migrant workers is on the increase (Hazekamp and Popple 2013); global violence and terror have reached unparalleled levels (Kaldor 2012). Many more problems/crises could be mentioned, but the point is sufficiently made.

At least some of the challenges named are manifestations of a single crisis, the crisis of humanism. By this I mean, the Enlightenment idea of what is means to be human—that the human being is an "autonomous rational being" captured in Descartes' (2006) *cogito*, "I am thinking therefore I exist" (p. 28). However, Heidegger (1962) points out that humanism's response to the question of what it means to be human focuses on the essence or nature of the human being instead of on the being of this human being, on the existence of the human being. The upshot of focusing on the essence of the human being is that "human" is defined in a particular way that declares others as less human, sub-human or non-human. The holocaust, apartheid and genocides in Bosnia, Rwanda and Cambodia forcefully remind us of the effects of humanism (Biesta 2006). Levinas (in Biesta 2006) goes as far as to argue that the crisis of humanism began with the inhuman events of recent history:

> The 1914 War, the Russian Revolution refuting itself in Stalinism, fascism, Hitlerism, the 1939-45 War, atomic bombings, genocide and uninterrupted war … a science that calculates the real without thinking it, a liberal politics and administration that suppresses neither exploitation nor war … socialism that gets entangled in bureaucracy. (p. 5)

The crisis of humanism might be understood as the manifestation of a broader concern, that Nietzsche argued is one of the great errors in Western thought: the problem of transcendence. Transcendence is the idea that there are two ontological substances and that the one transcends the other. It is a notion that underpins Plato's Forms, monotheistic religions' idea of God, Descartes's dualism, Hegel's dialectic, Marx's superstructure that creates ideological relations and so forth (Wallin 2010). I shall return to the problem of transcendence later.

In relation to education, Biesta (2006) avers that central to education is the cultivation of the human person or the individual's humanity

but that this idea of education became distorted during the European Enlightenment period. He argues that the idea that education is about cultivating the human person could be traced back to the tradition of *Bildung*—an educational ideal that emerged in Greek society, and through its adoption in Roman culture, humanism, neohumanism, and the Enlightenment, became one of the central notions of the modern Western educational tradition (see Biesta 2006, for a more detailed discussion). The upshot of these developments was that human being became configured in a particular way. For example, when *Bildung* became intertwined with the Enlightenment and the particular influence of Emmanuel Kant, human being came to mean "rational autonomous being"—consequently the purpose of education was to develop rational autonomous beings. Critical pedagogy and its derivatives followed from this understanding of education—that emancipation was a rational process—a process of conscientization in the case of Freireian pedagogy. My use of rationality has reference to a particular kind of rationality that the Enlightenment period gave us. I acknowledge that there might be other kinds of rationality. For example, the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess (1977) argued that rationality includes emotions and experiences, suggesting that it should be rescued from an erroneous turn (Le Grange 2013). But let me come back to South Africa and discuss humanism in relation to schooling.

In terms of its demographics, South African schools have changed significantly since the late 1980s. Many former white schools have a diverse student population. Although township[2] schools have remained the same with respect to its "racial" composition, its demographics have changed in that these schools now house students who are "foreign nationals." Classrooms in schools are the spaces in which complicated conversations about societal issues/challenges can and should occur—issues such as xenophobia, rape, corruption, HIV and AIDS and environmental degradation. Such conversations should occur in an atmosphere of respect and where the humanity of all present is affirmed, nurtured and cultivated. Moreover, it is in classrooms that teachers (with local communities), who know their students best, should play a key role in deciding what knowledge is of most worth to the students they teach. But, in South African classrooms, complicated conversations on issues such as xenophobia

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[2]Townships are underdeveloped peri-urban living areas that are mainly inhabited by black South Africans. They are the consequence of apartheid settlement policies.

are unlikely to occur, because teachers have very little say as to what is taught, for how long, and when it gets taught. The reasons for this situation are complex and detailed, but it links to Enlightenment humanism, how the latter became interwoven with colonialism and in South Africa also with apartheid-capitalism, and presently with neoliberal-capitalism—through all these processes, what it means to be human has become distorted. This distortion in education policy of the apartheid government is most illustrative. According to Enslin (1984), the apartheid education philosophy of Christian National Education stated:

