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A Synoptic View of Curriculum Studies in South Africa

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Introduction

This paper intends to provide a synoptic view of curriculum studies in South Africa as portrayed in William F. Pinar's *Curriculum Studies in South Africa: Intellectual Histories, Present*

Circumstances (2010).¹ Reading the intellectual histories and analyses of present circumstances, as discussed by the South African curriculum theorists in aforementioned volume, I felt related having coming of age India, having studied and taught in Indian educational institutions. Both South Africa and India were British colonies, faced severe social, political and economic discriminations, and have been going through similar educational reforms. For example, post-apartheid curriculum reforms in South Africa (epitomized by *Curriculum 2005*) and paradigm shift in Indian curriculum (due to *National Curriculum Framework 2005*) under the leadership of Professor Krishna Kumar, show their deep faith in constructivism, faith that has drawn strong criticism. The primary criticism is the uncritical import of constructivist educational philosophy from western world in the face of particular sociological, historical, economic, and political contexts, among them poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, underdeveloped school infrastructure, and poorly trained teachers, which are likely to prove constructivist principles of learning antithetical in both nations.² The analysis of the current policies makes one realize that the political decolonization has not brought with it *psychological decolonization* in both the nations. Even worse is the invasion of neo-liberal and neo-colonial policies of the West that wants to reduce education to the level of a commodity instead of a rich experience that can help the present and future generations to transform the deeply discriminated social landscape.

I have divided my paper in three major parts: historical legacies, contemporary circumstances, and future orientations. The first part traces and analyses the colonial roots of the contemporary field; the second part discusses the post-apartheid nature of the field dominated by the progressivism-constructivism-outcome-based education nexus; and the final part deals with future directions for the field as suggested by the South African curriculum theorists.

Part I: The Historical Legacies

I [Booker T. Washington] am taking advantage of my stay in this country (The USA) to attempt to convince my fellow whites in South

Africa that the example of the United States proves that with proper training and education the negro can be made a valuable asset to any country.

R. Hunt Davis, 1984 in Crain Soudien (2009, p. 32)

Curriculum as a Colonial Process

Colonialism and racism have been the key factors in shaping curriculum discourses in South Africa since colonial times. As a colonial process, curriculum involved the denigration and displacement of local knowledge and identities of the “natives.” The main curriculum questions in the colonial era were: How is the curriculum to preserve the fiction that some people are superior to others? How was the nation to be conceived and who is sufficiently human to be included as citizen-subjects? What national identity is to be cultivated for the people? The answers to these questions came from various sources: Enlightenment philosophy of Locke and Holmes, Christian missionaries’ focus on conversion, Darwin’s notion of the “survival of the fittest,” and the then newly emerged IQ tests. These all questions were, and even now are, central to the politics of curriculum in South Africa.

The Dutch Curriculum: Bringing Righteousness through Biblical Injunctions

The introduction of formal education is an important first period to understand the emergence of the field of curriculum in South Africa. The beginning of formal education signified the first contact between three elements of South African landscape—settler, slave, and indigene.

The first school that was established in April 1658 in South Africa was a slave school. A slaver has been captured containing a large number of children. Jon van Riebeeck, the so-called father of South Africa, saw these children as identity-less subjects into whom everything that was necessary for their embodiment as slaves could be poured—a Christian God, *VOC* (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* or Dutch East India Company) brandy and tobacco, and ultimately, new Dutch Christian names.

The nature of the curriculum that was first deployed at the slave school, with its emphasis on religiosity, provided the pattern that was to be used for the next 200 years. Schools served chiefly as an instrument for the perpetuation of a religious order. Literacy enabled children to read the Bible. Curriculum questions such as what should be taught and who should teach were answered by church.

Throughout the long period of *VOC* rule and into British period that comes in 1795, slaves and indigenous people virtually fall off South Africa’s history. The narrative of South Africa, building on an archive that almost deliberately effaces the “native,” has been constructed as a European allegory of resilience and virtue in the face of savagery and abomination (Soudien, 2009).

The Colonial Curriculum: Economy, State, and Religion

The British took over the Cape by 1806. During the British period education became tied with the economic development of the region brought about by the discovery of diamonds in 1862 and gold in 1866. Economic development was characterized by rapid industrialization and state formation (with the emergence of the new republics). These developments led to an increase in the rate of development of the “classic social groupings” of a modern capitalist

economy: workers, middle-class, and capitalists. The period was also marked by the contradictions between modernity (represented by and in the form of colonial authorities, and the religious conservatism of missionaries) and the local people (attempting to maintain their own customs).

