Can Social Realism do Social Justice? Debating the Warrants for Curriculum Knowledge Selection

Can Social Realism do Social Justice? Debating the Warrants for Curriculum Knowledge Selection

Lew Zipin, Victoria University, Australia
Aslam Fataar, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
Marie Brennan, Victoria University, Australia

The final version of this paper is published as:
Zipin, Lew, Aslam Fataar & Marie Brennan (2015) Can Social Realism do Social Justice? Debating the Warrants for Curriculum Knowledge Selection, *Education as Change, 19*:2, 9-36, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/16823206.2015.1085610

Abstract

Social Realism (SR), as a movement that argues for 'bringing knowledge back in' to curriculum (Young 2008), is significant globally, especially in South Africa. This article examines arguments from SR proponents that curriculum selection should privilege specialised disciplinary knowledge—as 'powerful knowledge'—over 'everyday knowledge', and how this is warranted through Durkheim's distinction between 'sacred' and 'profane' social bases for knowledge. The article asks how adequately curriculum based on SR warrants can do social justice. This inquiry stages debates between SR and three alternative approaches. The first is standpoint theories that knowledge—including that of scientific disciplines—is always positional and 'partially objective'. The next is Vygotskian arguments for curriculum that, dialectically, joins systematising powers of scientific knowledge with rich funds of knowledge from learners' everyday life-worlds. Third, SR's philosophical framing is contrasted with Nancy Fraser's (2009) framework for robust social justice in globalising contexts. It is argued that SR's grounds for curriculum knowledge selection emphasise cognitive purposes for schooling in ways that marginalise ethical purposes. In consequence, SR conceptions of what constitutes social-educational 'justice' are too thin, we argue, to meet substantive needs and aspirations among power-marginalised South African groups seeking better lives through schooling.

Keywords: Social realism, social justice, curriculum selection, funds of knowledge, standpoint theory

Calling knowledge back

A global educational development across many nations has seen calls to regain focus on issues of knowledge in curriculum. Key players include 'Social Realists' (henceforth SRs) such as Young, author of a key book (2008a) articulating the call in its title: *Bringing knowledge back In*, among others (e.g. Yates, Collins & O'Connor 2011; Biesta 2014; Pinar 2014). SRs and others argue that decades of 'student centred' and 'process' orientations have under-emphasised issues of what knowledge should/should not be core in curriculum, and why. South Africa's recent national curriculum—Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)—is significantly influenced by these arguments, although many South African policy makers, academics and teachers may not be aware of SR as an intellectual movement.

The country's broader political context from the late 1990s led government policy actors to engage with key SR advocates in academia, and ultimately to adopt SR orientations in school curriculum and teacher education. This opening to SR arose as inadequacies became apparent in the outcomes-based education (OBE) framework put in place in the *Curriculum 2005* reform (Fataar 2006). In this reform, what had been post-apartheid impulses for curriculum to include the cultural knowledges of those who had been educationally marginalised or disenfranchised during apartheid lapsed into emphasis on banal 'everyday competencies', for example 'driving a car, tying your shoelaces, cooking rice' (Hoadley & Jansen 2009:181). SR arguments to centre curriculum on 'powerful knowledge' gained impetus as policy makers (mis)read this to address 'education needed for the global knowledge economy', as the means to national technological and economic growth. As well, providing such knowledge 'to all' was touted as distributing social justice to population groups that had been disenfranchised from access to empowering education under apartheid.

We agree with calls for renewed foregrounding of knowledge *selection* questions in relation to curriculum when considering issues of social change and critical praxis. Yet we find that SR arguments shunt aside important ways of thinking about knowledge, power and curriculum that matter for socially just educational work. This paper aims to unpack underlying assumptions in the SR position. To do so, we stage key debates between SR and three alternative approaches. The first is standpoint theories that knowledge—including that of scientific disciplines—is always positional and so never more than *partially* 'objective'. Next, drawing on the work of Moll (2014), we challenge SR with Vygotskian arguments for curriculum that, dialectically, joins systematising powers of scientific knowledge with rich funds of knowledge from learners' everyday life-worlds. Third, SR's philosophical underpinnings are contrasted with Nancy Fraser's (2009) framework for robust social justice in globalising contexts. We argue that SR warrants for what knowledge should and should not feature in curriculum over-stress epistemological (cognitive) purposes for schooling, in ways and degrees that marginalise axiological (ethical) purposes. In consequence, SR conceptions of what constitutes social-educational 'justice' are too thin, we argue, to meet substantive needs and aspirations among power-marginalised groups, in South Africa and elsewhere, for better lives through schooling.

In staging these debates on the warrants for curriculum knowledge selection, we work closely with key SR texts. Our goal is to offer a robust but respectful critical reading of core SR assumptions, and to offer alternative curriculum warrants, which can contribute to ongoing debates about social justice and curriculum praxis.

SR's social-ontological basis for privileging 'powerful knowledge'

In debates about curriculum knowledge selection, SRs argue that we must distinguish 'between two ideas, *knowledge of the powerful* and *powerful knowledge'* (Young 2008b:13-14), and give value emphasis to the latter. As Young (2008b:14) puts it:

> *Knowledge of the powerful* … has its roots in Marx's … well-known dictum that the ruling ideas at any time are the ideas of the ruling class…. However … [this] tells us nothing about the knowledge itself…. [W]e need another concept … [that] refers not to the

> backgrounds of those who have most access to knowledge or who give it legitimacy … [but] to what the knowledge can do or what intellectual power it gives…. *Powerful knowledge* provides more reliable explanations … for engaging in political, moral, and other kinds of debates…. In modern societies, *powerful knowledge* is, increasingly, specialized knowledge; and schooling, from this perspective, is about providing access to the specialized knowledge that is embodied in different knowledge domains.

A persuasive argument here is not to sacrifice the value of knowledge that has been hard-wrought by specialist disciplinary communities, by dismissing it as merely or primarily '*power*-knowledge': i.e. knowledge made powerful by the arbitrariness of historical struggles in which certain social-structural positions gain upper hands over others to shape curriculum. It is important to consider how knowledge can be empowering in its own right, apart from the arbitrariness by which 'winners' in power struggles can promote their ways of knowing relative to others. Indeed, as critical sociologists of education, we are specialists who would not devalue our hard work to advance knowledge about structural inequality as simply an arbitrary view. We thus share something of Young's valuation about 'more reliable explanations' that provide greater 'intellectual power' to engage in political and moral domains of social life. (See also Wheelahan's arguments (2010; 2013) that 'powerful knowledge' provides those in adult education with critical-analytical power, beyond mere skills and facts, to read the social worlds of their practice.)

However, we demur regarding how SR warrants 'powerful knowledge' to deserve overwhelming centrality in curriculum, due—in their argumentation—to a 'sacred' esteem accorded to the 'truth' value of knowledge generated by those in specialist (or disciplinary) communities. Says Young (2008a:31-32):

> [T]he objectivity of knowledge is in part located in the social networks, institutions and codes of practice built up by knowledge producers over time. It is these networks of social relations that, in crucial ways, guarantee truth claims, and give the knowledge that has [been] produced its emergent powers…. [S]pecialist forms of social

> organization remain the major social bases for guaranteeing the objectivity of knowledge.