> The final point reflects a significant paternalistic element in the policy. This is particularly evident in articles 14 and 15, entitled 'Coloured Teaching and Education' and 'African (Bantu) Teaching and Education' respectively. Black education is the responsibility of 'white South Africa,' or more specifically of 'the Boer nation as the senior white trustee of the native', who is in a state of 'cultural infancy.' A 'subordinate part of the vocation and task of the Afrikaner,' is to 'Christianise the non-white races of our fatherland.' It is the 'sacred obligation' of the Afrikaner to base black education on Christian National principles. Thus, revealingly, 'We believe that only when the coloured man has been Christianised can he and will he be secure against his own heathen and all kinds of foreign ideologies which promise him sham happiness, but in the long run will make him unsatisfied and unhappy.' (p. 140)

In post-apartheid South Africa, racial content has been removed from policies and curricula and we have seen the infusion of environmental concerns, social justice issues, Indigenous knowledge, etc. But, I have argued elsewhere that all versions of post-apartheid curricula are iterations of the same thing (Le Grange 2010, 2014), namely, all variants of the Tylerian rationale. That all curricula versions have been based on an instrumentalist logic that manifests what Wallin (2010) refers to as an a priori image of a pedagogical life. I shall return to this idea of curriculum later. Moreover, the most recent version of the national curriculum, the Curriculum Policy and Assessment Statements (CAPS) prescribes what is to be taught, when and how it should be taught. Standardized tests have become the order of the day in South African schools following their introduction at the national, provincial and school level (in Western Cape province), thwarting the becoming of pedagogical lives and resulting in perverse practices in schools. Concerning the latter, for example,

a few years ago a Stellenbosch[3] school principal kept back 16 children in the reception year[4] because their birthdays were in the second half the year. His argument (supported by an educational psychologist) was that the children might not be mature enough when they reach grade 3, and therefore negatively impact the schools' performance on standardized tests, and consequently threaten the 100% pass rate that the school has maintained.[5]

Moreover, curriculum scholars in South Africa have in their work, reinscribed a transcendent view of the subject and *currere* as a priori image of a pedagogical life, that is, "to run the course" has become "the course to run." Although the field of curriculum studies is divided and in its infancy in South Africa (Le Grange 2014; Pinar 2010), this idea (a course to run) of curriculum underpins research in the field through large- and small-scale quantitative studies, pedagogical research using the work of Basil Bernstein,[6] critical realist curriculum research and so on. Much of the curriculum research in post-apartheid South Africa has focused on matters related to the implementation of national curriculum frameworks in schools and specifically on pedagogy (as a technology) rather than on the becoming of pedagogical lives (Le Grange 2014). It is for this reason that curriculum research in South Africa (perhaps elsewhere) needs rethinking.

The crisis of humanism alluded to manifests in all spheres and dimensions of life, individual political, social, economic, educational, biophysical and so on. Contemporary problems faced by humanity on all scales (global, national and local) are manifestations of the same underlying crisis—the environmental crisis, the global financial crisis, the education crisis are all expressions of the same crisis. So too is curriculum in the Tylerian mould, an approach that continues to dominate how curriculum is viewed across the globe and in South Africa. Transversal thinking helps us to understand the mutual contagion of humanism in all domains of

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[3]Stellenbosch is South Africa's second oldest town and located approximately 50 km from central Cape Town.

[4]The reception year (Grade R) is a formal year of compulsory pre-schooling before children begin Grade 1.

[5]I was present in a parent-teacher meeting when this was communicated by the school principal.

[6]For detail on Basil Bernstein's influence on Curriculum Studies in South Africa, see Hugo (2010) and Hoadley (2010).

life, and so too such thinking can help us to invigorate vectors of escape so as to generate new connections that open up alternative pathways for becoming. And it here that *currere's* active force holds particular promise in liberating thought from the colonizing fetters of humanism that find expression in *currere's* reactive force.

The Active Force of *Currere*

More than 40 years ago William Pinar first invoked the etymological root of curriculum, the Latin *currere*, which means "to run the course." He did so to refocus curriculum on the significance of individual experience, "whatever the course content or alignment with society or the economy" (Pinar 2011, p. xii). *Currere*, privileges the individual. Pinar (2011) argues that it is a complicated concept because each of us is different, in our genetic makeup, our upbringings, our families, and more broadly our race, gender, class and so on. Because each of us is different, our experiences of the world are different, therefore the running of our course is different. In the running of each of our courses, we interact with others and the conversations that we have with others are not easy or simple ones, but complicated or hard ones; conversations which the dominant approach (Tylerian) to curriculum excludes.