By the formation of Union of South Africa in 1910, it became explicitly clear that education of white children and black children were the responsibility of the state and the church, respectively. However, the puzzle of the colonizers was noticeable: On the one hand, they wanted useful labor for the expanding economy, and on the other, they were not convinced that the 'savage' in the 'native' has been crushed. Simultaneously, the question arose: What should the natives be taught?

Central to these developments, and reflecting the triumph of industry in the economy, was the emergence of the "academic curriculum." This development did not go unnoticed in the mission school system. The curriculum everywhere in the region for African children was broadened to include reading and writing to reasonably high levels of proficiency. The colonial authorities, however, despite not placing significant resources at the disposal of African children, disliked the fact that the missionaries, in their quest to "save" the souls of the Africans, were teaching natives to read and write. What the Africans needed, colonizers thought, was to give up their barbarous ways and adopt the manners of civilized Britain. Both the colonial government and the missionaries thought very little of African culture. Practical learning or industrial training, colonizers believed, was what Africans needed.

Notably, during the British rule the experts were imported to advise the South Africans as well as the colonial authorities throughout the region. Among others, representatives from the Phelps-Stokes Fund, which served the African-American, Native American and urban and rural poor in the United States, visited South Africa in 1921. At the same time, several key white South Africans, such as Charles T. Loram, addressed the question of the education of the natives. Africans should be educated to meet the needs of the colonial system, Loram answered. He came to be a major figure in the international Phelps-Stokes Fund. The view he developed was an adaptation of the views of Booker T. Washington in the United States, evident in the epigram to this section.

Calling itself the New Education Fellowship (NEF), a modernist-minded group emerged in the 1930s with the intentions of making a break with the racialized past. NEF convened a major international conference in 1934. A key debate in the conference took place around the "educability" of African people. Presentations were made based on the barely ten years old concept of intelligence tests. R.F Alfred Hoernlé, a major liberal, argued that there were no differences between white and black children. A conservative Afrikaner psychologist, Dr. M.L. Fick, acknowledged the vastly inferior test scores of African children to those of their white peers but disclaimed "whether this inability was due to low mentality or environmental influences" (Malherbe, 1937 in Soudien, 2009, pp. 33-34). Also important in this debate were J. Dewey and B. Malinowski, pre-eminent scholars in philosophy and anthropology. In Malinowski's analysis, the use of the terms such as "savage" and "primitive" in relation to black people was revealing.

Natives were very critical of several aspects of the new (colonial) education, particularly the ways in which it denigrated indigenous customs. Unable politically to reject it, however, they adapted it to suit their own systems of meaning. The significance of these "native" responses, which the proto-historiography of conservatism and liberalism misses, was the alertness of the local

people to what was going around them. They used this new ideology in complex ways, sometimes in pro-colonial ways and sometimes in anti-colonial ways (Soudien, 2009).

During the colonial period, then, curriculum was used as a tool to enforce the political advantage of Europeans and the presumed innate superiority of European civilization over the indigenous inhabitants of South Africa. The main function of the colonial powers, among others, was to “manage” the “savages,” and to make them “civilized” through biblical injunctions and enlightenment ideas to maximize the exploitation of their own territories and people.

Curriculum as a Racial Text during Apartheid

[S]ocial difference, as opposed to, say, pedagogical reforms, is the central question that derives curriculum development in South and Southern Africa.

Crain Soudien (2009, p. 20)

[The African had been made] a museum specimen, a fossil, a preserved animal for scientific experimentation. In short, the person in him has been killed.

The Murray Papers Memorandum 51 in Crain Soudien (2009, p. 37)

South Africa—1950 through the 1990s—was profoundly shaped by the apartheid government’s preoccupation with race. Race was inscribed onto the landscape through laws such as the Race Classification Act that sorted people physically. Key features that marked this period were: Racial segregation of universities and educational work; Commission on Native Education (1949-51); and National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI).

