Autobiography Without an "I"
Currere for the Era of a Porous Self

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DERIVED FROM THE FRENCH VERB "*ESSAYER*" or "to try," an essay is an attempt to do something with words. This essay is an attempt to do something without particular words. Specifically, it is an attempt to write autobiographical inquiry without evoking an "I." More concretely, this paper is an attempt to put the very humanistic tradition of *currere*, the autobiographical modality of curriculum theorizing initiated by William Pinar (1994), in conversation with emerging new materialist work on subjectivity, particularly Rosi Braidotti's (2019) posthuman subjectivity, Jane Bennett's (2020) vital materialist self, and Stacey Alaimo's (2010) trans-corporeality. Collectively, these new materialist theories point toward what is described below as "the era of the porous self." Stemming from the central proposition that all matter is agentic or vital, these thinkers all suggest that the material boundaries of the human subject are not as static as they once seemed. Such an unbounding of the subject necessitates new forms of *currere* and new understandings of curriculum, pedagogy, and education broadly (see also Du Preez et al., 2022; Snaza et al., 2016).

When the self is seen as porous, the "I" quickly becomes a problem. Karin Murris (2016) tacitly acknowledges as much in her discussion of the neologism "*iii*." Murris (2016) differentiates the child as seen by developmentalists, a stable and singular "I," from the social child, a discursively co-constituted "ii," and from the child as viewed by posthumanists, a material-discursive relational "*iii*." The italicization of "*iii*," for Murris (2016), "indicates that a self is not a bounded singular organism" (p. 96) and moreover that "the posthuman child *is* relational" (p. 96). The neologism *iii* identifies the unboundedness of the posthuman subject as well as the multiple beings that help constitute it. Du Preez et al. (2022) likewise suggest a need to escape from the "arrogant 'I'" (p. 11) of western individualism and move toward a "humble 'I'" (p. 11) of the interconnected posthuman subject (see also Le Grange, 2019). Yet, writing from an "I"— even a humble *iii*—encompasses within it a whole host of agentic, vital beings, who are rarely considered and almost never given voice. The human body is an ecosystem, and the "I" speaks on behalf of the entirety, often without hearing the voices of its smallest constituents. In essence, all those gut bacteria really ought to be consulted before they are spoken for. There is, thus, an ethic in this movement away from the "I"—something akin to multispecies flourishing (Khan et al.,

2023) within and atop the human body. This paper attempts to draw the contour—a rough sketch and nothing more—of that ethic in and through *currere*.

The aim here is not to erase the necessity of a subject, nor enact the "god-trick" of "speaking from nowhere" (Braidotti & Strom, 2018, p. 209). Erasing the "I" is not an effort to hide away the discursive, linguistic, and ideological biases of the author. Nor is it intended to erase the category of the human. As Murris (2019) notes, "posthumanism is not about doing away with the self—the human certainly does exist—but the crux is to re-think how relationality (intra-actions) brings subjectivity into existence ontologically" (p. 157). Indeed, there is a human writing this paper. That human is often seen as white, CIS gendered, male, and for three years, disabled because of their experience of chronic pain, their lopsided gait, and the cane they sometimes used during that time. These markers of positionality locate the following discussion around a particular human body—a body that contains many others, is influenced by many ethereal forces, and is socially embedded: in short, a porous self.

As complicated as it is to write without an "I," "we" is also out of reach: "we-are-(all)-in-this-together-but-we-are-not-one-and-the-same" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 52). Like "I," to say "we" is almost always a reduction of a complex reality into something manageable but misleading. Reductionism aside, using "we" quickly comes up against the critiques of representing voices beyond one's own, as per the "crisis of representation" in the social sciences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As above, erasing the "I" in this paper is an attempt to avoid representing nonhuman beings who have not agreed to be so represented. The ethic behind this might be named as part of "a new politics of attention" (Snaza et al., 2016, p. xxii), where attention is directed to very small beings (Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2015). It is an ethic of attempting to do no harm to those beings— something Braidotti (2013) calls ontological pacifism, a part of her wider movement beyond anthropocentrism and toward ontological relationality (Ross, 2021). Describing that ethic in and through *currere* may be an elusive goal, impossible in the current moment and with the current language. Indeed, the potential impossibility of such a task is precisely why it has been framed so explicitly as an attempt—because nothing else may be possible, *yet.* As noted by other posthumanists writing in curriculum studies (Ross, 2021; Snaza, 2013, Snaza et al., 2014), moving beyond the pale of humanist education remains a question—what might be possible? This paper, then, seeks a tracing of one of those possibilities.

