



Propositions for curriculum scholars in a contemporary world

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Abstract

The contemporary world is marked by multifaceted crises—personal, social, and environmental—that raise urgent existential and educational questions. Within curriculum studies, these crises prompt critical inquiries such as “What knowledge is of most worth?” “Whose knowledge is valued?” and “Is knowledge alone sufficient?” While these questions remain central, this article shifts focus to the role of the curriculum scholar in navigating the contemporary moment. Drawing on theoretical insights from thinkers who have explored the nature of contemporaneity, I engage particularly with Giorgio Agamben’s (2009) notion of the *untimeliness* of the contemporary. Building on this theoretical insight, I propose nine provocations for curriculum scholars operating in a temporally complex world. These propositions are not grounded in formal logic; rather, they serve as posthuman invitations to engage with reality in experimental and transformative ways.

Keywords: contemporary, crises, curriculum scholars, ethics, posthuman, propositions

Introduction

The contemporary world can be characterised as a time of overlapping and intensifying crises. These range from ongoing wars and rising global and national inequalities to escalating youth unemployment, the disruptive potential of advanced technologies, the effects of climate change, financial instability, and global pandemics. The cumulative impact of these crises has been termed a *polycrisis* by Morin and Kern (1999), a condition in which the combined effects of various stressors exceed the sum of their individual impacts. For example, at a local level, a woman living in rural KwaZulu-Natal may experience the compounded effects of poverty, gender-based violence, climate change, inflation, and loadshedding—an entanglement of stressors that produces a burden far greater than each one in isolation.

This condition has prompted renewed theorising about humanity’s impact on the planet. Crutzen and Stoermer (2000) proposed the concept of the Anthropocene, a new geological

epoch marked by human dominance over Earth's systems, an era that is wreaking havoc on the planet. Yet the Anthropocene is more than a geological marker; it is a philosophical, existential, and educational condition that demands ethical response-ability. Ulmer (2019) described the Anthropocene as a warning, a critical concept, and an invitation to rethink scholarly work and reconsider how we might live differently. Le Grange (2019) offered a hopeful perspective, suggesting that the Anthropocene represents a reflexive moment of growing ecological awareness, a critical consciousness of humanity's intra-action with/in Earth. Nevertheless, Morton (2014) argued that the term Anthropocene is peculiar because it may signal the end of the human, both as a humanist subject and as a species.

In *Capitalism in the Web of Life*, Jason Moore (2015) contended that the term Anthropocene should be replaced with Capitalocene, arguing that the rise of capitalism after 1450 marked a more significant shift in human–nature relations than the advent of agriculture. Haraway responded to the Anthropocene/Capitalocene debate by urging us to “stay with the trouble” (2016, p. 1) and “make kin” (2016, p. 99). Her concept of the Chthulucene¹ called for building multispecies alliances in a world shared by humans and non-humans. The implication is that any meaningful form of community engagement in a post/Anthropocene world must involve intra-actions between humans and the more/other-than-human world. Regardless of which “-cene” we invoke, what remains undeniable is that human actions are degrading Earth's biophysical foundations. This reality demands a reimagined relationship between humans and the more/other-than-human world.

The contemporary world is also shaped by the rapid advancement of technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, drones, and genetic sequencing. While these technologies offer significant benefits, they also pose serious ethical challenges. For instance, the increasing use of drones in warfare, often justified by claims of precision (see Gregory, 2011), raises concerns about accountability and the concealment of human involvement (Enemark, 2013). More broadly, human lives are now deeply entangled with advanced technologies, prompting the critical question: “How can we engage these technologies in ways that are productive rather than destructive?”

Thus, on one hand, humanity is increasingly enmeshed in technological systems and, on the other, it must confront looming ecological catastrophe. Braidotti (2019, p. 2) captured this tension by stating that we are “caught between the algorithmic devil and the acidic blue sea.” She also reminded us that “‘we’ may be in this together, but we are not all human and we are not one and the same” (Braidotti, 2020, p. 26). This speaks to both ecological and social injustices, highlighting the unequal distribution of benefits and burdens across the planet. The

1 Chthulucene is a neologism constructed by Dona Haraway (2016) that critiqued the term Anthropocene as appropriate for describing the current geological epoch. She challenged the Anthropocene's emphasis on the supremacy of humans, their individualism, and self-imagined exceptionalism. Chthulucene derives from the specific epithet of a spider, *Pimosa cthulhu*, which lives in the redwood forests of North Central California. However, Haraway (2016) made a small change in the taxonomic spelling of the specific epithet from *ctulhu* to *chthulu* to rescue it from the horror creature, Cthulhu in H. P Lovecraft's science fiction work. Gough and Adsit-Morris (2020) stated that they assumed that Haraway's change was tongue-in-cheek otherwise Haraway would risk being arrogant and disrespectful to the scientist who named the spider.

entanglement of humans with advanced technologies and ecological collapse, alongside the ethical response-ability this demands, defines the contemporary posthuman condition.