Racial Segregation of Universities under Apartheid and its Impact on Educational Work

The university system during apartheid was highly segregated and that continues to exert its influence even in the present day (Hoadley, 2009). Apartheid universities were segregated according to white, black, colored and Indian “population groups.” Notably, the different universities had very particular social and intellectual cultures. The white English speaking universities were “liberal”—Anglo in orientation, linked to big business, and viewed themselves as members of an international academic community. While accepting state subsidies and acknowledging that they were public institutions, these universities attempted to maintain academic and intellectual autonomy. The Afrikaans university, on the contrary, accepted their role as “creatures of the state”; their primary function was to train civil servants for the apartheid state. Rote learning characterized the pedagogy of these universities. The black universities were explicitly authoritarian and instrumental. The curriculum was a watered-down version of what was operating at the Afrikaans-language universities. Black universities existed largely as undergraduate teaching institutions catering for under prepared, predominantly black, matriculants. The one colored and one Indian university initially took a similar form to the black universities. During the 1980s, however, they had allowed their student population profile to change drastically, and, by the 1990s, were suffering less government control than were the black universities.

In the 1980s the White English universities experienced a rift between the liberals (who had been criticized for their complicity with apartheid and capitalism) and radicals in the field of education. The

radicals drove a project (largely out of the University of the Witwatersrand) of an “Althusserian-inspired structuralist neo-Marxism.” Using the concept of “ideology” and the ideal of “organic intellectual,” radicals launched an attack on liberals’ alleged lack of historical, social, and ideological self-awareness. The major forum where these debates were played out was the annual Kenton Conference, which ultimately became the preserve of the radicals, where they schooled themselves in the “rigors of the New Sociology of Education critique.”

The Christian National Education Policy (CNEP) dominated the Afrikaans universities. CNEP was a component of the apartheid ideology of the National Party that had come to power in 1948. The CNEP, purported to be the policy for white Afrikaans-speaking children, also had far reaching consequences for the education of all children in South Africa. According to CNEP, education for blacks should exhibit the following features: be in the mother tongue; not be funded at the expense of white education; not prepare blacks for equal participation in economic and social life; preserve the “cultural identity” of the black community (although it will nonetheless consist in leading “the native” to acceptance of Christian and National principles); and must of necessity be organised and administered by whites.

Fundamental pedagogics—an authoritarian pedagogical philosophy whose authority was derived from the Dutch Reformed Church and that regarded child as ignorant and undisciplined, in need of guidance from the teacher—was CNEP’s attendant science. Fundamental pedagogicians argued that the “scientific method” was the only authentic method of studying education. They viewed educational theory as an independent human science with its own terminology, points of departure, and methods of investigation and verification based on the essential characteristics of the teaching-learning phenomenon. In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s fundamental pedagogics was influential at Afrikaans-medium universities as well as at black colleges of education and in education faculties of historically black universities (dominated by Afrikaner lecturers). Fundamental pedagogics was severely criticized because it provided no room for critically examining the values embedded in CNEP in the South African case. Instead of being “universally valid” knowledge about education, free from “metaphysics,” “dogmatics,” and “ideology,” as argued by its proponents, fundamental pedagogics (along with *Didaktiek/Didactics*) played a key role in reproducing the ruling ideology by legitimating CNEP.

Resistance to CNEP: People’s Education for People’s Power

People’s Education for People’s Power (PEPP) emerged in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s in opposition to the debilitating discourse of Christian National Education Policy and its attendant fundamental pedagogics. PEPP represented those who struggled for social reconstruction through education in South Africa. It was an attempt coordinated by the then National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), advocating that parents, teachers, students, and other community members should be involved in the governance of education. This involvement expected parents’ concerns with matters of governance as well as with curriculum matters such as the introduction of “People’s mathematics” and “People’s history” as alternatives to apartheid syllabuses. The social-reconstructionist aim of People’s Education was embedded in a number of progressive ideals, including a “learner-centered pedagogy,” “content consonant with learners’ experiences of life,” and “collaborative learning.” The movement conducted workshops for teachers and produced

“alternative worksheets” characterized by contexts and discussion questions that related to the political, social, and economic realities of the apartheid state. Social awareness and political conscientization, based on the work of Paulo Freire, were fore-grounded. In the late 1980s People’s Education plunged into crisis due to state repression as well as a lack of clarity over what precisely it meant.

Commission on Native Education/ Eiselen Commission (1949-1951)

Another key relevant feature of the apartheid was the Commission on Native Education (1949-1951) under the leadership of W.W. Eiselen. The main purpose of the Eiselen commission was “the formulation of the principles and aims of education for natives as an independent race, in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitude, and their needs under the ever-changing social conditions are taken into consideration” (U.G. No 53/51:7 in Soudien, 2009, p. 36).