This essay begins with a discussion of curriculum studies, posthumanism, and the method of *currere*. It then moves on to characterize the new materialist theories of subjectivity named above. After establishing the theoretical foundations of this paper, three attempts at writing moments of *currere* in conversation with new materialist theories of the subject are presented. While Pinar (1994) initially articulated four discrete moments in the *currere* framework—the regressive, the progressive, the analytic, and the synthetic—others have noted that these moments are interconnected and often bleed into one another rhizomatically (McNulty, 2019). Each of these attempts, then, begins with a short regressive excerpt before passing into a more analytic discussion. All attempts focus on the painful bodily experiences of the human writing this paper, and all showcase something of the complexity of writing an unbounded subjective experience. The paper as a whole can be taken as a progressive moment—a desiring or dreaming of the future—an experimental (Du Preez et al., 2022) gesture toward what might be possible beyond humanism in education. The conclusion of the paper can be thought of as a fleeting attempt at a synthetic moment in the suggestion of a *currere* for the era of the porous self.

Curriculum Studies, *Currere*, and Posthumanism

To begin, four interrelated but non-symmetrical terms deserve attention: I, self, subject, and identity. Pinar (2023) juxtaposes self and identity asserting that self is essentially internal, while identity is both how one thinks of themselves (internal) and how others see them (external). Pinar (2023) also differentiates "I" from either self or identity, saying that it may overlap with either concept, but never perfectly. Indeed, none of these concepts can be easily reduced into any other. While definitions are often reductive, for the purposes of this essay "I" can be thought of broadly as "that which speaks." The term "subject" might be considered "that which acts," and "identity" refers more to the markers of social location such as race, gender, and ability. "Self" is the most difficult of the four to pin down, which is why it serves in the title of this paper. The ambiguity is intentional and, hopefully, productive. Authorial intentions noted, the self might be thought of in many cases as something specifically human.

Pinar (2023; see also Pinar, 2011) is steadfast in his commitment to a human subject, and that humanistic definition of the subject is a sticking point in this essay, one that is also noted by others (Le Grange, 2019). Indeed, a decade ago, Nathan Snaza and several others pointed out that educational broadly (Snaza, 2013) and curriculum studies specifically (Snaza et al., 2014) had been tacitly rooted in a project of humanization since their inception. The problems emergent from this humanistic scope might be summarized as 1) the problem of anthropocentrism and 2) the problem of exclusionary definitions of the human (Braidotti, 2013).

The problem of anthropocentrism, or human-centered thinking, suggests that humans have positioned themselves at the top of a constructed hierarchy of life, and all other forms of life are there to serve their needs. The prevalence of environmentally destructive and extractive industries serves as one example of this hierarchy, and the human-led climate crisis to which it contributes serves as one problem among many with that hierarchy. The problem of exclusionary definitions of the human might be summarized thus: "not all of us can say, with any degree of certainty, that we have always been human, or that we are only that" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 1). There is a long history of constructing the western, European, CIS-gendered, able-bodied man as the ideal human to which all others (e.g., Women, QTBIPOC, and disabled folks) represent degrees of difference. Difference under that view is negative or subtractive. Being different means being positioned lower in the constructed, unjustified hierarchies of race, gender, and ability and, in some cases, explicitly being named less than human (Smith, 2012). For these two main reasons, then, several thinkers have advocated a move beyond humanism in theory broadly (Braidotti, 2019), in education generally (Snaza, 2013), and in curriculum studies specifically (Du Preez et al., 2022; Le Grange, 2019; Snaza et al., 2014, 2016).