It is against this background that Pinar develops *currere* as an autobiographical method comprised of the following four steps or moments: (1) regressive, (2) progressive, (3) analytical, and (4) synthetical, that depicts both temporal and reflective moments for autobiographical research of educational experience (Pinar et al. 1995). *Currere* has strong phenomenological foundations in common with scholars such as Aoki (1993) and Jardine (1988) who have put forth phenomenological critiques of mainstream social science and in particular quantitative research. In his later work on autobiographical method, Pinar engages post-structuralism in rethinking notions of authenticity, self and autobiography, influenced by the ideas of Nietzsche and Derrida. As Pinar (1988) writes: "We are not the stories we tell as much as we are the modes of relation to others our stories imply, modes of relation implied by what we delete as much as what we include" (p. 28). Few would disagree that Pinar's invocation of *currere* has made a huge contribution to curriculum studies in North America and the rest of the world, and in particular to the reconceptualist curriculum movement in the USA.

However, more recently, Canadian scholar Jason Wallin has revisited the notion of *currere*—he rethinks the idea with Deleuze and Guattari (1994) and their contention that a concept is not a name attached to something but a way of approaching the world. Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) interest is not in what a concept is but what it does. In reviewing Wallin's work, Waterhouse (2012) argues that though inspired by curriculum scholars such as Ted Aoki, Jacques Daignault, William F. Pinar and William M. Reynolds (all interested in the productive potential of Deleuze's ideas for curriculum studies), Wallin does not follow in their footsteps. As Deleuze (1990/1995) writes: "thinkers are always, so to speak, shooting arrows into the air, and other thinkers pick them up and shoot them in a different direction" (as cited by Waterhouse 2012, p. 175).

And so Wallin's work is not autobiographical and does not lean towards reflection. His interest is rather in what *currere* wills to power, in other words, what *currere* does or might do—his mode of analysis might best be considered as a "thought experiment" (Wallin 2010, p. ix). If in its territorialized form *currere* means "the course to run," and in Pinar's invocation, "to run the course," then for Wallin *currere* evokes "a radically different way of thinking the course to be run" (p. 7)—a radically different way of thinking the course of a pedagogical life.

Wallin draws our attention to the paradoxical character of *currere*'s etymology: its active and reactive forces. Firstly, curriculum can be thought of as an active conceptual force. Thinking curriculum as an active conceptual force means that the concept does not have fixity or closeness—that the term does not convey an a priori image of a pedagogical life. It instead relates to the immanent potential of the becoming of a pedagogical life—the multiple coursings of a pedagogical life that exists prior to thought. As Wallin (2010) elaborates:

> [*To*] *run* implies that the conceptual power of *currere* is intimate to its productive capacity to create flows, offshoots, and multiplicitous movements. For example, the "running" roots of rhizomatic bulbs and tubers extend to create new interfaces with other organic and nonorganic bodies, extending the experience of what a body can become … Running flows of volcanic magma create new courses along and through the ostensible stability of the Earth's mantle, articulating the immanent geomorphic potential of territories to deterritorialise … A musical "run" creates lines of

flight potentially incongruous with the codes that structure it, overflowing, extending, and traversing tonal registers in producing new affects. (p. 2)

The conceptual power of *currere* implies newness, creation of things unforeseen, experimentation, expanding of difference and movement.

However, what has occurred in Western education is the territorialization of *currere's* active force into a reactive force whereby "to run" has become an a priori image—the Grecian "chariot track" or literal "course to run" (Wallin 2010, p. 2). In other words, one way of doing has become the way of doing. This reactive force of *currere* has dominated schooling and university education in the twentieth century (and continues to do so in the twenty-first century) evident in instrumentalist approaches to teaching whereby outcomes or aims are predetermined and often derived from existing disciplines. Students are tracked by standardized tests and kept on track by subject disciplines. The territorialization of *currere's* active force has led to the ossification of potential movements, thwarting of experimentation, freezing of living and domestication of self. Wallin (2010) writes about the humanistic character of *currere's* reactive force:

> The territorialisation of the pedagogical course is indicative of another privilege central to its reactive image. That is, the reactive image of currere is distinctly humanistic, reducing life to its human-all-too-human enframement. Potential ways of thinking a life are reduced to the image that the world is "just like us", and following, that the course to run finds full representation in the anthropocentric imaginery. (p. 6)

The dominance of *currere's* reactive force in education needs to be understood in terms of Western society's commitment to transcendence. Deleuze and Guattari (1994) assert that transcendence is the belief in the existence of a substance/thing beyond empirical space, power or existence (ontological being). It is the commitment to transcendence that has separated humans from nature (causing nature's destruction) and that has informed an education system that has reinforced dualisms. Transcendent thinking is not only evident in conservative positivist approaches to education but also in critical pedagogy informed by Marxist thinking. Bowers (1980) points out that proponents of critical pedagogy frame capitalism and socialism in a dualistic logic of right/wrong, truth/illusion and salvation/damnation.

In his work Wallin (2010) experiments on the lines of flight that are created by an active concept of *currere*, which he argues becomes a way of transforming a life and which extends experience beyond knowledge and opinion. Each line of flight escapes from a priori ways of thinking and brings something new into existence. These experimentations are performed across a wide range of genres of film, music, games, visual arts and technology (Wallin 2010).

In this chapter, I wish to experiment with connecting *Ubuntu* and the active force of *currere*, Deleuzo-Guttarian thought, and post-human(ist) theory so as to generate, in Deleuzian terms "circles of convergence" or in Wallin's (2010) terms unlikely fidelities. I am invoking *Ubuntu* as a way of rethinking the inhuman(e) events of our time, of rethinking the post-human condition and also because *Ubuntu* is an idea/practice that is known to rural communities in the Global South for whom some of the genres that Wallin uses might not be part of their life-world. But, before invigorating these lines of connection, let me first discuss *Ubuntu*.

Ubuntu

Ubuntu/Botho[7] is a concept that is derived from proverbial expressions (aphorisms) found in several languages in Africa south of the Sahara. However, it is not only a linguistic concept but a normative connotation embodying how we ought to relate to the other—what our moral obligation is towards the other. Battle (1996) explains the concept *Ubuntu* as originating from the Xhosa[8] expression: *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye Bantu*, "Not an easily translatable Xhosa concept, generally, this proverbial expression means that each individual's humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with others and, in turn, individuality is truly expressed" (p. 99).

Metz and Gaie (2010) argue that there are two ways in which sub-Saharan African morality (as embodied in *Ubuntu*) is distinct from Western

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[7] In this chapter, I shall use the term *Ubuntu* which derives from the aphorism "*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" found in the Nguni languages of Zulu, Xhosa or Ndebele. However, I wish to point out that a similar concept exists in Sotho-Tswana languages derived from the proverbial expression, "*Motho ke motho ka batho babang*".

[8] The Xhosa people are Bantu language speakers living in the southeast of South Africa. The mains tribes of the Xhosa are: Mpondo; Mpondomise; Bonvana; Xesibe; and Thembu. isiXhosa is one of the official languages of South Africa.

approaches to morality. Firstly, they argue that sub-Saharan morality is essentially relational in the sense that the only way to develop one's humanness is to relate to others in a positive way. In other words, one becomes a person solely through other persons—"one cannot realize one's true self in opposition to others or even in isolation from them" (p. 275). They point out that *Ubuntu* means that our deepest moral obligation is to become more fully human and to achieve this requires one to enter more deeply into community with others. One therefore cannot become more fully human or realize one's true self by exploiting, deceiving or acting in unjust ways towards others. Metz and Gaie argue that the second way in which African morality differs from an Aristotelian or other Western moral philosophy is that it defines positive relationship with others in strictly communal terms. They write:

> One is not to positively relate to others fundamentally by giving them what they deserve, respecting individual human rights grounded on consent, participating in a political sphere or maximizing the general welfare, common themes in Western moral philosophy. Instead the proper way to relate to others, for one large part of sub-Saharan thinking, is to seek out community or to live in harmony with them. (p. 275)

Following from this is that moral obligation concerns: doing things for the good of others; to think of oneself as bound up with others; and to value family (in a broad sense of the term) for its own sake and not for its efficacy.