The Commission hedged when it came down to deciding whether the African mind was innately inferior. However, it determined that African culture, which formed African mind, limited the capacity for African children to perform on a level with white children. It was out of this “concern” that *Bantu Education* was born which effectively condemned African people to the status of “hewers of wood and drawers of water.”

The Commission recruited science to empirically define and recognize the “original Bantu” who then became, as in racial science, systematically classifiable, and like any zoological species, available as an object of knowledge for inspection and analysis. Though the Commission tried to appear to talk outside of racial biology but, in fact, it held fast to its conceits. This was a curriculum of subordination; the rote learning served as the script of inferiority (Soudien, 2009). Nevertheless, African and colored intellectuals’ groups, namely, the Teachers’ League of South Africa, Spartacus and Leninist Club in the 1930s, and the Non-European Unity Movement and the Cape African Teachers’ Association in the 1940s and the 1950s, heavily challenged the notion of race propagated by the Eiselen Commission. These groups tried to develop socialist ideas to a level of personal and social commitment against the racializing tide of South African history. Moreover, as teachers these people introduced into their classrooms a non-racial curriculum in order to disrupt the racist curriculum of apartheid.

Such oppositions, however, did not bring a complete break in the real sense from racial way of thinking. The idea of non-racialism is ultimately adopted by important organizations such as the African National Congress (ANC); however, the substance of this commitment seems confused (Soudien, 2009). Even when the ANC commits to non-racialism, it is clear that this non-racialism was instead a multi-cultural one. What changed in its ideology was a commitment to racial unity but not to the removal of race. The Freedom Charter of the ANC, for example, continued to speak of South Africa’s four racial groups—African, whites, coloreds and Indians—without engaging with these concepts as social constructs. As a consequence, the political and intellectual discourse, even in subordinate circles, remained enmeshed in the hegemonic vocabulary of conservatism and liberalism (Soudien, 2009).

National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI)

The lifting of bans over political organizations such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the release of political

prisoners such as Nelson Mandela led to the development of a new democratic movement. It provided the impetus for several projects aimed at transforming all spheres of South African society. One such project was the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI), a project of the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC), which was conducted to formalize aspects of People's Education between December 1990 and August 1992. The project produced twelve reports including a report on curriculum. Underpinning the curriculum report was the commitment to build a unitary education system with a curriculum unbiased with respect to race and gender.

In 1995, a year after the South Africa's first democratic elections, the interim syllabuses were introduced. Largely, curriculum revision involved exorcising of racial content and outdated and inaccurate subject matter from school syllabuses. These syllabus alterations were critiqued as mere concerns of an uncertain state seeking legitimacy following the national elections. In the first White Paper on Education and Training (Republic of South Africa, 1995), produced by the post-apartheid government, a new discourse of outcomes-based education was introduced, which was to become the central focus of much of the deliberations on curriculum for more than a decade.

Part II: Contemporary Circumstances

While it is true that the intention of the Constitution [in post-Apartheid South Africa] is to be inclusive, the way in which it is constructed continues to make it possible for exclusion to take place. It and the derivative legislation based on it, it is contended here, often misrecognizes the South African child sociologically.

Crain Soudien (2009, p. 40)

[T]he new curriculum [C 2005] has catalyzed and even amplified the major vectors of discrimination inherited from the past.

Crain Soudien (2009, p. 43)

In South Africa, we attempted to implement the most ambitious, overly sophisticated, progressivist curriculum [C 2005] without foregrounding in an explicit way what the foundational needs were or focusing most of our resources on primary education and care, ensuring basic reading, writing and numeracy for all. We went for the grandiose vision when we should have focused on the foundational.

Wayne Hugo (2009, 59)

Curriculum in the Post-Apartheid South Africa: Progressivism, Constructivism, and Outcome-based Education

The ANC entered the era of democracy in 1994 with a number of key policy pronouncements. The central document was the Constitution of South Africa passed in 1996. This Constitution is considered as one of the most progressive of its kind. However, the apparently clear stipulations of the Constitution appear amenable to quite different and often contradictory interpretations and policy injunctions.

For instance, the Constitution of South Africa views human beings as rational, conscious, and deliberative individuals whose subjectivities are derived from their engagement with the world of meaning in a fully responsible way. While this projection is important as an ideal, and therefore, has important pedagogic implications for teaching South Africans about the citizens they could be, it

underplays the extent to which subjectivity in South Africa is raced, cultured, gendered, and classed. Thus key reform initiatives that are derived from such understanding of Natives failed to engage the sociological reality of the everyday and to suggest how it might change. This is especially the case with respect to the *Curriculum 2005* (C2005) and its successor the *National Curriculum Statements* (NCS) (Soudien, 2009).