As noted, the contemporary moment invites a range of questions, and here particularly within the field of curriculum studies. Traditional curriculum inquiries such as “What knowledge is of most worth?” “Whose knowledge is of most worth?” and “Is knowledge enough?” (Le Grange, 2020) are especially pertinent. However, this article focuses on the curriculum² scholar and their role and response-ability in relation to the contemporary condition. I begin with a brief discussion of the contemporary as a way of rethinking contemporaneity in the context of curriculum scholarship. This is followed by a discussion on propositions, culminating in nine³ propositions for curriculum scholars navigating the contemporary world. Finally, I offer some parting thoughts for the reader.

A word on the contemporary

The etymological root of contemporary is the Latin word *contemporaneus*, combining *con-* (“together with”) and *tempus/tempor-* (“time”), which suggests that the word contemporary signifies “living, existing, or occurring together in time” (Silvello, 2019, p. 4). The term can also refer to periodisation, such as in contemporary art, which denotes a specific era of artistic production. However, to move beyond a strictly temporal or periodised understanding, Silvello (2019, p. 4) argued that the contemporary should be understood “as a condition, as an attitude, as a mode of being.” I would add, as a mode of becoming. Understanding the contemporary as an attitude, a way of being, and a process of becoming foregrounds the subject’s capacity to respond to the present moment.

In his essay, *What Is the Contemporary?* Agamben (2009) drew on Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Untimely Meditations* and contended that the contemporary is, by nature, untimely. He wrote, “Those who are truly contemporary, who truly belong to their time, are those who neither perfectly coincide with it nor adjust themselves to its demands” (Agamben, 2009, p. 40). For Agamben, there were two dimensions to this untimeliness:

- *Temporal disconnection*, where the individual experiences a sense of estrangement from the present—inhabiting it without fully belonging to it.
- *Anachronism*, where one views the present from a critical distance—perceiving its darkness and absences that are often overlooked.

2 In this article, curriculum does not refer to a fixed plan or static blueprint. It is a complicated conversation that encompasses a dialogical, ethical, and relational practice that unfolds among scholars and students, teachers and learners, and the broader world (both human and more-than or other-than-human). It is lived within its time yet also untimely, making it possible for scholars to interrogate dominant narratives whilst attending to what is hidden or not part of conversations. Curriculum is emergent and experimental, enacted rather than merely followed, and responsive to the crises and complexities of the contemporary posthuman condition. It is relational, embracing the entanglement of human, non-human, technological, and ecological systems, and transformative in its commitment to cultivating new ways of thinking, being, and becoming. It sustains inquiry, nurtures imagination, and cultivates ethical response-ability.

3 The propositions are not ranked in order of importance and there is no logic to their placing. The propositions should be understood and read as intertwined, together–apart.

Viewing the contemporary as untimely is crucial because it enables one, particularly the curriculum scholar, to interrogate the blind spots of the present. This entails a refusal to be interpellated into dominant narratives, a commitment to uncovering omissions and suppressed histories, and a drive to generate new forms of thought across all domains of life.

There are many ways in which the curriculum scholar can embody untimeliness. A few examples, not in order of emphasis, include:

- Critically engaging with advanced technologies, which have become instrumental to neoliberal capitalism (Du Preez & Le Grange, 2025).
- Questioning dominant narratives on sustainability, such as those embedded in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which tend to narrow the discourse (Le Grange, 2017).
- Resisting the prevailing notion that violence is necessary in struggles for freedom (Butler, 2020; Wang, 2014).
- Challenging the Enlightenment-derived conception of the human as autonomous, rational, and atomistic (Braidotti, 2013).
- Recognising the persistent presence of coloniality, which demands ongoing processes of unlearning and relearning (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Omanga, 2020).
- Continually generating new ways of performing curriculum work beyond the constraints of the Tylerian model (Le Grange, 2025).