This claim for the 'truth' value of specialist knowledge goes against many decades of constructivist epistemology in the sociology of knowledge, as indicated in the subtitle of Young's book (2008a) *Bringing knowledge back in: From social constructivism to social realism in the sociology of education*. The adjective 'social', prefixed to 'realism', is important: specialist knowledge is not transcendental but socially generated. Yet, while SRs agree that socially generated knowledge can never yield unmitigated, transparent truth about social 'realities', their claim is serious about specialist communities as the social locus that guarantees progressively greater approximations of objective truth. This claim applies to both natural and social science disciplines (with recognition of greater limitations on the truth-value of *social* science knowledge).

On what basis can specialist knowledge achieve such rarefied power-of-truth? After all, do we not find that actually practising communities of specialist knowledge, situated in given times and places, typically consist far more of men, and/or those who are white, and/or born to families of relatively powerful socio-economic status, etc? Are there no partialities of perspective in such imbalances of membership? Indeed, Young himself 'in no way denies that the production and transmission of knowledge is always entangled with a complex set of contending social interests and power relations' (2008a:31). We read this to acknowledge that actually practising knowledge communities encounter contestations both from outside and within. So: how can specialist production of knowledge nonetheless bypass partial perspective to a degree that *guarantees truth*? The SR answer is suggested in Young's reference to networks, institutions and practice codes that build up *over [historic] time*—and also across social spaces. SRs here invest strongly in Durkheim's distinction between 'sacred' and 'profane' social grounds of knowledge. Says Young (2008a:146-147):

> Durkheim … wanted to emphasize the 'sociality' of knowledge, but in contrast to social constructivism, stressed the differences not the similarities between different types of knowledge, and explored the different types of social organization associated with them…. His

> starting point was a distinction between profane and sacred orders of meaning that he found in every society that he studied. The profane refers to people's response to their everyday world—it is practical, immediate and particular…. [T]he sacred was a collective product of a society, and not related directly to any real world problem … [and so] both social and removed from the everyday world.

Although inhering in a religious locus in earlier historic periods, 'the sacred for Durkheim', notes Young (ibid:147), 'became the paradigm for all other kinds of conceptual knowledge including science, philosophy and mathematics' (ibid:147). Wherever 'sacred' and 'profane' might divergently locate in given historic eras, Young and Muller (2010:121) suggest

> it was in the differentiation between the 'sacred' as an internally consistent world of concepts and the 'profane' as a vague and contradictory continuum of procedures and practices that Durkheim found the social basis of science and the origins of speculative thought.

That is, the 'sacred' plane of meaning constitutes a far deeper, broader and more cohesively ordered continuum of concepts and practices than the 'profane'. Compared to the vague and contradictory resonances that emerge across diverse sites of profane (everyday) knowledge, there is, say Maton and Moore (2010), a special 'capacity for intellectual fields to build powerful and cumulative knowledge over time' (ibid:6), which consists in a 'coalition of minds extending across time and space' (ibid:12). In explicating this 'coalition of minds', Maton and Moore (ibid:10) quote a rousing passage from Durkheim (1967:15):

> Collective representations are the product of an immense cooperation that extends not only through space but also through time; to make them, a multitude of different minds have associated, intermixed, and combined their ideas and feelings; long generations have accumulated their experience and knowledge.

The logic seems to be that diverse and *plural* streamlets of actually situated knowledge 'communit***ies***' flow into, and ultimately partake of, a great river of *singular* comm***union*** across a vast reach of social space and historic time. We read this to suggest that we need not worry over partialities and contestations inhering in situated instances of disciplinary knowledge work. Rather, any limits on objectivity of given instances are transcended in the social-historical accumulation across which multitudinous sites of work on knowledge mix and combine. This long accumulation flows towards convergence that—in the *im*partiality of its vastness—dissolves progressively accumulated disciplinary knowledge of any partialities among members situated in particular time/space locations of knowledge work. No matter, then, if concrete time/space instances of scientific community comprise people whose social-structural positions and cultural-historical perspectives do not equally represent groups populating the wider social space. Via Durkheim, SR thus conjures a locus of knowledge production at once *social yet otherworldly* ('sacred') in its extending continuum that transcends particular time/space settings.

With due respect to Durkheim, this trope of 'long generations' of 'immense cooperation' strikes us as a grand hyperbole. Moreover, invoked by SRs to warrant a truth-guaranteeing impartiality of specialist knowledge communities, we see it as a desired *imaginary*: an article of *faith*, not fact—and a faith on which a good deal of argumentative effort to distinguish social *realism* from social *constructivism* hinges.

Defending 'sacred' impartiality against 'profane' partial objectivity

Maton and Moore (ibid:10-11) invoke Durkheim in a call to arms against critical analysts who give focus to how partial perspectives, associated with elite social-structural positions (or standpoints), predominate in curriculum:

> Durkheim's description encapsulates … the nature of the social realist enterprise: a key aspect of the process of knowledge production and development is its sociality … in a shared intellectual field. Because constructivist and post-structuralist approaches see only power at play, they cannot fully understand the social nature of knowledge…. By overfocusing on the social (in terms of power relations) and neglecting

> knowledge they paradoxically neglect a crucial dimension of the social in knowledge and education.

It is here claimed that, unlike social *realists*, social *constructivists* do not take knowledge seriously *qua knowledge* ('powerful knowledge'), seeing *only* relations of power inequality at play ('knowledge that has power'). We will argue that this is a reductive caricature, which refuses to see how 'constructivist' projects can take seriously *both* the power of knowledge *and* the power relations infused in knowledge. To begin, we recall that SRs do allow that social-structural power relations often infuse educational knowledge selection; says Moore (2013:339): 'it might in fact be the case that official educational knowledge *does* reflect the standpoint and interests of dominant social groups' (in this and further quotes from Moore 2013, italics are in the original). Nor do SRs disagree with the basic 'constructivist' premise that *knowledge* of realities (natural or social) is always socially constructed, never transparently revealed. Says Moore (ibid:344), 'all knowledge is humanly produced and reflects the condition under which it is produced', which means 'that knowledge is always *fallible* … [and so] constantly open to revision'. This modifies how we might take Young's assertion (cited earlier) that the deep social networks of intellectual fields 'guarantee truth claims'. What SRs claim as guaranteed is not absolute or final truth, but superior progressive advancement on truth due to capacities special to conditions and procedures of intellectual knowledge fields. The sociality of these fields, says Moore (ibid:345), assures ' judgemental rationality … more powerful than others' in that 'the knowledge so produced is more *reliable* by virtue of *how* it is produced'.

Social *realists* mark their distinction from *constructivists*, then, in upholding the *special*(ist) status—Durkheim's 'sacredness'—of intellectual fields as loci of judgemental rationality that significantly transcends partialities and so guarantees powers of knowledge *qua* knowledge. In contrast, constructivists fail to respect a special locus of judgement—they see intellectual communities, too, as inevitably partial in their knowledge productions, and so prone to 'profane' plays of unequal power relation in those productions. Constructivists thus cannot escape what SR's see as the greatest sin of rejecting a 'sacred' court of appeal to judgement: *relativism*. Says Young (2008a:25; our italics):

> By arguing that all knowledge derives from partial and potentially self-interested *standpoints*, *relativism* can be seen as a superficially powerful basis for challenging what are assumed to be the repressive and dominant knowledge forms of the existing curriculum…. [T]hey [thus] deny to oppressed communities the possibility of [powerful] knowledge that goes beyond their experience and might play a part in enabling them to overcome their oppression.