C 2005 (indicating the final year of implementation of the new curriculum in all school grades) was launched in 1997 by Professor Bengu, the then South African Minister of Education. C2005 was strongly informed by a number of trajectories within education, both locally (People's Education; the integration of education and training) and globally (outcomes-based education (OBE); competency-based curriculum) (Hoadley, 2009). C 2005 sought to place emphasis on "learner-centeredness" and the development of "critical thought" in contrast to the apartheid government's rote learning approach. The major purpose of C 2005 was to confront the hierarchal and racial objectives of the apartheid era's curriculum. Additionally, it intended to redress the legacy of apartheid by promoting the development of skills throughout the school-leaving population to prepare South Africa's workforce for participation in an increasingly competitive global economy. However, in practice, it favors older forms of privilege and continues to discriminate against black and poor children (Soudien, 2009).

Criticisms of Curriculum 2005

Although muted at first, the criticisms generated by the first post-apartheid curriculum were notable (Hoadley, 2009). The first significant critique of OBE was a paper by Jonathan Jansen (1997) entitled, "Why OBE will fail?" An elaboration of this paper was later published as a chapter in *Changing Curriculum: Studies on Outcomes-based Education in South Africa* (Jansen and Christie, 1999). Jansen outlines what he refers to as the "principal criticisms of OBE," (Jansen 1999 in Le Grange, 2009, p. 191), namely, its links to behavioral psychology and mastery learning and its focus on instrumentalism. Below I provide a brief account of the criticisms raised against C 2005 in particular and, more generally, of what Hugo (2009) calls Post-Apartheid Education Reform (PAER) and Post-Apartheid Curriculum Studies (PACS) in general.

C2005 represents an 'imported' curriculum; it has been brought from New Zealand and the United Kingdom with a view to induce "best-practice" in South Africa's school education without giving any attention to the latter's historical and present circumstances. A relatively little known curriculum specialist from the United States of America, William Spady, was employed to develop outcome-based curriculum for South Africa. Spady's outcomes-based education encountered severe criticisms, both in USA and South Africa, for emphasizing "competencies" rather than academic knowledge (Soudien, 2009). This seemed especially problematic for a country like South Africa where Apartheid had ensured a "despecialization" of non-white teachers and learners, rendering essential the provision of the specialized knowledge by ensuring that the school subjects bear resemblance to the parent academic disciplines (Hugo, 2009).

Moreover, C2005 and the principles of outcomes based learning that informed it—so-called "learner-centered education" and "curriculum integration"—made explicit what the outcomes of learning should be, but left implicit precisely what content should be selected and how it should be sequenced. It assumed that different teachers and students would use different methods suitable for their

own contexts to achieve the outcomes. While this conception of curriculum may appear sensible, in the face of immense diversity of South Africa students and teachers, it has proved a disaster. Why?

First of all, it is important to consider that many historically undereducated groups within South Africa rely on schools to teach basic skills. Eighty percent (80%) of schools in South Africa are said to be dysfunctional, which means that the already disadvantaged never get a chance to systematically acquire foundational skills. This situation is made worse by the use of “progressive” techniques in the primary phase that do not specify what the basic skills must be mastered, especially in the case of mathematics and science. Second, when the means of achieving outcomes are left implicit, teachers, students, and the school must have the intellectual and material resources required to devise routes toward realization of outcomes. Apartheid had ensured that schooling for non-whites was inadequate, not only in terms of the material resources of the school but also in the education of its teachers and the quality of the curriculum. To expect teachers with inadequate subject and pedagogic knowledge to negotiate the complexity of education in such circumstances amounted to an injustice. To provide teachers with textbooks that favored resource-rich activity-based lessons without specifying what the content and instructional sequences might be employed stripped them of the basic tools necessary to achieve the required outcomes (Hugo, 2009).

Additionally, PACS promotes models of teaching and learning that emphasize individualized pedagogy over collective forms of curriculum delivery. The individualized model of teaching and learning based on small classes, with all other forms taken as inferior options almost by definition, is often unworkable in South Africa due to large number of students per classroom. The post-apartheid imperative to increase access to higher education, it was feared, would result in larger classes and compromised quality of education (Hugo, 2009). Such contradiction between the fact (larger number of students per classroom) and the ideal (individualized pedagogy) denied the possibilities of developing pedagogic practices suitable for South African classrooms.