Agamben's (2009) emphasis on the contemporariness of the subject invites us to consider the contemporariness of the curriculum scholar, premised on the idea that the curriculum must be lived within its time, yet remain untimely. The implication being a deeper ethical responsibility of what should the curriculum scholar do in response to the demands and crises of the contemporary world.

With this in mind, I will now generate nine propositions for the curriculum scholar in a contemporary world. Before doing so, I will first elaborate on the meaning of proposition in the context of this article. It is important to note that understanding the contemporary subject as untimely also involves recognising that the human subject is not an atomistic, autonomous rational actor, but rather relational, entangled, and ecological.

Propositions (as genre of writing)

Since the theoretical challenge to the hegemony of positivism, particularly from the 1980s onward, there has been a proliferation of alternative approaches to research. Scholars have increasingly experimented with diverse modes of writing, and a broader range of genres has gained acceptance within the humanities and social sciences. Richardson (2001), for instance, argued that writing is a form of inquiry—that we write to discover, to learn something previously unknown.

Among these emerging genres, some authors have explored the use of propositions as a form of academic writing (see Le Grange, 2024; Manning, 2016). However, their understanding of

propositions diverges significantly from the definition found in propositional logic. In logic, a proposition is a declarative statement that is either true or false, serving as a building block for constructing logical expressions. My use of the term in this article also departs from this binary framework and warrants further elaboration.

Sehgal (2014) noted that Alfred North Whitehead (1985) rejected the notion that propositions should be evaluated solely in terms of truth or falsehood because this reduces them to objects of judgment. For Whitehead, a proposition is not a judgment but an entertainment, a concept that must be embodied and experienced. As Sehgal (2014) explained, propositions are not abstract; they are immanent to contemporary conditions. Whitehead (1985, p. 259) famously stated, “In the real world it is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true. The importance of truth is that it adds to the interest.” Building on Whitehead’s insights, scholars engaged in posthuman theorising, such as Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, and Karen Barad, have reconceptualised propositions not as statements of truth or falsity, but as provocations. These propositions challenge the boundaries of what it means to be human. They are speculative, relational, and performative, inviting new ways of thinking, being, and becoming.

Let us now consider a few examples:

- **Cyborg proposition:** In *A Cyborg Manifesto*, Haraway (1985) proposed the cyborg as a figuration that blurs boundaries between human and technology, organism and machine, physical and non-physical. Her proposition is not a literal claim but a conceptual tool that invites us to rethink identity, gender, and embodiment.
- **Posthuman subjectivity:** In *The Posthuman*, Braidotti (2013) proposed a rethinking of the human as the central unit of reference. Given our entanglement with advanced technologies and the urgency of ecological crisis, she called for making kin with the more-than-human and other-than-human.
- **Zoe-centred ethics:** Braidotti (2002, 2019) proposed affirming the vital force of life (zoe) as central to ethics. This shift moved away from anthropocentric human rights toward planetary sustainability and interspecies equity. In this context, she argued that death is ethical because it marks the return of *Anthropos/bios* to zoe.
- **Material–discursive acts:** In *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, Barad (2007) proposed that matter and meaning are inseparable. Propositions, in her view, are ongoing intra-actions, dynamic entanglements of material and discursive forces.

This discussion of propositions provides the conceptual backdrop and justification for the propositions I shall now generate. It also affirms the value of propositions as a genre of writing, one that is attuned to complexity, difference, and the ethical demands of our contemporary condition.

Propositions for curriculum scholars

Before outlining the nine propositions, it is important to emphasise that they are mutually inclusive and inherently interconnected. While presented individually, they will inevitably overlap.

Professional ethics to affirmative ethics

In one of the introductory chapters to the *International Handbook of Curriculum Research*, Autio (2014) emphasised the moral dimensions of education, asserting that it is morality that renders education truly educative. Autio's use of the term moral is not moralistic; rather, it aligns more closely with ethics, a commitment to continually interrogate the worthiness of knowledge. This involves critically examining what is included and excluded in teaching and learning programmes. Pinar (2014, p. 2) echoed this ethical orientation, noting that it informs "our profession's ethics, our commitment to study, and teach as we engage in academic research to understand curriculum." He conceptualised curriculum as a complicated conversation, a dialogical process that unfolds among scholars and between scholars and students.