SR casting of a standpoint focus as inevitably relativist has been challenged by scholars (e.g. Michelson 2004; Edwards 2014) aligned with the constructivist philosophy of science known as *standpoint theory*, or *standpoint epistemology*. Standpoint theory emerged among feminists in circumstances where claims to speak in the name of 'women' were contested as both partial to 'white Anglo professional class' women's experiences, and over-emphasising gender relative to other significant axes of power relation. From these discussions emerged theory that ways of seeing/knowing 'realities' are always partial in being positional: we see from somewhere (standpoints), not everywhere (Haraway 1988). As well, our perspectives are constructed within intersections of multiple positions in power relations, which shift in salience depending on social context and life history. However, standpoint theorists see partialities of *epistemic* perspective as grounded in *ontological* gravities of historically materialised social structures, which are neither infinite nor equally weighty. Hence, partialities are not a matter of 'anything goes'; standpoint theorists thus refute notions that their approach is 'relativist'. Rather, situated perspectives represent *partial objectivities* of insight into social-ontological realities. It is then possible to pursue a robust social *science* that triangulates partial perspectives via methodologies of 'power-sensitive conversation', yielding 'stronger objectivity' than the 'God trick' (Haraway 1988) of supposed objectification from a dis-interested universal perspective. As Harding puts it (1992:582-583; italics in original):

> These accounts are not fundamentally *about* marginal [partial] lives; instead they start off research *from* them; they are about the rest of the local and international social order. The point … is not to generate ethnosciences, but *sciences*—systematic causal accounts of how the

> natural and social orders are organized…. [S]tandpoint theory is persistently misread as a kind of "perspectivism" that generates relativistic interpretations of nature and social relations…. [Rather,] standpoint theory demands acknowledgement of the sociological relativism that is the fate of all human enterprises including knowledge claims, but rejects epistemological relativism.

Harding here claims a social *science* that *is* about knowledge *qua knowledge*, not simply a reduction of knowledge to power relations. This approach takes structural power relations seriously—indeed, as an object of sociological objectification—but also takes seriously that explanatory power ('powerful knowledge') can be gained by the hard work of specialist knowledge communities to map systematic causalities across the partial objectivities that they research. We suggest that, *up to a point*, this agrees with SR claims for specialist powers of intellectual networks to achieve strong objectivity. Likewise, Harding's rejection of '*epistemological* relativism'—rejecting the view 'that each of [the] (often conflicting) [cultural] standards that different groups use is equally valid, equally good' (ibid:576)—accords with SR arguments.

However, the pivotal contention, as we read it, is in Harding's insistence on '*sociological* relativism': 'that different people or cultures have different standards for determining what counts as knowledge'; and this 'is *the fate of* ***all*** *human enterprises* ***including [scientific] knowledge claims***' (ibid:583). SRs do not accept this degree of attribution of partialities within specialist knowledge fields—and it is an important matter of degree. Thus when Michelson argues that Muller (2000) misrepresents constructivism as relativist—rather, 'constructivists argue that what is usually taken for objectivity in Western knowledge practices is not objective or rigorous *enough* … [in] fail[ing] to take researchers' own social locatedness into account' (Michelson 2004:11; italics in original)—Young (2005:10) pounces:

> Donna Haraway may, as quoted by Michelson … combine in one sentence the "radical historical contingency of all knowledge claims" with a "non-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real' world"; however, such a combination would be impossible if she was a curriculum developer or a teacher.

We suggest that a curriculum developer or teacher could, like standpoint theorists, combine these two tenets, and Young's retort about impossibility is *ad hominem*. However, we read his main impulse to be rejection of the first tenet on grounds that we cannot forfend against relativism unless we purchase the ***im****partiality* of a locus of judgemental rationality that is *sacredly* separated from *profane* power-relational dynamics. Hence, SRs see no call to consider the argument that triangulation across partially objectifying accounts could yield a 'stronger objectivity'. (We have seen no SR text that suspends the shout of 'constructivist-equals-relativist' long enough to consider the actual argument.)

Again, we stress that SR argumentation hinges on *faith* in the social-ontological 'reality' of an *im*partial locus achieved by 'immense cooperation' across 'long generations'. If we find we cannot purchase this faith, then standpoint theorists' more modest claim for 'stronger objectivity'—achievable when diverse scholarly communities triangulate partially objectified knowledges—is, we suggest, a better purchase. The evidence of our sense and judgement, as knowledge workers across educational fields of sociology, curriculum and policy, is that these fields do not embody the impartiality and cumulative coherence wished for by SRs, either presently or via past-present-future accumulation (as Kuhn 1962, perhaps overdoing historical discontinuity, nonetheless cogently argued even for 'hard science' fields). We thus advocate a more modest claim for 'judgemental rationality' achievable in our fields by practice of what Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) call 'reflexive sociology'—akin to Haraway's (1988) 'power sensitive conversation'—that takes self-critical account of what positional standpoints are centred, marginalised and absent within field networks, and how these power relations affect knowledge work in our fields.

Moreover, conceptual investment in a 'context-independent' locus of social-yet-impartial knowledge—removed from profane contexts of power struggle—seems, ironically, to incite a wish for this 'sacred' social realm to be *ethics*-free as well as epistemologically non-arbitrary.

Stressing socio-cognitive over socio-ethical purposes for education

Young and Muller (2010:122-123), in discussing how SR builds upon Durkheim, note a problem that they wish to attenuate:

> [T]here remains the issue that … [f]or Durkheim, the social is the moral: it is about values. Insofar as knowledge (and the curriculum) are social, they too for Durkheim are primarily moral issues. This makes it difficult to use his framework to explore questions of knowledge content and structure that are avoided by … social constructivism. Is Durkheim right in equating the social with the moral, even when it comes to the question of knowledge? Or can we envision a non-moral concept of the social? We think the answer to the latter question must be yes … [because] issues of the structure and content of knowledge must lie at the heart of the sociology of the curriculum.

'The social' where Young and Muller look for a non-moral address to knowledge questions is of course not the profane but the sacred locus. As part and parcel of their strong binary separation of 'sacred' from 'profane', they here suggest a stark either/or: questions of knowledge selection for curriculum must find authorisation in a social-*epistemological* **but not** social-*ethical* basis. Against this view, we will argue that a both/and—ethical-**and**-epistemological—valuation of reasons for curriculum knowledge selection is both viable and desirable, and indeed their mutual exclusion is impossible. We will argue further that conjuring such a mutual exclusion severely curtails dialogue and debate about purposes for curriculum. However, we need first to examine the reasoning and assumptions behind such impulse to separate ethics from knowledge questions.

For the needed re-thinking of Durkheim, Young and Muller hail the foremost latter-day 'Durkheimian' in education, Basil Bernstein, who—in one of his last writings before his death, 'Vertical and Horizontal Discourse: an essay' (1999)—analysed structures of both everyday (profane) and scientific (sacred) knowledge. Say Young and Muller (2010:124):

> As is by now well known, [Bernstein] distinguished between two forms of discourse, horizontal and vertical, and within vertical

> discourse, between two kinds of knowledge structure: hierarchical and horizontal.