The current of posthumanism and new materialism in educational thinking has often been met with resistance and critique (Ross, 2021). Some critique posthumanism for reducing the human to a thing, which functions precisely as a form of dehumanization. To this critique, Braidotti (2019) and other feminists have responded by distancing themselves from those dehumanizing forms of posthumanism and explicitly stating the need for a theory of the subject. Another critique is that there is nothing new in new materialisms, and that much of what is posited in this ontological turn is anticipated or present in Indigenous knowledges the world over (e.g., Todd, 2016). That critique stands; the concept of kinship, expressed as "all my relations" in different North American Indigenous cultures (King, 1990), does address human interconnectedness with the broader material world and the material world's vitality (e.g., Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). The response offered by Braidotti (2023) has been to agree with this critique, but also express the need to hold

the past to account or to critique European humanism from within its own tradition. Other posthumanist thinkers attempt to work with both posthumanism and Indigenous thinking as allied theories (e.g., Bignall, 2023).

While not presenting a direct counter to the discourses of posthumanism, the parallel movement toward reclaiming the category of the human in education does tend to occupy more attention in curriculum theorizing. Today, curriculum globally is assaulted by neoliberal, ideological, and colonial forces (Kumar, 2019). Schooling has become a dehumanizing process, for some much more than others, and some recent work has sought to speak back to that dehumanizing process under the name re/humanizing education (Lyle & Cassie, 2021). Others reclaim the category of the human but desire distance from the specific version of the human favoured by K-16 education systems—what Dwayne Donald (2019) calls *Homo Economicus.*

Currere, taken here broadly as an autobiographical method of curriculum theorizing or the writing of one's own lived experience, desire, and analysis of education, often aligns with these latter concerns. There is a methodological movement in the call to re/humanize education toward using the "I" as a subversion of schooling's dehumanization (Lyle & Cassie, 2021). Indeed, journals like *The Currere Exchange Journal* and even Pinar's (2011) theorizing of *currere* do much to mobilize autobiographical inquiry as a subversive force within an education system that attempts at every turn to standardize. In short, making the teacher and student subject by asserting the value of their lived experience in and of education remains subversive.

In some ways, *currere* speaks back to the elevation of certain humans above others, especially when taken up as critical race/feminist *currere* (e.g., Baszile, 2015). The problem of anthropocentrism, however, is one that *currere* has yet to fully exit—although some do move beyond the human in their evocations of the method. Paul and Beierling (2017), for example, note the need for a *currere* 2.0 amid the third millennium's proliferation of technology, seeking a self-understanding that is technologically mediated. As another example, Morna McNulty (2019) posits *ficto-currere*, or the use of fiction as a site of reflective work, as possibly working beyond the finitude of the human, especially its temporal bounds. These works still maintain the human subject as their focus, though they do push at the edges of its boundaries.

Lesley Le Grange (2019) has offered one of the more explicit challenges to the human subject of *currere*. He argues that *ubuntu-currere*, or the idea of reflecting on one's own humanness in conversation with human and nonhuman others, might offer response to the conditions of the posthuman moment by shifting *currere's* emphasis on "individual human beings" (Le Grange, 2019, p. 222) toward "an assemblage of human-human-nature" (p. 222), or an ecological form of subjectivity such as those discussed in the next section. While Le Grange's (2019) notion of *ubuntu-currere* inspires this essay and its rethinking of what *currere* might offer in the current era, the essay makes no claim to the label of *ubuntu-currere*. Rather it offers another rethinking, and partial demonstration, of what might be possible in and through *currere* while engaging theories of subjectivity that both extend and maintain the human as a category.

The Porous Self

It has been suggested above that the era of the porous self emerges from the work of new materialists. This is only partially true, as the last 400 years of western thinking about subjectivity can be viewed as a continual unbounding of the subject once bounded so tightly by Descartes' *cogito*. Such a reading of the history of western thought would suggest that the porosity of the self

has several antecedents in social and psychical contexts. Here, however, it is the *material* porosity—the conceptual erosion of the boundaries of the flesh—that is of interest.