When reference is made to the other by Metz and Gaie (2010), then they are evidently referring to the human other—that relatedness means connectedness with other human beings. In other words, *Ubuntu* means becoming more fully human through deeper relationships with other human beings. It is because of this understanding that Enslin and Horsthemke (2004) have argued that *Ubuntu* is by definition speciesist and therefore cannot contribute positively towards addressing environmental problems. Through a categorical lens of environmental ethics, we would say that *Ubuntu* is anthropocentric. However, I wish to argue that this is not the case and that *Ubuntu* has very strong ecocentric leanings (if the categorical lens of environmental ethics is used) or that it transcends the binary of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. To appreciate the ecocentric leanings of the concept *Ubuntu* a broader/similar concept, *Ukama*, of which it forms part, should be understood.

In the Shona[9] language, there is a broader concept *Ukama* which means relatedness—relatedness to the entire cosmos. Murove (2009) argues that *Ubuntu* (humanness) is the concrete form of *Ukama* (relatedness) in the sense that "human interrelationship within society is a microcosm of the relationality within the universe" (p. 316). It is against this backdrop that Murove's (2009) assertion that, "ukama provides the ethical anchorage for human social, spiritual and ecological togetherness," might be understood (p. 317). This idea of ecological togetherness is supported by others such as Bujo (2001) who writes: "The African is convinced that all things in the cosmos are interconnected" (pp. 22–23). Also by Tangwa (2004) who avers: "The precolonial traditional African metaphysical, outlook … impl[ies] recognition and acceptance of interdependence and peaceful coexistence between earth, plants, animals and humans" (p. 389). Opoku (1993) notes: "There is community with nature since man [sic] is part of nature and is expected to cooperate with it; and this sense of community with nature is often expressed in terms of identity and kinship, friendliness and respect" (p. 77).

Moreover, humanness is not humanism and is in fact antithetical to it. As Ramose (2009) writes:

> Humanness suggests both a condition of being and the state of becoming, of openness or ceaseless unfolding. It is thus opposed to any, '-ism', including humanism, for this tends to suggest a condition of finality, a closedness or a kind of absolute either incapable of, or resistant to, any further movement. (pp. 308–309)

Humanness is therefore inextricably bound up in the human being's connectedness with other human beings and with an ever changing and complex (biophysical) world. The sense of wholeness and interconnectedness of self with the social and natural by implication means that caring for others also involves a duty to care for nature (the more-than-human-world). *Ubuntu*, therefore is not by definition speciesist as Enslin and Horsthemke (2004) suggest, but is rather an ecosophy that connects Guattari's (2001) three ecologies; self, social and nature—self, social and

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[9] Shona is the collective name for several groups of people in the east of Zimbabwe and southern Mozambique. The Shona speaking people are categorised into five main ethnic groups: Zezuru; Manyika; Karanga and Kalanga; Korekore; and Ndau. There are substantial numbers in South Africa and Botswana.

nature are inextricably bound up with one another. Cultivating *Ubuntu*, by definition therefore involves healing of self, social and nature.

Guattari's notion of transversality helps us to gain a more nuanced sense of the notion of *ukama* when he argues that when suffering is witnessed in one ecological register it will also be witnessed in other ecological registers. Africa's suffering evident in the, "staggering incidence of genocide, patriarchy, dictatorships and autocratic rule, corruption, sexism (and practices of genital excision), heterosexism and homophobia, xenophobia, and environmental degradation (and connected with this, human suffering) on the continent" (Horsthemke and Enslin 2005, p. 67) should be understood as the breaking or erosion of *ukama* through among other influences, years of colonial rule and apartheid-capitalism (manifestations of the crisis of humanism). Healing in one ecological register will therefore effect healing in other ecological registers. If *Ubuntu* means that our deepest moral obligation is to become more fully human, then this means not only fostering a closer and deeper relationship with human communities but also with biotic communities and the entire ecosphere. In other words, the realization of one's true self cannot be achieved if other human beings and nature are exploited or harmed.