Regarding *discourse* forms, Bernstein made a broad distinction between 'vertical' modes of knowledge that characterise intellectual disciplines, compared to 'horizontal' modes that characterise social spaces of everyday life. In terms of *structures*, Bernstein more finely distinguished between modes of knowledge organisation across diverse disciplinary fields. Although the discourses of all those fields are 'vertical' relative to everyday life discourses, at the structural level of analysis, discourses of humanities and social science fields are less 'vertical', or 'hierarchical', than the 'harder science' fields. Say Young and Muller (ibid):

> In hierarchical knowledge structures it develops through the integration of propositions, towards ever more general [i.e. abstract; universally extensive] sets of propositions…. In contrast, horizontal knowledge structures are not unitary but plural; they consist of a series of parallel and incommensurable languages (or sets of concepts). Verticality in horizontal knowledge structures [thus] occurs not through integration but through the introduction of … apparently new problematic[s] … The level of integration, and the possibility for knowledge progress in the sense of greater generality and hence wider explanatory reach, is thus strictly limited.

That is, disciplinary fields such as sociology are 'vertical' in relative contrast to everyday life knowledge. However, compared, say, to physics—Bernstein's *par excellence* example of a hierarchically structured field—sociology embodies 'weak grammar'; and Young and Muller, as educational sociologists, hope to find ways to 'stiffen its vertical spine' rather than remain 'uncomfortably close to the relativism of pragmatism and constructivism' (ibid:128).

We appreciate Bernstein's historical-analytic distinctions between how the knowledge structures of different disciplines have taken form. We agree that knowledge development in our field—sociology of education—is 'horizontal' as defined above, compared to physics. Yet we do not share SR discomfort with this more parallel than

vertical accumulation of conceptual tools and problematics. On similar grounds to above arguments for standpoint theory, we do not see a 'relativist' tragedy, since both older and newer conceptual lenses do get tested for explanatory power in relation to socially emergent problematics that are materially substantive, not anything-goes. Moreover, these lenses can triangulate (they are not all incommensurable with each other) around problematics, shedding mutual light on each other's 'blind spots' (Wagner 1993) to yield 'stronger objectivity' which, we argue, does generate widened explanatory reach.

We also agree that life-world knowledge is 'horizontal' compared to disciplinary bodies of knowledge. However we challenge SR characterisations of this horizontality that strike us as a deficit view that misses rich potentials to use life-world knowledge for curriculum learning purposes. Here (briefly) is Bernstein's definition (1999:159):

> We are all aware and use a form of knowledge, usually typified as everyday or 'common-sense' knowledge…. This form has a group of well-known features: it is likely to be oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered and contradictory across but not within contexts…. [T]he crucial feature is that is it segmentally organised.

If SRs worry about losing explanatory reach to 'relativism' via 'weak grammars' of some *disciplinary* knowledge fields, which still have relative verticality and they still see fit to include in curriculum, they are far more worried about the degrees to which *everyday* knowledge embodies segmentation (not integration), locality (not generality), context dependence (not context-independence), and contradiction (not coherence and commensurability) across contexts. Young (2008a:89) asserts:

> Bernstein's distinction between vertical and horizontal knowledge structures … assumes that … the codes and practices associated with subjects and disciplines … are designed to set the curriculum apart from the everyday knowledge that students bring to school … [and] it is this separation of the curriculum from everyday life that gives the knowledge acquired through it an explanatory power and capacity for

> generalization that is not a feature of everyday knowledge tied to practical concerns…. Certain principles for guiding curriculum policy necessarily follow …[including that] curriculum cannot be based on everyday practical experience. Such a curriculum would only recycle that experience.

To avoid basing curriculum on everyday practical experience does not mean there is no pedagogic use for lifeworld-based knowledge in classrooms. Bernstein argues that, depending on which learners and subjects, teaching can usefully entail stronger or weaker boundary separation (what Bernstein calls 'classification') between disciplinary and everyday knowledge. However, SRs are insistent that 'The purpose of schooling … is to specialise learners' voice by induct[ing] learners into the "uncommonsense" knowledge of formal education—or the school code' (Hoadley 2006:16). This means that life-world knowledge can at best be used as stepping stones to scaffold learning towards induction into vertical (specialised) knowledge codes, leaving life-based horizontal codes behind.

From a SR perspective, the contaminating deficits that everyday experiential knowledge imparts to curriculum go beyond the problem that everyday knowledge is confined to local sensibility, thus segmented across locales. SRs see co-related problems that get closer to why they seek a *non-moral* social basis for curriculum knowledge selection. To grasp their view of ethical grounds for curriculum as contaminating, we explore Young's (2008a) efforts to work out whether/how Vygotsky offers viable ways to ameliorate some problems with, and so strengthen, the Durkheimian framework that SR privileges.

Young suggests that Durkheim saw the 'sacred' locus of collective social representations in too holistic a way, making it difficult to conceptualise how given social knowledge fields change historically. As Young sees it, an interactive dynamic between different parts within a social 'whole' is needed to conceptualise historical movement in knowledge development at specialist levels. Young is therefore intrigued that Vygotsky, while paralleling Durkheim in distinguishing between 'scientific' and 'everyday' knowledge, at the same time enables a historical dynamic by conceptualising an 'interrelatedness of the two types of concept', which 'offers

some advantages over a Durkheimian analysis' (ibid:58). Young does however claim Vygotsky as substantively aligned with SR on the necessity of privileging 'scientific' over 'everyday' concepts (ibid:52):

> Vygotsky's primary emphasis is, in my view, on the limitations of everyday concepts …[in that they] lack any capacity for abstraction and generalization and fail to provide the learner with the resources to act in what he referred to as a voluntary (or free) manner.

We later argue that this is a highly dubious reading of Vygotsky. At this juncture, we note that, elsewhere in his text, Young betrays significant ambivalence about his above suggestion that Vygotsky sees limited usefulness for everyday knowledge, compared to scientific knowledge, for curriculum purposes. Young's concerns focus on the Marxian *dialectical* way that Vygotsky interrelates everyday and scientific knowledge (ibid:61):

> [T]o the extent to which Vygotsky was a Marxist, epistemological questions about knowledge as a separate category distinct from practice did not exist; they were always resolved in practice, in the course of history. It follows that Vygotsky's distinction between scientific and common-sense concepts was a contingent one to be overcome in practice and through learning. For Durkheim the separation between theoretical knowledge and common sense was not contingent—it was real; the development of knowledge … involved the progressive replacement of one kind of theoretical knowledge (religion) by another (science). Hence the necessary social basis of knowledge.

In this contrast, Young again champions Durkheimian separation of 'profane' and 'sacred' social grounds for knowledge, with school curriculum based on the latter as where powerful knowledge truly advances. Elsewhere (ibid:74) he quotes 'Durkheim's view that "in all the history of human thought there exists no example of two categories (the sacred and the profane) so profoundly differentiated or so radically opposed" (Durkheim 1995:53)'. In further passages, he urges a need to

sustain this 'insularity' against relativist dangers of 'hybridity'. But we ask: Is interrelation, rather than stark binary separation, so terrible for learning purposes? Cannot school learning advance through rich curricular interaction between everyday and scientific knowledge? Young (2008a:51-52) indeed quotes statements from Vygotsky to this effect; for example (Vygotsky 1962:108): '[S]pontaneous concepts [emerging in children's engagements with everyday life-worlds] are already "rich in experience" but, because they are not part of a system, they provide no explanations and can lead to confusions'. This might be read to warrant Young's claim that Vygotsky stresses limitations for curriculum from everyday concepts. However, Young also quotes Vygotsky (1962:98): 'The rudiments of systematization first enter the child's mind by way of his [sic] contact with scientific concepts and are then transferred to everyday concepts, changing their psychological structure'.