Jane Bennett (2010, 2020) forwards one form of material porosity. She is perhaps best known for her book *Vibrant Matter* (2010), which posits the idea that all matter is not only agentic, but vital. Her more recent book, *Influx and Efflux* (2020), builds on this idea of matter's vitality to question what a self under such conditions might be and do. Hers is "a process-oriented self—a model of subjectivity consonant with the world of vibrant matter" (pp. xiv–xv) where "I alters and is altered" (p. xiii). In some ways, this book could be read as extending a form of psychical porosity, or intersubjectivity, to the nonhuman world through the idea of influence. Everything exerts influence on everything else. Relevant to the essay at hand, Bennett suggests the writing self as plural through influence, noting that in writing *Vibrant Matter* she "came more and more to experience 'my' efforts as a writer as but one vector within a much larger group of conative influences" (p. xi). The writing "I," then, for Bennett (drawing on Walt Wittman), "is a porous and susceptible shape that rides and imbibes waves of influx-and-efflux but also contributes an 'influence' of its own" (p. xi). Bennett's model of subjectivity certainly and explicitly evokes a porous self, but it is significantly less well known than the others discussed below.

Braidotti (2019), whose critical feminist iteration of posthumanism has seen more popularity in curriculum studies (e.g., Du Preez et al., 2022; Snaza et al., 2014; Ross, 2021), posits a posthuman subject as a human-in-relation, its state of subjectivity being continually made and remade through agentive assemblage with technological, geological, and biological entities. More concretely, microbes, technologic extensions, and chemical concoctions are all co-present with the "I" that writes these words, the "I" that speaks. The precise connection here is a network—not exactly the inter-fleshed connections discussed below, nor the ethereal realm of influence evoked above. Drawing on Deleuze's (1988) reading of Spinozian monism, all matter is one and agentic for Braidotti (2013), which allows for a movement beyond the anthropocentric hierarchies between different forms of life. Acting across difference, here seen as an affirmative force (Braidotti, 2019), within the assemblage becomes an act of ontological pacifism (Braidotti, 2013), which requires care, attention, and consideration (Bignall, 2023).

Stacy Alaimo's (2010) notion of trans-corporeality posits a more substantial, enfleshed connection between the human and other beings. Simply put, the boundaries of the flesh are no boundary at all. Alaimo (2010) writes that trans-corporeality shows how "the human is always meshed with the more-than-human world" and "underlines the extent to which the substance of the human is ultimately inseparable from 'the environment'" (p. 2). Alaimo's is not a simple call to return to nature, nor to recognize that humans are a part of nature. Rather, she highlights the very real material interconnectedness of the human and nonhuman world. The proliferation of chemicals that are at once invisible and profoundly affecting to human health is one example of the way humans are constantly caught up in a material world that extends beyond perception.

More precisely on the issue of subjectivity, Alaimo writes, "understanding the substance of one's self as interconnected with the wider environment marks a profound shift in subjectivity. The material self cannot be disentangled from networks that are simultaneously economic, political, cultural, scientific, and substantial" (p. 20). Work proves the illustrative example here, where "the body of workers [is] managed like other 'natural resources'" (p. 30). The material flesh of the human is caught up in the economic flows of capitalism, and all the beings that live on or within the human are brought along for the ride.

The porosity of the self, then, whether the precise connections with nonhuman beings are viewed as networked (Braidotti, 2019), enfleshed (Alaimo, 2010), or influential (Bennett, 2020),

is not a politically neutral fact. Some bodies are affected more harshly by the conditions of advanced capitalism than others. Some experience it as a necropolitics (Mbembe, 2019)—a tracing of the line between life and death, "make live" and "make die," along the boundaries of identity. Other bodies benefit from these systems. An emphasis on human materiality cannot erase the ways bodies are affected differently—thus the need to maintain the subject.

The combination of these new materialists' theories of the subject suggests a new era in the history of subjectivity, an era of the porous self. It is a moment of going beyond the bounded subject in both incorporeal and corporeal senses of the word, a moment of meshing human and nonhuman beings. In such a moment, new ethics and new methods will be required. Sketching the contour of that ethic in and through *currere* is the project toward which this paper now turns.

The Attempts

Each of the following subsections presents an attempt at writing *currere* with a porous model of subjectivity. The attempts focus on the experience of chronic bodily pain. They engage the living curricular experience of a body as part of the three-year course it ran alongside chronic pain. They, thus, form something akin to an embodied inquiry (Snowber, 2016), where the body is seen as a site of learning with, following new materialism (Ross, 2021), those co-present in the bodily assemblage seen as co-learners and co-teachers. Each attempt begins with a short regressive storytelling followed by a more analytic discussion, which puts the experience in conversation with the theories elaborated previously.