In response to the complexities of the contemporary world, there may be a need to expand this ethical framework toward what Braidotti (2011) referred to as affirmative ethics. Affirmative ethics is a practice of saying yes to life, of engaging in actions that enhance and sustain life. It is relational, immanent, and transformative. What makes it affirmative is its shift away from critique and negativity toward the creation of new ways of thinking, being, and becoming. Affirmative ethics entails responsiveness to the immanent present and openness to transformation considering the pressing issues of our time. Crucially, it does not centre the human as an isolated, autonomous entity. Instead, it foregrounds the intra-action between humans and the more-than-human and other-than-human world, emphasising entanglement and co-constitution.

The contemporariness of the curriculum scholar, then, involves the capacity to respond to the present beyond the boundaries of conventional professional ethics. It calls for an affirmative ethics, one that nurtures creative modes of thinking, doing, being, and becoming, and cultivates this capacity within students. This proposition signals a shift in how scholars should understand and practise ethics in contemporary times. Professional ethics is rooted in the responsibility scholars must uphold vis-à-vis moral and professional standards in teaching and research. It emphasises integrity, accountability, and the worthiness of knowledge. This form of ethics is human-centred. Affirmative ethics engages in practices that enhance, sustain, and transform life (all life). It decentres the human subject, and foregrounds entanglement with the more-than-human and other-than-human worlds. It concerns cultivating openness, transformation, and ecological response-ability.

Making kin

Donna Haraway (2016, p. 1) argued that we must “stay with the trouble” and “make kin, not babies” (2015, p. 161) in the Chthulucene. This opening statement suggests that the concept of kin-making must be understood in relation to two other key ideas: staying with the trouble, and the Chthulucene. By staying with the trouble, Haraway urged us to confront the challenges of a damaged planet directly: rejecting despair, escapism, denial, and simplistic solutions. The Chthulucene, a term she preferred over Anthropocene, more accurately captures the current epoch in which humans are deeply entangled with other species.

Making kin, in Haraway’s (2016) framework, does not refer to traditional notions of family or community. Instead, it involves cultivating enduring relationships across species boundaries, challenging anthropocentrism and the Western emphasis on individualism. It calls for solidarity with all refugees, human and non-human, and embraces a multispecies ethic. For Haraway, choosing kin over procreation is a deliberate ethical stance in a world marked by polycrisis.

This perspective has profound implications for curriculum scholars. It calls for an expansion of ethical response-ability beyond institutional confines to encompass planetary and multispecies concerns. Such response-ability should be nurtured collaboratively among curriculum scholars and students through intra-action with the more- and other-than-human world. Transdisciplinary approaches are essential, dissolving boundaries between the natural sciences, arts, social sciences, and humanities. To truly value the more/other-than-human, pedagogical practices can creatively incorporate insights from Indigenous knowledge systems, speculative fiction, environmental ethics, and beyond.

Post/human complicated conversations

The notion of complicated conversation in curriculum studies was first introduced by William Pinar (see Pinar, 2004), drawing on the philosophical insights of Michael Oakeshott and Richard Rorty. It emerged in response to political attacks on education in the United States, underscoring the need to preserve the dignity of the field and reaffirm its commitment to intellectual life. In the current climate, marked by the Trump administration’s response to ethical protests at US universities regarding genocide/educide in Gaza, which threatens institutional autonomy and academic freedom, the need for ongoing complicated conversations is more pressing than ever.

Aoki (2004) emphasised that complicated conversations are not mere exchanges of information; they require authentic human experiences and a willingness to truly listen to the other. In the context of classroom dialogue, Pinar (2004) argued that educators should avoid presenting students with airtight arguments. Instead, they should create opportunities for students to express their own thoughts and engage in the study of self and learning. Regarding the internationalisation of curriculum studies, Pinar (2014) asserted that this process involves engaging in complicated conversations within transnational spaces, where the aim is to listen to others in order to interrogate the self. For both Pinar and Aoki, complicated conversations

are central to the humanisation of curriculum in response to the systematic dehumanisation of education.