Is there no educational merit to Vygotsky's idea that scientific knowledge, interacting with everyday knowledge in school curriculum, offers power to systematise and clarify learners' spontaneous conceptions, *while learning also gains substance and vitality from those spontaneous conceptions emergent in practical engagement with life-worlds*? Although Young does not directly address this question, he continually invokes Durkheim's affirmations of the *binary insularity* of scientific from life-world knowledge, as against *dialectical interrelation*. This strongly suggests he thinks 'spontaneous concepts' would profanely contaminate 'real science' learning that curriculum must foreground. Young's critiques of Vygotskyan 'dialectics' offer further clues to how he sees everyday life knowledge as contaminating, such that good curriculum, and science, must keep to a separated 'sacred'. We here quote a few such passages from Young (2008a; our italics):

- By locating knowledge in the history of human beings' actions on the external world, a dialectical approach treats knowledge as a product of human labour … in the Marxist sense … [of] *purposive activity* ….Within such an analysis, knowledge and truth, as distinct categories referring to cause and explanations that are not tied to *political purposes*, disappear (39).

- Vygotsky's emphasis on social activity appears to preclude him from treating knowledge as something that can be conceptualized as separate from its *uses*. The importance of being able to *separate knowledge from its uses* is of course Durkheim's key point in his critique of pragmatism (66).
- Durkheim was seeking an answer to why we find logic so compelling; in other words, where, he asked, did its undoubted power over our thinking come from? For Durkheim this power could never arise out of its *usefulness in terms of satisfying specific needs*. Consequences, he argued, are inevitably unreliable criteria for truth. The power of logic has to refer to factors that are a priori and external to any specific human activity (70).

In the above passages, we italicise words we see to have significant *ethical* tonalities. Along with the epistemological contaminants of horizontality—contingency, contradiction, segmentation—ethically inflected problems of practical life mattering—*use*, *purpose*, *need*—are seen to taint the *a priori* power of knowledge in a 'sacred' realm of *non-moralised logos*. (In effect, this is logo-centric insistence on a fact-value distinction—a point to which we return later[1]). It would seem that separation of knowledge questions from ethics questions is necessary to guarantee that compellingly powerful logic, from a high-minded plane beyond actual human activity and its uses and purposes, can exist and so be brought to bear in explanatory application to profane life-worldly matters. The sacred plane must primarily be about advancing knowledge and its power to establish objectivity and truth, not morality. And so must curriculum. After flirting with Vygotskian possibilities, then, Young does not seem to know what to do with Vygotsky. How Vygotsky might help historicise a primarily Durkheimian project is not explained. In the last instance, Vygotsky's regard for the educational value of life-world knowledge—as a key curriculum element in dialectical interrelation with science-world knowledge—threatens to inject weak *epistemological* grammars and profane *ethical* valuations into the latter; and this will not do.

[1] We thank Fazal Rizvi for helpful conversation about the fact-value distinction in relation to SR.

In what follows we argue, by contrast, for a dialectical approach to curriculum, rather than a binary orientation that strives to separate school-privileged disciplinary knowledge from life-world knowledge. We maintain that: (a) well-selected life-world knowledge offers depth and vitality to schooled thinking and learning; and (b) *both* epistemological *and* ethical purposes are crucially relevant—and not actually separable—for curriculum knowledge selection.

Curriculum dialectics: Bringing life-world epistemology (and social ontology) back in

If Young finds that 'Vygotsky's primary emphasis is … on the limitations of everyday concepts' (cited above), Luis Moll, in *L.S. Vygotsky and education* (2014), offers a very different reading. Moll certainly appreciates how Vygotsky valued scientific knowledge's systematising power for school learning. However, Moll underscores the primary value Vygotsky put on life-based knowledge. Moll observes (2014:120) that, in relation to curriculum, Vygotsky 'place[d] a high premium … on respecting and understanding the cultural diversity of life'. Moll (ibid:120-121) goes on to quote Vygotsky (1997:345):

> [T]here [should] exist within the very nature of the educational process, *within its psychological essence* … as close an interaction, with life itself as might be wished for. *Ultimately only life educates*, and the deeper that life … burrows into the school, the more dynamic and the more robust will be the educational process. That the school has been locked away and walled in as if by a tall fence from life itself has been its greatest failing. Education is just as meaningless outside the … [life] world as is a fire without oxygen, or as breathing in a vacuum. The teacher's educational work, therefore, must be inevitably connected with his [or her] creative social and life work (original italics).

Vygotksy's stress on bringing *life* into curriculum, through more permeable school walls, indicates a philosophical *vitalism*: education that does not engage life-world

processes of making sense is baseless like fire, or human bodies, without oxygen to breathe. Not only students, but also teachers, need life-based vitality in the knowledge (curriculum) they transact via learning interactions (pedagogy). However, what does Vygotsky mean in saying that 'ultimately *only* life educates'? As we will show, he does *not* mean scientific knowledge is either unimportant for learning, or indistinct in properties from life-world knowledge. We read him to mean that all worthwhile knowledge formations, including disciplinary bodies of knowledge, sustain vitality in engaging problematics deriving from 'profane' life—and not just 'initially' but *continuingly and inextricably*.

We underscore that Vygotsky did not see knowledge drawn from life-worlds as sufficient, by itself, for school learning. As Young quoted Vygotsky (cited above), 'spontaneous concepts' emerging in children's engagements with life-worlds, while 'rich in experience', lack needed explanatory powers of systematisation; and 'systematization first enter[s] the child's mind by way of his [sic] contact with scientific concepts' through schooling, which 'are then transferred to everyday concepts, changing their psychological structure'. Likewise, Moll (2014:34-35) notes that Vygotsky, in conceiving how learners extend knowledge capacities in 'the zone of proximal development', envisioned

> [inter]relationship between … what he called "spontaneous" and "scientific" concepts ….The key difference is that scientific, or schooled, concepts … as compared with everyday or spontaneous concepts … are acquired through, a system of formal instruction. The observation that scientific concepts tend to be acquired in school and everyday concepts … out of school is not as important as the characteristic of systematicity: the way scientific concepts form part of an organised system of knowledge and thus can more easily be reflected upon and deliberately manipulated.

While Vygotsky thus appreciated the need for systematising powers of specialist knowledge in school learning, spontaneous conceptions emergent in everyday life are hardly a secondary element in his curriculum dialectic. It is not only, notes Moll (ibid:35), that 'the relationship between everyday and scientific concepts is

reciprocal', i.e. '[t]hey mediate each other', but that scientific concepts need vital connection to everyday concepts in order to sustain *meaningful significance*. Says Moll (ibid:35):

> Everyday concepts provide the "conceptual fabric" for the development of schooled concepts, and the everyday concepts are also transformed through their connection with the more systematic concepts. Scientific concepts grow into the everyday, into the domain of personal experience, thus acquiring meaning and significance. However, scientific concepts bring with them conscious awareness and control, which Vygotsky believed to be essential characteristics of schooling.