Furthermore, the high status of English in PACS has resulted in losses in both learning and cultural richness. Research shows that initial learning must take place in mother tongue, and South Africa’s Language in Education Policy attempted to encourage this. However, the policy did not stop school management and parents from replacing their home language with English as the medium of teaching and learning right in the initial years of schooling. The problem is further compounded by the complex and irregular nature of English. It takes around two and a half years to master the recognition and decoding of familiar words in English (Hugo, 2009). With languages that have simpler spelling and rules the recognition and coding of familiar words take around a year (Abadzi, 2006 in Hugo, 2009). This enables quicker learning of reading, and South Africa’s African languages do have a simpler, more phonetic structure. The rule is that mother tongue instruction is especially vital if the second language to be learned has complex and irregular spelling rules, doubly so, if the mother tongue happens to be simply structured. The failure within PACS to insist on and actively facilitate mother tongue instruction until reading, writing, and numeracy becomes automatic is particularly disturbing. The decision was “democratically” left to the schools to determine. The result has been that many South African learners are neither able to read properly in their own languages nor in English (Hugo, 2009).

Nelson Mandela introduced the Primary School Feeding Scheme in 1994 with an initial budget of R472.8 million. By 2004 this

had doubled to over 800 million, feeding around 5 million primary school children per year. However, there have been major problems with corruption and exploitation by some of those running the feeding schemes (Hugo, 2009). The direct question facing PACS in the present context is: What forms of teaching and learning best suit those who have been and are malnourished? Malnutrition and poor health damages cognitive capacity, affects memory and attention, and makes for more antisocial and aggressive behavior (Abadzi, 2006 in Hugo, 2009). High performing students in both language and mathematics tend to have efficient working memory; slow learners tend to have limited working memory (Abadzi, 2006 in Hugo, 2009). Though the “recuperative learning” (Hugo, 2009) is possible, the research on how to structure a curriculum taking into account poor working memory of disadvantaged learners is very thin on the ground, especially in relation to the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. The key in this kind of a situation is to stress on the role of “automaticity.” The more a learner can do things automatically, the more free space within working memory allows for concentration on the actual task at hand, rather than its preconditions. Automaticity results in creativity (Hugo, 2009).

Another issue is the segregation of schools, based on the factors of race and class, in post-apartheid South Africa. Though there is a movement of learners away from township schools to other schools, there is no significant movement in the reverse direction. This pattern repeats itself with certain qualifications throughout the old racial hierarchy of schools working its logic from (a) African Department of Education schools; (b) upwards through the Coloured House of Representatives schools; (c) the Indian House of Delegates schools; (d) through to the White House of Assembly schools. Blacks move into Indian schools, Indians move into white schools, and whites move into private schools (e), or home schooling (f), anywhere, but certainly not back to (a). The black middle class have used their money to jump from (a) to (d) and (e), skipping (b) and (c) while the poorer black classes remain either locked within dysfunctional schools or are only able to enter barely functioning, vulnerable schools at a premium cost. (Hugo, 2009).

Finally, outcomes-based education is also part of a neo-liberal agenda, and it appeals to states who have embraced neo-liberalism. The South African government is making stronger links between education and economy. And it is in this context that the outcomes-based qualification frameworks have arisen claiming to provide world-class standards against which students must perform in order to gain employment, experience economic improvement, and survive international competitiveness (Le Grange, 2009).

In addition to above scholarly critique there was an important report entitled *Getting Learning Right* (Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999) that fed into the review of C2005. The report was based on the findings of the President’s Educational Initiative (PEI) undertaken in 1998. The 35 small-scale studies that constituted the PEI aimed to interrogate issues of teacher practice, curriculum, and the use of teacher and learner materials. The report claimed convergence in these studies around a number of issues, most importantly, around teachers’ extremely poor conceptual knowledge. They also found that teachers lacked knowledge base to interpret *Curriculum 2005* and were unable to ensure that the everyday approach prescribed by the new curriculum will result in learners developing sound conceptual knowledge. Researchers found that although teachers were implementing forms of “learner-centered” practices and “co-operative learning,” in actuality very little learning was taking place (Hoadley, 2009).