However, in today's world, where human lives are increasingly entangled with advanced technologies and human exceptionalism is being challenged in the face of planetary degradation, complicated conversations must extend beyond the human. Du Preez et al. (2022) argued that when re/thought through posthuman theorising, complicated conversations are not predetermined but radically open intra-actions, in which human exceptionalism itself is questioned. These conversations are not confined to discursive or cultural dimensions but also encompass material and natural dimensions. In Baradian (2007) terms, they are material-discursive. The capacity of curriculum scholars to invigorate such posthuman conversations is therefore of critical importance. Moreover, an affirmative ethics invigorates complicated conversations including making kin with both human and non-human refugees. Therefore, complicated conversations as described here do not provide room for movements or stances that are antagonistic to enhancing, sustaining, and transforming life.

Curriculum experimentation and emergent curriculum design

In both schools and universities, curriculum development and design continue to be shaped by the Tylerian (1949) model. Contemporary iterations of Tyler's rationale include outcomes-based education and constructive alignment (Le Grange, 2025). Tyler's approach to curriculum was grounded in the factory model of industrialisation, reflecting the dominant socioeconomic paradigm of the time. However, the world has changed, and continues to change, at an unprecedented pace. This transformation is driven by rapid technological advancement, the intensification of capitalism, and escalating environmental degradation, which now places the planet on the brink of ecological collapse.

In this context, predetermined and fixed curriculum designs have become increasingly obsolete. What is needed in the contemporary posthuman condition is a shift toward emerging designs rooted in curriculum experimentation. This approach is not about trial and error within a closed system; rather, it involves radically rethinking what curriculum is, what it can do, and whom or what it serves. Curriculum experimentation is inherently political, ethical, ontological, and epistemological. It is always evolving, always becoming. Such experimentation seeks to unsettle the fixed boundaries of curriculum, treating it not as a static blueprint but as a dynamic, emergent process—something we enact rather than merely follow. It invites us to reimagine curriculum as a fluid, relational, and creative practice that transcends traditional norms of schooling and higher education. In doing so, it embraces complexity, diversity, and the interdependence of human and more-than-human worlds.

Curriculum scholars are called upon to break away from obsolete approaches to curriculum development and design and instead, embrace curriculum experimentation and emergent design. This shift demands a move beyond rigid, predetermined frameworks toward dynamic, responsive practices that reflect the complexities of contemporary life. In doing so, scholars reimagine curriculum not as a static product, but as a living, evolving process—one that is relational, creative, and attuned to the ethical, political, and ecological challenges of our time.

Sustainability culture

Sustainable development continues to dominate global sustainability discourse and has been widely adopted by governments, as evidenced by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, many governments have embraced what is known as education for sustainable development. The connection between sustainable development, education, and broader sustainability concerns is of particular interest to curriculum scholars. However, sustainable development not only narrows the discourse on sustainability, it also contributes to the colonisation of educational pathways intended to promote sustainability. As Le Grange (2017) argued, both the concept of sustainable development and its association with education are deeply problematic.

In her book *Hijacking Sustainability*, Adrian Parr (2009) critiqued the co-optation of sustainability by governments, the military, and corporate interests. She proposed an alternative grassroots movement, which she termed sustainability culture. Parr distinguished between culture as a site of disequilibrium and insurgency, and culture as a mechanism of control and order. Her notion of sustainability culture is characterised by the former, an unmediated or less mediated form of cultural expression. Sustainability culture draws on the creative and generative energies of *potentia*, acting in service of the common good. In contrast, the culture embedded within sustainable development is driven by the negative, hierarchical power of *potestas*, oriented toward profit maximisation. Sustainability culture affirms the vitality of all life and fosters connections between human and more-than-human worlds.

Rather than being interpellated into dominant sustainability narratives, curriculum scholars are invited to embrace sustainability culture, an approach that resists commodification and opens space for ethical, relational, and transformative educational practices. Curriculum is not limited to its institutionalised form but incorporates being and becoming, learning and unlearning that is integral to grassroots community cultures (on all scales).

Strategic engagement

The term strategic, as used here, does not refer to its conventional application in corporate or organisational contexts, such as an overarching strategic framework. In such settings, strategy often operates hierarchically, transcends practice, and is imposed from above. As a result, it can have colonising effects. In contrast, the use of strategic in this context refers to an orientation or manner of being embodied and immanent to the present.

Educational institutions are often shaped by paradigms, organisational structures, and approaches to curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment that are alienating and dehumanising. This is particularly evident in neoliberal schools and universities, which are marked by creeping managerialism, marketisation, and regimes of performativity. Languages of critique addressing these conditions have long been developed within the field of critical/radical pedagogy. However, curriculum scholar Brian Deever (1996) argued that such critiques have largely remained confined to the academy and have done little to transform practices within

educational institutions. This remains largely true today. What Deever implied is that the field and curriculum scholars have not been strategic.