In Vygotsky's rationale for a curriculum dialectic, as rendered by Moll, specialised systems of thought are crucial for learning, and have the effect of transforming everyday concepts: 'verticalising' their structure, we might say. However, scientific concepts reciprocally gain living significance from the dialectical interrelation. As compared to Durkheimian binary thinking, this dialectical thinking sees the 'profane' plane of life-world knowledge as the very epistemological *fabric* necessary for scientific concepts to gain and sustain meaning. Life-world emergences of knowledge contents, forms and *ways of knowing* (in the verb sense of active processes of thought-engaging-worlds) are, in this view, not contaminants but *assets*—what Moll and associates call *funds* of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonalez 1992; Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti 2005; Moll 2014)—for school learning of the concept systems of organised disciplines. Thus, Moll suggests (2014:36; original italics) that 'formations of … subjectivities, intimately related to the living of everyday life', whereby people '*internalise* the social world they experience', constitute 'the foundation, one could say, for further learning, including the specialized learning typical of school'.

We suggest that life-based knowledge as ongoing foundation for further learning applies not only to learning processes in schools, but also to knowledge work in specialist communities. In this view, particularly in 'human' and 'social' science disciplines, research *problematics that matter* for future knowledge work *continuously emerge from life* more primarily than science. Science-worlds, then,

ought not aspire to leave life-worlds behind in determining where new knowledge might matter. Rather, they need continuing contact with the life-breath of newly emergent problems and associated sense-makings from life-worlds, or they become static: they lose the livingness of history as change (which Young flagged as a challenge for Durkheim's 'sacred'). This is a key argument in many 'practice' and 'pragmatist' philosophies of science (Stengers 1997; Carr & Kemmis 1986; Biesta 2014). As Moll (2014:117, 120) puts it:

> Such processual and emergentist perspectives [on knowledge] are central to a Vygotskian formulation … [which] think[s] about culture as dynamic and changing, never fixed or static, and full of agency and versatility, especially in response to the many different circumstances of material life.

We understand, as SR authors oft remind us, that Durkheim criticised 'pragmatist' philosophical thought (including Dewey). We will not go into the SR critique of pragmatism; suffice to say it is like SR critique of standpoint theory. Our argument, from a Vygotskian counter-perspective, is that SRs push too hard and far towards Durkheimian binary separation and school privileging of 'sacred' knowledge. We also suggest there is a fine line between (a) high regard for contributions from 'great minds' such as Durkheim, and (b) fetishistic regard that, even in identifying problems 'the tradition' needs to work upon, wields 'the tradition' to knock back other trains of thought which challenge theirs. There is need for respectful debate, open to considering pros and cons, and gains and losses, across contending ways of thinking about curriculum knowledge selection. Moreover, if empirical 'evidence' can be mobilised for a Durkheimian binary case about how science works, so can 'evidence' be mounted for a Vygotskian dialectical case. Ultimately, there are unprovable first principles underpinning distinctions in approach, and the key test is *explanatory power* of conceptual tools in application to empirical fields (Bhaskar 1989:49-50). (While we lack textual space to discuss those who join aspects of Bernstein and Vygotsky in pursuing greater explanatory power, in ways we consider less hampered by SR's insistent binarism, we note Daniels (2012) in this regard.)

In our section staging SR debate with standpoint theory, we argued that knocking back standpoint theory as 'relativist', by way of asserting specialist knowledge communities as guarantors of *im*partiality, hinges too greatly on the hyperbolic trope of a 'coalition' of scientific minds across space/time. In this section we have argued that the associated strong binary separation of 'sacred' from 'profane' knowledge costs us the value of educative work *both* with life-world *and* science-world knowledge. Via Vygotsky by way of Moll, we have pursued an *epistemological* 'bringing back in' of life-world funds of knowledge for curriculum use, and a life-world social ontology underpinning this reclamation. Previously we also flagged another worrisome loss from a too-muscular SR binary: the separation of ethical purposes from epistemological purposes—privileging the latter—for schooled work with knowledge. In the next section we pursue arguments for 'bringing *ethical* purposes back in' to curriculum.

Bringing ethical valuations back in

It is important to appreciate that, in the 'funds of knowledge' (henceforth FoK) approach for bringing life-world knowledge into curriculum, the everyday knowledge brought in is hardly of the banal sort that the South African OBE curriculum featured: 'driving a car, tying your shoelaces, cooking rice' (Hoadley & Jansen 2009:181). Moll *et al*. (1992) define FoK as 'historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills' (ibid:133) meaningfully put to use as 'household and other community resources' (ibid:132). FoK are thus richly meaningful to the practices and identities of given social-cultural groups represented in classrooms (Esteban-Guitart & Moll 2014). A FoK approach does not indiscriminately take all life-world knowledge to constitute *assets* ('funds') for school learning. Of course populist and otherwise simplistic 'common-sense', and 'bad sense', circulate in life-worlds along with 'good sense'. Moll (2014:122) outlines how a FoK approach selects FoK by a process of research in students' home and community locales, followed by study groups in which academic- and teacher-researchers discuss 'theory, data collection, and findings' to identify FoK with a richness worth building into curriculum units. In this process, a key selective principle is the *lived use-value* of knowledge. Say Moll *et al*. (1992:133; our italics):

> Our approach … stud[ies] how household members *use* their funds of knowledge in dealing with changing, and often difficult, social and economic circumstances … [in] multiple spheres of activity within which the child is enmeshed.

This approach gives respect to knowledge-abilities in which people develop *useful* meaning and practice around vital needs emergent in their life-worlds—entailing problematics, we argue, running more broad and deep than so-called 'horizontally segmented' locales (we return to this point shortly). In highlighting *use*, we hark back to Young's assertion (2008:66) that '[t]he importance of being able to *separate knowledge from its uses* is of course Durkheim's key point in his critique of pragmatism'. In contrast, FoK and other Vygotskian approaches are indeed Marxist in *valuing knowledge in relation to use*. Such approaches, we argue, entail *ethical* reclamation of use-values from school tendencies to stage market-exchange contests that selectively privilege the cultural capital associated with relatively powerful social-structural positions. Says Zipin (2009:319; our italics):

> Against a logic of capital accumulation, the 'funds of knowledge' metaphor mobilises a counter-logic of *meaningful cultural use* …. While FoK literature registers a need, in societies structured by capital, to redistribute 'winning' cultural modalities to learners from less powerful families, it nonetheless gives *pride of place to lifeworld-based use values*. This incites qualitative and *ethical* shifts in our sense of what has learning 'value': not a narrow exchange-value power of selectively elite cultural modes, reproducing society structured by capital accumulation; but an expanded use-value agency of life in varied social positions, creating more egalitarian, democratic and intellectually rich curriculum that puts diverse lifeworld learning assets to use.

Ethical reclamation is here linked to curriculum that, while redistributing 'cultural capital' as an unavoidable matter of practical justice, ethically refuses domination by capital's exchange-value logic. Rather, it gives *ethical priority*—'pride of place'—to knowledge that has *use*-value in learners' lived social-cultural spaces. Pride of *place*

emphasises socially *situated*, culturally *specific* knowledge practices and uses. This contrasts with SR stress on universal knowledge. Nonetheless, SR also valorises *use* purposes for school knowledge. As discussed earlier, SRs urge educationists not to over-obsess about 'knowledge that has power', but instead to value the empowering uses that 'powerful knowledge' offers those who acquire it in school. However, Vygotskian approaches see more empowerment offered via curriculum in which learners work, *dialectically*, with use values of *both* life-world *and* specialised knowledge. By contrast, SRs dismiss the use-value of life-world knowledge because, as compared to universal ('vertical') knowledge from the 'sacred' plane of specialist disciplines, it is mired in 'need', 'purpose', and other political-ethical limits of 'horizontality': of being 'local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered and contradictory across … contexts' (Bernstein 1999:159).