Attempt One: Pain

A virus jumps from animal to human. Its spread ramps up and forces the flows of global mobility and capitalism to slow. First China, then Italy and Spain, and before long North America. Even rural parts of the world are affected. Everything happens on Zoom now. Human materiality is an afterthought amid the proliferation of the virtual. Yet, some walk. Some run. Some are injured. Some seek health care for their injuries.

In the early days of a pandemic, a phoneline connects a physician and a body. The body's mind describes a pain: lips form familiar words, and worry propels them forward at rapid speed. Zoom. The next day, a virtual visit. The body, now broken, displays itself on a screen; it moves so the mediated eyes can assess. An adductor strain; go to physiotherapy. Do not pass go. Do not collect 200 dollars. Physio is a version of the same: a body displayed on a screen lead through a series of movements in hopes of helping the body to heal, to right itself.

But it never does. Every so often, when things seem to be moving in the right direction, a wave of adrenaline-anxiety-dejection washes from head to toe, and a familiar pain reignites. Muscles grow tense with knots, tendons pluck like guitar strings across other structures, and things stick together. "Move" says the physiotherapist; "sleep" says the doctor; "drink water" says the osteopath; "work" says the mind. Work, work, work. Reject the body, for it has betrayed "you"; live in the mind. Live as a mind. Such logic becomes tangibly possible within the accelerated world of neoliberal academia.

As above, in *Bodily Natures*, Alaimo (2010) highlights the way that 20th century working class bodies can be seen as lodged within the social flows of capitalism: "Capitalism … devastates humans and nature alike, extracting economic value and leaving a wasteland behind" (p. 35). In conversation with the poetry of Meridel le Sueur, Alaimo is specifically thinking of folks who work in close relation with the land, but more broadly, people who spend their lives working in physically demanding jobs literally sell their bodies for capital, and the proliferation of dangerous chemicals used in many of those industries makes the exchange far from equal.

In academic work, including schooling, the body seems less present. It is thought work—work of the mind rather than the body. It is, by comparison, much less strenuous work—a very privileged position. Yet, the increased expectations to publish or perish along with the heightened accountability measures of the neoliberal university certainly affect scholars' bodies. In some cases, those external pressures are internalized, first intersubjectively, then, following Bennett's (2020) thinking, they become materially lodged within the body through its postures and gestures. The protestant work ethic expresses itself physically as an inverted c-spine on an x-ray—a "scholarly" posture with shoulders hunched forward in intense study.

When bodies stop working, there isn't a user's manual on how to fix them. The medical system is the only way to find help, and, as Ivan Illich (1975) noted, medicine has become bureaucratized in much the same way that schooling has. Over the last three years of the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadian healthcare has been found lacking in several respects. In October of 2022, there were 116,000 Nova Scotians on a waiting list for a primary healthcare physician (Thomas, 2022), about 11% of the province's population. No primary health care means over-run emergency rooms, and in rural parts of the country, they have routinely begun shutting down over long weekends because of staffing shortages; doctors in the system say there seems no end in sight to the ongoing crises (Varner, 2023). Medicine's bureaucratization is no small part of these situations, and it all directly impacts human bodies, some more than others. Indeed, necropolitics touches every social structure, whether medical, economic, political (Mbembe, 2019), or educational (Wozolek, 2023).

Pain proves the case in point. Poorly understood in general, pain is inherently subjective; no two bodies will feel pain in precisely the same way. Where there is subjectivity in medicine, there is also the possibility of bias, and there is a long history of ignoring the pain of racialized and Indigenous peoples in medicine. Joyce Echaquan, for example, was an Atikamekw (Indigenous) woman who, in 2020, died in hospital after live streaming the racist behaviour of staff toward her. Her pain wasn't taken seriously, and she died as a result.

No two pains are ever the same, and that, combined with systemic barriers, can constrain empathy. *Currere* might offer a way to understand the nuances of each pain personally, rather than bureaucratically. Indeed, running the course of empathy for others' pain, *no matter how small*, may be part of the ethic palpated in this essay—an ethic of listening for pain.