Strategic engagement, in this sense, involves acknowledging that neoliberal schools and universities cannot simply be wished away. Yet, they are not impervious to disruption and transformation. Drawing on the work of la paperson, Le Grange (2023) suggested that within the neoliberal university, decolonial desires can be revitalised by repurposing the “scrap material” of both neoliberal and critical universities.⁴ The agents who engage in this repurposing are referred to as scyborgs. Curriculum scholars are invited to become scyborgs and through intra-actions with students, the same is cultivated among students.

Zoe-geo-techno subjectivity

Human lives are increasingly entangled with technology, raising critical questions about what it means to be human in the contemporary world. This entanglement also presents an ethical challenge: “How can one resist the harmful effects of new technologies without becoming technophobic, while still recognising humanity’s inextricable connection to technological systems?” At the same time, the looming environmental crisis is heightening awareness of human interdependence with the more-than-human world and the profound impact of human actions on the biophysical environment.

In response to these realities, Braidotti (2022) argued that subjectivity can no longer be understood as an isolated, autonomous, rational being. Instead, it must be reconceptualised as a *zoe-geo-techno* assemblage. As opposed to *bios*, the life of humans as organised within socially constructed society, *zoe* refers to the life of all living beings, both human and non-human, as vital and self-organising matter (Braidotti, 2019). *Zoe* decentres the human by removing it from its ontological pedestal and repositioning it on an immanent plane alongside technology, animals, and other non-human entities (Braidotti, 2019). *Geo* refers to the Earth and its abiotic material components, including mineral resources. *Techno* encompasses the digital technologies and systems that permeate contemporary life. *Zoe-geo-techno* subjectivity thus denotes a posthuman subject that is embodied and embedded within ecological and technological systems, is relational and affective, and immanent and transversal.

Curriculum scholars should recognise that they are not only embodied and embedded beings but also extended selves within the posthuman condition. They are called to increase their coefficient of transversality to cultivate and intensify lines of connection with human, non-human, and inhuman components to form assemblages that are ethically affirming, ecologically responsive, and ontologically generative.

4 For a more detailed discussion, see Le Grange (2023). In short, he argued that the neoliberal university (first university), though dominant, is not monolithic and impervious to penetration and change. In fact, a second university, the critical university, exists within the neoliberal university and its aim is emancipation. Instead of imagining a decolonial university, Le Grange argued that we should rather think of a third university that operates within the neoliberal university. This third university is strategic and repurposes the scrap material (conceptual, technological, practical tools) of the first and second university into decolonial desires. The assumption is that the neoliberal university will not disappear soon.

Nonviolence

The episodes of violence we witness through the media including those perpetrated by individuals with extreme political or religious beliefs are deeply disturbing, yet they may only represent the tip of the iceberg: surface manifestations of a deeper, systemic issue. In his book *Violence*, Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek (2009) drew attention to the underlying carriers of violence, which he identified primarily as capitalism. Žižek distinguished between subjective and objective violence. Subjective violence refers to disruptions of what appears to be a peaceful normality—those shocking, seemingly random acts that dominate media coverage. Objective violence, by contrast, is embedded within the structures of that perceived normality. It consists of “more subtle forms of coercion that sustain relations of domination and exploitation, including the threat of violence” (Žižek, 2009, p. 9).

Events such as the Gaza–Israel war following the events of October 7, 2023, may be interpreted as instances of subjective violence, disturbances of an assumed peaceful status quo. However, a more fitting lens might be that of objective violence, given the systematic and sustained oppression of Gaza’s citizens (and Palestinians more broadly) by what many have described as an apartheid state, violence that has escalated and resulted in genocide. In the environmental domain, Rob Nixon (2011) introduced the concept of slow violence, a form of harm that is gradual, invisible, and insidious, yet no less devastating than overt acts of aggression, akin to Žižek’s (2009) objective violence. Slow violence, of course, does give rise to subjective violence (moments of intensity) such as the devastating effects of climate change that we witnessed in the media such as the effects of Hurricane Katrina in the USA and more recently, the floods in parts of India and Pakistan.