In summary, the proponents of C 2005 considered South

Africa as if she was already the society they wanted it to be, a largely middle-class one and, thereby, misrecognized the historical legacies and present circumstances of South Africa as well as the educational challenges such circumstances created. Certainly, C 2005 has failed to recognize South African students and teachers as the victims of a prior process of deep discrimination (Soudien, 2009).

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS)

In the wake of these criticisms, C 2005 was revised in the year 2000. The process of revision produced what is known as *National Curriculum Statement*. While bureaucrats prepared the original C2005, in this new round of curriculum revision academicians dominated. The authors of the review took a “realist” view of school knowledge. The lack of specified sequence was seen as the major design flaw of C2005. Bernstein’s distinction between vertical and horizontal knowledge formed the key conceptual stance of the review.

The review committee strongly recommended reduced integration, clearer specification of content, and more simplicity of curriculum design. However, the review also argued in favor of retaining outcomes. The review asserted that though outcomes-based education emphasizes the dominance of outputs over inputs, it also contains the progressive features of curriculum reform from the world over, namely, “active learning,” “ideas of uniqueness and difference,” and “activities and skills” as the basis for knowing and knowledge (Hoadley, 2009). Although dealing with the central criticism of the C2005— curriculum being strong on integration and weak on conceptual coherence or progression—the insistence on retaining features of progressive and constructivist pedagogies, in some ways, contradicted the central direction in which the review was heading. Over time, outcomes, constructivism and progressivism became entwined, and because of their conceptual conflation it became difficult to disentangle them (Hoadley, 2009).

It was these debates, highly politicized, that animated much of the discussion around the review of C2005. Ultimately, a moderate constructivist view was taken with respect to curriculum, which emphasized conceptual coherence and vertical progression as well as an attempt to restore the authority of the curriculum and the teacher.

Part III: Future Orientations

I suggest curricular strategies need to be investigated that uncouple whiteness from the ideal of equality. This is a first step in a complex process of invoking a range of new ways of resituating the subject in all its hierarchical locations—super- and subordinate in new spaces of vulnerability and even ‘inarticulateness’ and releasing, through this, the search for new ways of seeing self and other.

Crain Soudien (2009, p. 45)

[A] more rhizomatic view of outcomes, knowledge, and outcomes-based education could begin to include that which is excluded...

Lesley Le Grange (2009, p. 196)

In essence, educating people to be democratic citizens involves inculcating in them a spirit of openness and respect for the justifications of others, a recognition that others should be listened to, and that injustices should not be done to others under the guise of equal and free expression.

Yusef Waghid (2009, p. 212)

The analysis of the inheritances of the apartheid and uncritical and decontextualized policies in the post-apartheid era creates a

gloomy picture of the state of education in South Africa. Despite the difficulty of present circumstances, curriculum studies scholars do suggest significant strategies, which can be of immense help if taken into consideration to make curriculum more appropriate to the situation in contemporary South Africa.

First, recall that C 2005 was imported from New Zealand and the United Kingdom, amounting to an imposition onto the Post-Apartheid imagination as another instance of colonization. As such, it functioned as a racial project. South African curriculum was conceived in the legacy of the Enlightenment and mediational technologies of whiteness: its vocabularies, its histories, its authorizing images, its taken for granted conceits and forms of conduct. In this situation what is needed is the conceptualization of curricular strategies that may uncouple whiteness from the ideal of equality. This is a first step in a complex process of invoking a range of new ways of resituating the subject in all its hierarchical locations—super- and subordinate in new spaces of vulnerability and even “inarticulateness” and releasing, through this, the search for new ways of seeing self and others (Soudien, 2009).

Second, it is essential to develop “mixed-mode pedagogy” for poor children, which may combine the pedagogic variables (e.g., inter-discursive relation between everyday knowledge and school knowledge; and the interdisciplinary relations of the subjects and evaluation etc.) in non-simplistic and flexible ways. There is no reason to consider strong classification and framing necessarily dysfunctional and weak classification and framing necessarily educative.³ Hybridity in the face of contextual and conceptual complexity seems recommended (Hugo, 2009).