The regressive slice above depicts a privileged, white, academic body in constant pain. The body is treated here as a unity, porous only in the psychical and social senses of the word. Psychically, the voices of others are carried within it, while socially it is lodged within different systems, discourses, ideologies, and languages that help constitute it. While each of those dimensions has a certain materiality, from a critical posthumanist perspective this is all above and below the subject. Braidotti (2019) writes: "going 'above' the subject points to the supra-subjective face of institutional and social power. 'Below' the subject operate the sub-subjective and affective factors, including the singular psychic landscapes. 'Alongside' the subject there are adjunctive bio-technological assemblages of posthuman relationality" (p. 53). This first attempt, then, fails to

capture the material porosity of the subject. It does, however, highlight the way human materiality is always bound up with social forces. Nonetheless, a second attempt must centre the biological, technological, and geological beings that work "alongside" the subject.

Attempt Two: Chemical Entanglements

Three years after the initial injury, this body is still knotted, tense, and constantly affected by intensities; pops, clicks, and cracks all result in the familiar burning of pain. The pain is like the weather, bound within the constraints of climate but changing daily. Some days the pain is a hurricane, on others it is a mild rain, but the land is always saturated. The rare sunny day only evokes what has been lost: mobility and possibility.

Muscles are, by this point, deeply knotted together in ways they ought not to be. Muscle adheres to fascia, fascia adheres to muscle, and dura mater adheres in places it ought to float free. The muscles are sticky. Levator scapulae has knotted from hours spent hunched over a vibrant computer screen. Work. Work. Work. A thousand spikes made of Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS)—the plastic commonly used in LEGO®—poke into the muscles trying to release those knots (acupressure). In the first moments, the pain is intense. The skin doesn't like being poked, and blood rushes to the area. Slowly, inflammation sets in, and the intensity abates. After 15 minutes, there is a soothing effect, and the back seems less tense than before.

They say it's good for chronic pain (Frizziero et al., 2021), but those knotted muscles won't budge. They are too stuck, and the sticking creates pain as those muscles are held in places they ought not to be—like after a night spent at an odd angle.

Sleep and pain are intimate partners. Pain makes sleep impossible, while sleep is one of the most effective responses to pain. In pursuit of sleep, the body becomes entangled with chemicals. 10 mgs of doxepin or cyclobenzaprine helps the body rest through the night, but pain often persists. Cannabidiol, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and valerian complicate the entanglement. Each comes with effects and affects; each touches mindbody in unique ways.

Chemicals, whether ingested or pressed against flesh, become a part of the bodily assemblage. They affect and are affected (Braidotti, 2019; Deleuze, 1988); they change and are changed by their interactions with the body. It is easy to see this play out unidirectionally—to see the way that chemicals can affect the human body. It is harder to conceptualize the ways that human bodies might affect chemicals. Chemicals are not often thought capable of feeling, but in the era of the porous self, nothing is indifferent to anything else.

Those chemicals form the maps of human-nonhuman entanglement. Haraway (2012) made that point by drawing a line between estrogen supplements, themselves both necessary in some cases and caught within the social webs of patriarchal capitalism, and pregnant horse urine—a sisterhood across species. Tracing the web of any chemical makes one into what Alaimo (2010) calls an "ordinary expert," someone who wades through the scientific research and government reports to understand the way they and others are affected by those chemicals.

Cannabidiol (CBD), for example, is one of the two main active chemicals in the cannabis plant, commonly referred to as marijuana. The other is Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Both are often cited as effective interventions on chronic pain, and while anecdotal evidence for that claim seems strong, a recent systemic review was only willing to state that some cannabis products "may be associated with short-term improvements in chronic pain" (McDonagh et al., 2022, n.p.). From

a strictly medical perspective, the combination of CBD and THC has many effects on the body: dizziness, sedation, and perhaps pain relief. The authors also mention the psychoactive effects of THC and the possible anti-inflammatory effects of CBD (McDonagh et al., 2022).

Looking at these chemicals only for their physiological effect, however, can be profoundly misleading. In Canada, cannabis was legalized for medical purposes in 2001 and for recreational use in 2018. Cannabis, however, remains illegal in many parts of North America and around the world. In the United States, the disproportionate number of African American and Latino men who are charged with cannabis-related offences and see jail time as a result is well noted, and the initial criminalization of cannabis was rooted in racist perceptions and fears of those same groups (Bender, 2016). Bodies matter. The movement of cannabis from the legal system to the medical system and then into the free market doesn't erase its history. Each movement brings new associations, effects, and affects with it. In all these movements, bodies affect and are affected differently along the lines of race, gender, and ability.