Judith Butler (2020) argued that violence has become so pervasive that we now inhabit a *force field of violence*. She noted that while some on the political left view violence as a tactical means to achieve justice, and libertarians often justify it in terms of self-defence, violence inevitably begets more violence. For Butler, this necessitates the cultivation of a force of nonviolence, not as passive acquiescence, but as an active ethical stance. In the educational realm, Wang (2014) observed that nonviolence has received relatively little attention, despite its growing relevance in social and political discourse. She contended that nonviolence is not a passive state of harmony, but an active engagement with complexity, contestation, and diversity. Moreover, she argued that embedding nonviolence within the curriculum can awaken students to new ways of being, becoming, and doing, especially in times of crisis.

Curriculum scholars are thus invited to consider the ethical imperative of nonviolence. Though it may seem untimely in an age saturated with violence, it offers a transformative pathway toward justice, relationality, and hope.

Writing differently

Writing is one of the key performances of curriculum scholars, a practice deeply embedded in curriculum work. In contemporary times, however, writing has become accelerated. There is growing pressure to publish, driven by systems that reward speed and productivity. Curriculum

scholars are not immune to the logic of performativity, which prioritises the best input-output ratio; they are both agents and subjects of this system.

Yet writing can also be untimely/slow. Ulmer (2017) emphasised that slow scholarship does not imply a lack of productivity but rather, a different kind of productivity. For her, writing within a slow ontology involves learning to write differently. She explored alternative modes of writing: writing on nature, with nature, through nature, and in nature. The latter involves spending time immersed in natural environments, engaging with the more-than-human world through all the senses, and writing from within this embodied context. Slow writing can also mean writing in zones of conflict and contestation. This kind of writing is often difficult, demanding sweat, risk, and intellectual courage.

In a world shaped by fast capitalism, fast technology, and fast pedagogy, curriculum scholars are invited to embrace untimeliness, to slow down in scholarship, pedagogy, research, and writing.

Parting thoughts

The use of propositions as a genre of writing offers curriculum scholars a distinctive way of engaging with the complexities of the contemporary world. Unlike propositional logic, which reduces statements to binaries of truth or falsity, propositions in this posthuman sense are provocations, open-ended invitations to think, feel, and act differently. Their value lies in their capacity to unsettle dominant narratives, to generate curiosity, and to create spaces for experimentation. In curriculum studies, this mode of inquiry is particularly relevant because it resists closure and instead, cultivates responsiveness to the polycrisis conditions of our time. Propositions allow scholars to remain untimely, to interrogate the present without being fully absorbed into its demands, and to imagine futures that are not yet seen.

Curriculum propositions also serve as tools for navigating what Pinar (2011) described as the *complicated conversation* of curriculum. They help scholars and educators to identify and respond to the *blind spots* (areas obscured by dominant ideologies), *blank spots* (areas neglected or unaddressed in scholarship and practice), and *bald spots* (areas worn thin by overuse or repetition; Reid & Scott, 2013; Wagner, 1993). By foregrounding these absences, propositions invite curriculum scholars to reimagine knowledge, ethics, and pedagogy in ways that are generative rather than reductive. With respect to blind spots, propositions can expose the hidden assumptions embedded in sustainability discourses or technological determinism, prompting scholars to question what is excluded or silenced. Concerning blank spots, propositions can draw attention to neglected dimensions of curriculum, such as multispecies ethics or Indigenous knowledge systems, opening new pathways for inquiry. In relation to bald spots, propositions can reinvigorate areas of curriculum that have become stale through repetition, offering fresh perspectives that resist formulaic approaches.

In this sense, propositions are not merely speculative exercises; they are ethical and political acts. They enable curriculum scholars to cultivate affirmative ethics, to make kin across species and disciplines, and to experiment with emergent curriculum designs that reflect the entangled

realities of the Anthropocene/Chthulucene. By embracing propositions as provocations, curriculum scholarship becomes a living practice, responsive to crises, attuned to difference, and committed to transformation. Ultimately, the value of propositions lies in their refusal to settle for easy answers. They remind us that curriculum work is not about arriving at definitive conclusions but about sustaining inquiry, nurturing imagination, and cultivating responsibility in the face of indeterminacy. In a world marked by polycrisis, propositions offer curriculum scholars a way of staying with the trouble, of inhabiting untimeliness, and of generating new possibilities for thinking, teaching, and living together.

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