For instance, the working-class pupils’ semantic orientation tends to be context specific, localized, and communalized. When this semantic orientation intersects with the decontextualized, abstract, specializing semantic orientation of school discourses, the effective learning on the part of working class children becomes difficult. In this case the “strong framing” (where teachers keep control of the direction of the lesson her/himself) with a localized semantic orientation is vital in terms of evaluation—both with regard to the clarity over what is to be evaluated and what the criteria are for demonstrating success. The strong framing combines successfully with “strong classification” (where various subjects are demarcated from each other) between everyday knowledge and school knowledge. It is important in terms of both recognizing what exactly is to be learnt and realizing it in practice. Strong framing and classification combines well with “weak framing” and “weak classification” in this particular instance of working class pupils. Under weak framing rules teacher structures the lesson in a way that allows learners to take control. In other words, the teacher allows the learners time to grapple through unfamiliar expectations and is flexible about the order it is done and works with the learners in a personal way. Weak framing combines effectively with weak classification within the subject (i.e. various components of one subject are partially integrated), as it allows for connectivity and meaning within a strongly bounded specializing focus (Hugo, 2009).

This instance of working class pupils conveys two crucial things about pedagogy: First, at different times, with different learners, in different subjects, different combinations become useful, the skill is in being able to play the whole range. Second, the intrinsic project of curriculum studies must intensely be tied up to extrinsic issues of social class, gender, race, cultural identity, language, interior development, physical health and well being in a way that takes seriously into account issues of social justice as well as the specificity

of a case (Hugo, 2009).

Additionally, there may be several other factors that can contribute to optimal learning for low SES students (Hoadley, 2009) These are: clear explication of the evaluative rules; strong teacher control over the selection of knowledge; variable pacing in order to assess student learning; and more horizontal, personal relations between teacher and taught. The clear specification in the intended curriculum, with clear vertical progression paths is optimal, especially for teachers with weak content and conceptual knowledge (Hoadley, 2009).

Moreover, it is important not to look OBE as arborescently (in a tree like manner)—a monolithic entity that is impervious to penetration and change. On the contrary, a more rhizomatic view of outcomes, knowledge, and outcomes-based education could begin to include that which is excluded (the null curriculum) and bring it into the conversations, and make it part of the activities in South African classrooms through incorporating such issues as race, gender, sexual orientation, cultural inclusivity, africanisation of knowledge, etc. (Le Grange, 2009). Rhizo-analysis can be useful in relation to curriculum policy analysis and teachers' work. Traditional policy analysis remains dominant in South Africa that focuses on the extent to which policy is implemented in practice. The key finding of traditional analysis is that there is a "policy-practice gap". A rhizo-textual analysis, on the other hand, shifts the angle of analysis and focuses on how teachers read and interpret policy text—how they tactically appropriate policy, comply or subvert policy prescriptions (Le Grange, 2009).

Finally, if one central concern of the South African curriculum is to educate people to be democratic citizens who demonstrate the capacity to deliberate as free and equal citizens, then several dispositions must animate any reform, among them: A spirit of openness and respect for the justifications of others; a recognition that others should be heard; and a vigilance that injustices should not be done to others under the guise of equal and free expression (Wahgid, 2009). Animated by these dispositions of openness, recognition, and integrity schools should teach students, on the one hand, about their duties as citizens to advance justice and not to limit performance of these duties to some individuals or groups, and on the other hand, about their responsibilities as citizens to support institutional ways to move towards better societies and a better world. Students should be taught to see their neighborhoods and the international community as arenas of civic participation. They should be encouraged to discuss issues related to democratic citizenship, diversity, and multiculturalism. Educating students to respect and to do something about the preservation of human life becomes a necessary part of the agenda of educating for democratic citizenship (Wahgid, 2009).

Conclusion

The historical legacies and the present circumstances of South African curriculum studies present a great challenge for the curriculum scholars, planners, school administrators, and teachers to provide an education that takes into account the history and present circumstances of South Africa. In the Post-Apartheid Era policy makers have eliminated the flagrant misrepresentations associated with the apartheid past. Through C 2005, outcome-based and constructivist approaches have been directly imported from the West in apparent defiance of the specificity of South Africa's history and present circumstances. The essays in *Curriculum Studies in South Africa: Intellectual Histories, Present Circumstances* (Pinar, 2010),

however, make it clear that South African curriculum studies scholars are well aware of the danger represented by C2005 and they have been raising their voices against the historical and current curriculum deliberations. Development of a meaningful curriculum that speaks to the reality of children in South African society at this historical moment is an extraordinarily complicated and painstaking process. If, given history and present circumstances, such a curriculum is possible, the South African curriculum theorists have been trying their best towards its realization.

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Endnotes

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²For critical evaluations of *National Curriculum Framework 2005* see Habib (2005); Thapar (2005); and Setalvad (2005).

³For a detailed explanation of the concepts of “framing” and “classification” see Hugo (2009).

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