This brief cartographic exercise—a gesture toward an ordinary expert's mapping of two cannabinoids—suggests an interconnectedness between humans and the rest of the world. Of course, there is nothing new in this notion (Jardine & Lyle, 2022). Indigenous thinkers have made clear the interconnectedness of the world since time immemorial (Todd, 2016). Posthumanists have likewise taken to mapping these interconnections, and even the idea that humans are entangled with chemicals is not a new one (Alaimo, 2010; Haraway, 2012). When read in relation to this essay's concern with not speaking for others, however, one additional provocation emerges: at what point do those chemicals become a part of "us," and when can they be unproblematically written as part of the "I"? Once they pass the gums? Once they enter the blood stream? Once they are metabolized by the liver? Likewise, must chemicals be injected or ingested to be a part of "us," or do those ABS spikes pressing into muscle form their own subject-assemblages in allyship with skin, blood, muscles, and fascia? Are they part of the "I"?

There is a weird quality to this regressive-analytic attempt at *currere*—not another failure, *per se*, but perhaps an impossibility or *aporia*. Writing the experience of those chemical others— listening for their pain—seems at once weighty and fantastical: something deserving of serious ethical contemplation and the sort of anthropomorphizing found in a science fiction novel. The beings in question are often imperceptible to the human, making "a new politics of attention" (Snaza et al., 2016, p. xxii) extend outward toward unintelligible and unseeable beings. Such an ethics, then, may ask for more than the human can give: a sustained effort to think and perceive across scale.

Attempt Three: Across Scale

Climate change makes hurricanes, forest fires, and floods more likely and more intense, and the East Coast of what is today called Canada is battered by all three in one year. Three months' worth of rain falls in 24 hours. Homes flood, roads wash out, and tragically one adult and three children lose their lives in a storm surge washing their vehicles from the highway. Two months previous, nearly 150 homes burn down amid province-wide forest fires. The loss of a habitat is no small sorrow.

In September of the previous year, a hurricane anthropomorphised as "Fiona" ravages the entire east coast. Trees are uprooted, harbours are destroyed, and mass, days-long power

outages make power lines—neglected until they fail—suddenly very affecting. They are down everywhere, black-snake corpses halting certain flows but reigniting others.

Amid the chaos, generators become the norm. There are mile-long line ups at the gas stations that still have power. Everyone has a generator, and they all require gasoline to run. A street once quiet in that suburban way now becomes a cacophony of industrial electricity generation, running 24 hours a day.

The body's sleep is disrupted, the industrial vibrations are too jarring a sonic disruption. Vibrations affect the body on a cellular level; too much intensity can thin, damage, or destroy nerve and muscle cells (Curry et al., 2002). Sleep deprivation can limit cells' capacity to heal themselves (Mônico-Neto et al., 2017). These two facts are derived from experiments on rats but are also acutely known by the body in pain. Those generated vibrations touch the body, keeping it alert throughout the night. Sleepless, the pain gets worse until the power comes back, and the generators stop. The privilege of all of this is striking.

Defined as unearned advantage received through group membership, privilege *feels* like entitlement and disregard for the feelings of others—a negation of the social contract in favour of one's own self-interest. Privilege is sacrificing nonhuman life for the advancement of human knowledge. Privilege is having pain immediately understood as real by healthcare professionals and never being denied care. Privilege is being noisy in a quiet world and being quiet in a noisy world. It manifests as a boisterous conversation held across seats on a crowded plane, a strong opinion shared without provocation, or an unnecessary generator running through the night during a power outage. It is the ability to choose excess without fear of consequences or repercussion and the freedom to choose lack amid abundance.

Privilege is affecting, and the dimensions of its affection are scalar—they are experienced at different magnitudes by the privileged and those witness to it. For those who live oblivious to their impact and the way their success isn't completely of their own doing, privilege remains infinitesimal. For those on the other side, privilege is obvious, impactful, and omnipresent.

The social and the environmental intersect in the way privilege functions as a discrepancy of scale. As Taylor and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2015) note, very small beings—earth worms, ants, gut bacteria, individual cells—are often difficult to mark as a life. Indeed, the smaller the being, the more difficult it seems to take notice of them. This incapacity to see, to mark as a life, functions precisely as a privilege; it is a privileging of the human scale.