Vygotskian approaches, then, reclaim a use-value *ethics* that SRs see as thankfully voided in specialist knowledge processes, and want likewise to avoid in curriculum. Against this, we argue—joining both Vygotskians and standpoint theorists—that it is precisely the *situated partiality* of life-world funds of knowledge that enables such knowledge to contribute to 'stronger objectivity' that triangulates across contexts of 'partial objectivity' and to bring *valuable* ethical considerations into educative—*and scientific*—settings. Furthermore, we question whether life-world FoK is as limited by 'horizontality' as SRs assert. That is, 'power-sensitive conversation' across life-world settings, furthered by educative processes, can raise consciousness to how place-based FoK carry global dimensions running across locales. Freirean educational work—paralleling FoK approaches—scaffolds vernacular oral literacies of people in high-poverty locations towards written literacy capacity. In the process, educators and power-marginalised people think together, teach each other, and raise critical consciousness to 'generative themes' of global connection that run within-and-across local social spaces (Freire 1970; Shor 1987). This is another kind of dialectical education that, in linking local FoK with globalising problematics, identifies deep and extensive—we might say 'verticalising'—global connections between localities.

While we agree with SRs that redistributing 'knowledge that has power'—cultural *capital*—ought not dominate ethical pursuit of social justice via curriculum, we also argue that the problem of arbitrary selective coding of curriculum with the 'capital' of

those in power-elite social-structural positions cannot be treated as inconsequential. There is indeed a tendency in SR argumentation to suggest that curricular provision of wider access to 'powerful knowledge' renders this problem moot. Maton and Moore thus argue (2010:10):

> Social realism attempts to recover knowledge in the service of progress and social justice. The impulse underlying social realist work is … both the creation of epistemologically more powerful forms of knowledge and establishing the means to enable them to be accessible to everyone.

Moore extends this argument (2013:350; original italics):

> SR is the appropriate framework for socially progressive sociology of education because it secures, *contra* … constructivist relativisms, strong *justice* claims with strong rather than weak *knowledge* claims. The powerful are so *not* because they can arbitrarily impose *their* knowledge/culture as 'powerful knowledge/culture', but because they enjoy privileged access to the knowledge/culture that *is* powerful in its own right.

These statements seem to assert that—*already*, and not in some future in which powerful interests no longer hold sway to institute their knowledge as an unjustly selective 'gold standard' in curriculum—the only social justice problem is *access* to knowledge that is 'powerful in its own right'. It would seem the most powerfully specialist knowledge is one-and-the-same as the 'cultural capital' most valued by those who are structurally powerful. Hence, we need not worry about arbitrary injustice in which 'knowledge that has power' is imposed. We need simply redistribute powerful knowledge, via curriculum, so that it is everyone's and not the hoarded 'capital' of the few.

If only the vastly and deeply instituted logic of capital—as powerful accumulations of commodities that are exchange-valued for their manufactured *scarcity*—could be so easily undone. SR denial of formidable processes that sustain selective coding of

curriculum to reproduce inequalities supports a thin conception of justice as mere *redistribution of access* to empowering knowledge. In the process, complex ethical matters linked to structural power inequalities are avoided. As when extracting morality from Durkheim's 'sacred' social plane, SRs thus make curriculum justice a matter of epistemology *trumping* ethics rather than *inseparable from* ethics. In the next section we draw on Nancy Fraser's thick conception of 'justice' to argue that, in limiting curriculum 'justice' to *access* to knowledge developed in *specialised* locations, SRs avoid inextricable questions not merely of *what* knowledge is selected, but *whose* knowledge, and *how* selected. Robust address to these matters of justice, we argue (with Fraser), requires joining knowledge *redistribution* to ethical concerns for *recognition* of diverse cultural knowledge, and *representation* of diverse social-cultural groups in processes of knowledge selection.

Pursuing robust social-educational justice in globalizing conditions

We here draw on Fraser's book *Scales of justice: Reimagining political space in a globalizing world* (2009). In this revised collection of previously published essays, Fraser explores what she calls 'the burning question of our day: What is the pertinent *frame* within which to reflect on the requirements of justice in a globalizing world?' (ibid:37; our italics). *Framing* pertains to 'interpretations of the circumstances of justice', including 'understanding of our social and historical circumstances … [and] forces that shape people's lives in a globalizing world' (ibid:38). The question of framing also evokes meta-questions of justice: *who* is included in determining what interpretations count; and *how* will competing accounts be offered and heard. These questions are inseparable from, and trouble the supposed 'matter-of-factness' of, the question of *what* counts. Says Fraser (ibid:38-39; our italics):

> Those who rely on the *normal-social-science approach* construe [these questions] as settled matters of empirical fact, which do not depend on controversial assumptions…. Far from having to worry about *the relation between fact and value* … we need only consult the established fruits of normal science…. [Yet] proposed accounts of the circumstances of justice are inherently theory-laden *and value-laden*, which is why they are controversial…. The task of adjudicating rival

> characterizations … must, rather, be handled dialogically, in a multifaceted practical discourse that canvasses alternative conceptions, unpacks their underlying assumptions, and weighs their relative merits—all in full awareness of the *internal relations between knowledge and normative reflection*.

We see SRs to advocate what Fraser calls a 'normal-social-science approach', according to which 'fact'—the truth-value of knowledge, presumably guaranteed by impartiality of specialist knowledge communities—stands apart from and transcends ethical valuations. We argue that this entails a philosophical level of framing assumptions, or first principles: it is an assumption, not a fact, that 'fact' and 'value' can be separated. Fraser (who takes up philosophical interventions by Quine 1953) articulates a contrary framing assumption—which our arguments in this paper share—that 'knowledge and normative reflection' are internally related, i.e. inextricable. We read Fraser to suggest that ethical valuations (a) are situated and partial (standpoint-based); and (b) must be seen as part-and-parcel of *all* truth claims. This means *not* assuming 'scientific impartiality'—while still, as per Vygotskians, valuing the systematising and other explanatory powers offered by scientific thought. However, if competing use/ethics-valuations are inevitable, including in scientific discourse, then social science must join and contribute to a wider democratic politics of public and inclusive processes for adjudicating *who* defines *what* is the substance of justice, and *how* contesting claims are heard and arbitrated. We note that Fraser's philosophical orientations—neo-Habermasian and pragmatic—stress communicative democratic processes: the *who* of justice must be widely inclusive; and the *how* must entail dialogue that is reciprocally informative and clarifying at a level of philosophical depth, i.e. unpacking divergent assumptions across competing frames.

When framing assumptions diverge at a level of philosophical first principles—as do Fraser's from those of SR—adjudication is possible not by 'proof' but in tests of *explanatory power* to address social-historical conditions that matter to both, and/or to others who apply them to conditions. It is important, then, to recognise that Fraser's critique of 'normal social science' is based not only on a trans-historical argument—that it is never possible to separate 'fact' from 'value'—but also on historical grounds: 'normal science' proves inadequate to address globalising conditions. Fraser argues

that ‘normal social science’ emerged and gained sway within a *Westphalian* framing of political space in which nation-states were the prime units of governance and of justice politics. In ‘this “Westphalian” framing of justice’, says Fraser (ibid:2-3; original italics), ‘major political currents converged on a *distributive* conception’, primarily in economic terms, as the *what* of justice, with ‘the unspoken assumption that obligations of distribution applied only among fellow citizens’, as the *who* of justice. The *how* of justice was the province of state-endorsed ‘scientific experts’, relied upon for ‘*impartiality* … [that] can guarantee a fair assessment of competing claims’ (ibid:1; original italics).