Understanding *Ubuntu* as a concrete expression of *Ukama* also problematizes the categories of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism (and those in between) which have come to characterize debates in environmental ethics/philosophy and on those who wish to impose such categories on African values such as *Ubuntu*. Nurturing the self or caring for other human beings is not antagonistic towards caring for the-more-than-human world—*Ubuntu* cannot simply be reduced to a category of anthropocentrism or ecocentrism. The self, community and nature are inextricably bound up with one another—healing/development in one results in healing in all dimensions and so suffering too is transversally witnessed in all three dimensions. Put simply, African spirituality cannot be reduced to a category of anthropocentrism.

UBUNTU AND *CURRERE'S* ACTIVE FORCE

Responses to the challenges facing Africa (and elsewhere)—xenophobia, poverty, environmental destruction, etc. do not necessarily lie outside of the concepts known to the communities perpetrating them or who are victims of harm, but in reviving, reinventing, reimagining, rethinking such concepts. And so I wish to rethink *Ubuntu* by generating

connections with *currere's* active force and post-human "theory."[10] By the latter, I mean emerging thoughts on the post-human condition that Braidotti (2013) has also described as the "post-human predicament" (p. 1). Here Braidotti views post-human theory as both a genealogical and a navigational process. By the former, she means an approach to rethink the basic unit of reference for the human in a bio-genetic age known as the "anthropocene"—a historical moment where humans are capable of affecting all life. By the latter, she means mapping how the post-human is circulating as a dominant term in our globally interconnected and technologically mediated societies. Post-human theory is a critical response to post-human capitalism (the genetic code that has become capital, robotics and a fourth industrial revolution, etc.) but it also positively draws on new materialist thought that posits that there are material flows that connect everything in the cosmos—an immanent plane from which human, animal and physical forms are actualized. This wider macro context serves as the basis for exploring *Ubuntu* in relation to the following notions: *people-yet-to-come*; *subjectivity that is ecological*; and *transcending the anthropocentric-ecocentric divide*.

Unprecedented levels of destruction in Guattari's (2001) three ecological registers (mental, social and environment) by present generations might suggest that those who could take us beyond the crisis of humanism are not yet with us, that is, that they are a *people-yet-to-come*. However, when Deleuze and Guattari invoke the notion of a *people-yet-to-come* it is not a historical lament on their part but more an expression of an ontological concept. As Hroch (2014) writes:

> Deleuze and Guattari's plea for a 'people-yet-to-come' does not presume that the pedagogical or political process of transformation at work is one through which a pre-existing (though not-yet existing) 'people' will come to adopt a pre-existing 'idea' over time. Rather, they understand the people present *in the present* as *already* the 'people-yet-to come'. That is, for Deleuze and Guattari, we are always already people-in-becoming and thus the concept of a 'people-yet-to-come' expresses the perpetual potentiality of becoming-other inherent to the present. (italics in the original) (p. 50)

Those that are to respond to the crises of humanism (in all its manifestations) and the challenges of the post-human condition are not a

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[10]I put theory in scare quotation marks because the post-human predicament might also signal a post-theory mood.

people-yet-to-come in the sense of a future people, but a people here and now—it is the people in the present that are in-becoming. This notion connects with *currere* as an active conceptual force which holds that there is no a priori image of a pedagogical life, but multiple coursings for the becoming of a pedagogical life—it concerns the immanent potential for the becoming of a pedagogical life. The notions *people-yet-to-come* and *currere's* active force conveys an anti-humanist stance—if the "human" is always in-becoming then it can't be defined or essentialized. Moreover, the two notions align with post-human theory that draws on new materialism, which is premised on the idea that bodies (including human bodies) are material flows of energy that have become actualized—the materiality of the human being denies it fixity, makes it fleeting and connects it to all of life. It is with the (material) immanent plane that the life force in human beings is connected (or flows from), a term that Braidotti (2013) refers to as *potentia*. *Potentia* is a positive force that expresses the human's desire to endure, to become and to connect to other human beings and the more-than-human world. Earlier I noted Ramose's (2009) argument that *Ubuntu* is anti-humanism, that it concerns a state of becoming, of openness or ceaseless unfolding. The conceptual connection between *Ubuntu*, *currere's* active force and the new materialism turn in post-human theory is clearly evident. An education informed by *Ubuntu* therefore makes possible the expression of *potentia*, the expression of the desire to live, to connect and care for other humans and the more-than-human-world. It opens up multiple coursings for the becoming of a pedagogical life. *Ubuntu-currere* is anti-humanist, because it is in contrast to education informed by humanism that is driven by a negative power, *potestas*, which centralizes control, colonizes desire, predetermines the course to run through predefined aims, objectives or outcomes, etc. In other words, *potestas* territorializes *currrere's* active force into a reactive force.