This privileging of the human scale, another name for the wider problem of anthropocentrism, is what makes the ethics of not representing voices beyond one's own within the bodily landscape seem weird or fantastical. The beings discussed are too small, both materially and psychically, to influence and be influenced from a privileged perspective. In a word, then, the "new politics of attention" (Snaza et al., 2016, p. xxii) is as follows: hear the pain of those at the edges of perceptibility; be changed by the listening, but don't speak on their behalf. As above, this attention may be impossible to maintain, but the attempt is still worth pursuing. Indeed, the course run in the pursuit may well yield precisely the sorts of curricular insights needed amid the current environmental crisis. *Currere* might remain the method of such an attention in curriculum studies—albeit a *currere* changed by pursuit.

Currere for the Era of the Porous Self

This paper began by articulating the desire to move away from the "I" while maintaining the autobiographical scope of *currere*. The justification given was that the "I" reduces the myriad others within the human body to non-agentic objects, which simply isn't true according to new materialists. Though gut bacteria and ingested chemicals may not speak in human languages, they do act on and within the ecosystem that is the human body. Is it right, then, to speak for them as part of the "I"? No, has been the answer implied throughout this essay.

Yet, the absence of the "I" herewithin has not perfectly rendered the porosity of the self, nor avoided speaking for others entirely. In the first attempt, the body was unified in order to highlight the way it is continually bound up in the social. In the second, questions were raised about the various beings that constitute and live in or on the body, but those questions did not lead to answers, only a vague weirdness at the edge of human perception. The third attempt brought together the previous two toward a demonstration of the complexity of perceiving divergent scales—the very large socio-environmental effects of climate change and the very small destruction and restoration of cells in the body. In all three attempts, the absence of the "I" opened new possibilities but foreclosed others, and none yet completely show the porosity of the human subject. Indeed, a fourth attempt would offer something else entirely—and a fifth too.

Given the above, this paper and its attempt to write an autobiography without an "I" ought not to be taken as a suggestion of "the right way" to write posthuman *currere*—if such a thing can be said to exist. The "I" remains subversive to the neoliberal and colonial forces that would move education toward objectivity and standardization (Pinar, 2011), as well as a productive space from which to speak of embodied and embedded experiences of social reality (Braidotti & Strom, 2018). This paper has been an experiment with method, an attempt to see what might be possible beyond curriculum studies' latent humanism (Snaza et al., 2014).

While this attempt has surely fallen short in several respects, and it may not seem as focused on the human dimensions of education as some may like, it has offered four key insights into the shape of *currere* to come. First, the boundaries of human flesh are porous and interconnected with other beings, and this necessitates new ethics—listening, being affected, but not speaking for others. Second, the human, no matter how porous or material it may be considered, is always caught up with the social, and those writing educational experience must hold that closely. Third, writing the experience of a porous self requires the development of ordinary expertise (Alaimo, 2010) and, thus, an expansion to the disciplinary scope of curriculum studies. Everything within and touching the classroom becomes a teacher in posthumanism (Ross, 2021) and drawing cartographies of those newly re/complicated conversations (Du Preez et al., 2022) may require reading medical reports, scientific research, and/or science fiction as part of living the curriculum (see also Snaza et al., 2016)—it will move curriculum studies beyond the anthropocentric foundation of education, as uncomfortable as that may be. Fourth, engaging ethically with very small beings requires a careful attention to the privilege of human scale and a willingness to listen at the edges of perceptibility. *Currere* can, perhaps, be the method of such an attention.

The shape of the "new politics of attention" (Snaza et al., 2016, p. xxii) sketched here is a circle of influence (Bennett, 2020) radiating from the subject-assemblage (Braidotti, 2019), where the human is not at the centre but remains a crucial part of the picture. *Currere* tracing the contour of this attention is not concerned simply with the expansions of the subject's interior space (i.e., Pinar, 2023), but also with an expanded mapping of the subject-assemblage and its materiality.

While the writing of that attention in ethical ways may have limits given current language, the attempts will surely create a new paradigm of curricular thinking, a *currere* for the era of the porous self.

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