Furthermore, an education informed by *Ubuntu* liberates thought from the fetters of Cartesian duality—from Descartes's *cogito*, I think therefore I am. *Ubuntu*, the active force of *currere* and new materialist post-humanism celebrates the oneness of mind and body and the oneness of humans and the more-than-human-world. Rather than subjectivity being individual, it is ecological. An education informed by *Ubuntu* represents a shift from what Doll (2015) calls the arrogant "I" (of Western individualism) to the humble "I"—to the "I" that is embedded, embodied, extended and enacted. In an ever-changing world, the

pathways for becoming of a pedagogical life cannot be known or defined. *Ubuntu-currere* signifies both our movement in the world and how the world moves through us which generates potentially creative ways for us to inhabit the world. The oneness of the self and other humans as a microcosm of the oneness of self and the cosmos provides impetus for becomings that are caring towards other humans and the more-than-human world. An education informed by *Ubuntu-currere* is based on co-operation and not competition.

Ubuntu-currere is post-anthropocentric and in fact overcomes the anthropocentric-ecocentric divide. Braidotti (2006) importantly points out that geo-centric (ecocentric) theories such as deep-ecology and gaianism humanize the more-than-human-world by imposing human attributes on other species and the physical world. *Ubuntu-currere* suggests thinking differently about ecological domains, akin to Guattari's (2001) notion of thinking about the three ecological registers transversely. Education informed by *Ubuntu-currere* suggests moving beyond disciplinary thinking to explore the mutual connections among disciplines, to explore their mutual contagion and to invigorate transdisciplinary trajectories. *Ubuntu/ukama*, *currere*, and Guattari's three ecologies are ideas with different epistemological histories. The experiment here was not to reduce any of the concepts by collapsing them into each other but to expand them, to explore points of resonance among them, to explore their mutual contagion, to enrich each concept so as to open up alternative pathways for the becoming of the young in a world with complex challenges that revolve around the self, social relations and the condition of the environment. Pathways that will enable us to live more "hopefully, radically, ethically, and lovingly" (Hébert et al. 2018, p. 5).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that *Ubuntu-currere* shifts our registers of reference away from the individual human being to an assemblage of human-human-nature. In other words, subjectivity is ecological. Moreover, the subject is always in-becoming and the becoming of a pedagogical life is relational—the subject becomes in relation to other humans and the more-than-human-world. The notion in-becoming ensures that the human cannot be defined nor have fixity and therefore *Ubuntu-currere* is anti-humanist. Put differently, *Ubuntu-currere* negates the construction of a molar identity that is a screen against which

anything different is othered in a negative sense. *Ubuntu-currere* has resonance with new materialist post-human theory in that it embraces an ontology of immanence—that there is a material immanent plane that connects everything in the cosmos and from which all actualized forms unfold/become. *Ubuntu-currere* opens up multiple coursings for developing post-human sensibilities driven by the positive power of *potentia* that connects, expresses desire and sustains life. It is this power that connects curriculum scholars across national boundaries and makes possible conversations where we can hear "what people do, how they do it, how they think about things with the hope that we could learn from each other" (Hébert et al. 2018, p. 3). But, it also makes possible conversations with the more-than-human so that we can listen to rhythm and heartbeat of the earth—so that our conversations do not happen on the earth but are bent by the earth (Le Grange 2016). *Potentia* promises to counteract the manifestations of the crisis of humanism such as racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, environmental destruction, centrally controlled and standardized education systems. These crises are manifestations of a negative power, *potestas*, the same form of power that produces *currere's* reactive force. Counteracting *postestas* (criticism of and resistance to it) and the releasing of *potentia* is at the heart of living hopefully and that make possible the internationalization of curriculum studies mooted in this volume.

In Kappeler's (1986) words: "I do not really wish to conclude and sum up, rounding off the arguments so as to dump it in a nutshell for the reader. A lot more could be said about any of the topics I have touched upon … I have meant to ask questions, to break out of the frame … The point is not a set of answers, but making possible a different practice" (p. 30)—a different way of viewing *Ubuntu* and *currere* and the internationalization of curriculum studies.

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