Fraser’s historical-contextual diagnosis of Westphalian-framed ‘normal science’ implicates SR claims that we have critiqued, *viz*: (1) the impartiality of science; (2) the possibility and virtue of separating epistemic truth from ethical valuation; and (3) ‘justice’ as primarily a question of *what* resources need redistributing to people. Fraser suggests that assumptions warranting such claims come increasingly into question through globalising forces that unsettle nation-state capacities to meet people’s needs and aspirations or attenuate effects of power inequality. In such *post*-Westphalian conditions, argues Fraser, the *what*, *who*, and *how* assumptions of ‘normal justice’ and ‘normal science’ appear inadequate. Summing up the inadequacies of claims **(1)** and **(2)**, Fraser asserts (ibid:68):

> [A] theory of justice for abnormal times must reject what I shall call “the scientistic presumption” … that decisions about the frame should be determined by normal social science …. [N]ormative assumptions that necessarily underlie factual claims are themselves in dispute …. [M]oreover, what passes in the mainstream for social “science” may well reflect the perspectives, and entrench the blindspots, of the privileged … [and] risk foreclosing the claims of the disadvantaged ….Without denying the relevance of social knowledge, [an apt theory of justice] must refuse any suggestion that disputes about the “who” be settled by “justice technocrats”.

Clearly Fraser’s view of science as a human endeavour does not purchase the Durkheimian idea that specialist knowledge workers transcend power-relational

partialities through accords and procedures developed among an immense coalition of minds across situated times/spaces of scientific effort. This does not mean social science knowledge cannot richly inform dialogue and debate over matters of justice. However, social science, too, has underpinning frameworks containing perspectival blindspots (see also Wagner 1993) often associated with positions of social-structural privilege. Hence, social science must not be vested with cloaks of 'neutrality' and supreme expertise, but rather checked-and-balanced by voices from other situated spaces of meaningful contribution to justice discourse. This is all the more so, suggests Fraser, under conditions in which globalisation means people outside nation-state boundaries are increasingly affected by events and decisions within those boundaries; and governments and other agencies (national, inter- and supra-national, including scientific agencies) have less capacity to control or ameliorate effects. In that case, argues Fraser (ibid:27-28):

> [G]lobalization cannot help but problematize the question of the "how," as it politicizes the question of the "who"…. [A]s the circle of those claiming a say in frame-setting expands, decisions about the "who" are increasingly … political matters, which should be handled democratically…. The effect is to shift the burden of argument, requiring defenders of expert privilege to make their case. No longer able to hold themselves above the fray … they must contend with demands for meta-political democratization.

Regarding the one-dimensional focus of 'normal science' (and SR) on 'justice' primarily as *what*-questions of redistribution, Fraser argues historically that emergent *who* and *how* questions now compel 'that theories of justice must become three-dimensional' (ibid:15). *Redistribution*, suggests Fraser, was a political focus in post-WW2 decades of welfare-state attention to poverty as a plight from which 'the less fortunate' deserved remedy through institutional access to material and cultural resources (e.g. policies of 'equal opportunity' educational access). However, from the 1960s, feminist, anti-racist and other social movements brought *who* questions into focus, demanding policy attention to claims for *recognition* of cultural histories, meanings and identities of social groups that had been denied presence and power in social institutions (e.g. school curriculum). As we have shown, SRs see recognition

claims as ‘relativist’; whereas standpoint theorists value the ‘partial objectivities’ of diverse cultural perspectives if engaging other partial perspectives in ‘power-sensitive dialogue’. This reflects the third of Fraser’s ‘R’ dimensions, associated with *how* questions: i.e. *representation* in discussions and decisions that affect lives (e.g. curriculum knowledge selection).

These ‘3-R’ dimensions—redistribution, recognition and representation—are inextricably linked, argues Fraser, requiring three-fold attention for robust address to justice needs and claims. Fraser suggests, from a pragmatist stance, that *who* and *how* questions of justice entail complex contingencies and cannot be assigned formulaic procedures. Instead, she offers flexible meta-principles. Regarding the *who* of justice, Fraser defines a strong inclusion principle: *all-subjected* (ibid:96):

> [T]he all-subjected principle holds that what turns a collection of people into fellow members of a public is … their joint subjection to a structure … that set[s] the ground rules for their interaction…. [I]n a postwestphalian world [we] must reinterpret the meaning of the inclusiveness requirement. Renouncing the automatic identification of the latter with political citizenship [we] must redraw publicity’s boundaries by applying the all-subjected principle directly to the question at hand. In this way, the question of “who” emerges from under its Westphalian veil.

Entwined with this inclusive *who* is a *how* for which the meta-principle is *participatory parity* (ibid:93-94; original italics):

> [In what] I shall call the parity condition, all interlocutors must, in principle, enjoy roughly equal chances to state their views, place issues on the agenda, question the tacit and explicit assumptions of others, switch levels as needed, and generally receive a fair hearing. Whereas the inclusive condition concerns the question of *who* is authorized to participate in public discussions, the parity condition concerns the question of *how*, in the sense of on what terms, the interlocutors engage one another…. [The two principles] go hand in hand. Henceforth,

> public opinion is legitimate if and only if it results from a communicative process in which all who are jointly subjected to the relevant governance structure(s) can participate as peers, *regardless of political citizenship*.

Fraser's post-Westphalian unveiling of *who* and *how* questions—yielding the linked 3-R dimensions and two meta-principles—offers a *robust justice framing* that (a) is congruent with standpoint theory and Vygotskian challenges to SR that we have elaborated; and (b) reveals how SR argumentation relies on *framing* assumptions, including philosophical first principles, that can and should be questioned. In our concluding section, we address the need, particularly in South Africa, for reinvigorated debate about framing in relation to curriculum knowledge selection.

South African curriculum selection—reframing *what, who, how*?

'[T]he politics of framing', says Fraser, 'concerns the boundary-setting aspect of the political' (ibid:22); that is, *who* is included, and *how*, in 'the chance to participate … [in] authorized contests over justice'—hence 'the crucial importance of framing to every question of social justice' (ibid:19). This section's title poses what/who/how questions for substantive, long-term debate in South Africa rather than a brief concluding section. The question mark in the title poses the *meta-political* question of *whether* South African curriculum selection *will* occur within a *framing* that can substantively address a robust range of justice questions.

Our examination of SR's framing shows a narrow focus mainly on the question of *what* knowledge should be in curriculum. SR's response addresses the single justice dimension of knowledge *redistribution*—and only of specialist knowledge, not also the codes of arbitrarily powerful cultural capital. SR's rationale for curriculum knowledge selection thus sustains Westphalian norms in which specialists are custodians of the *what*, for the *who* of 'the population', with *how* as the province of academic experts and government policy makers. We put the question: does this *what/who/how* satisfy what diverse South African groups need from education? We have argued—invoking standpoint theorists, Vygotskians, and Fraser—that a broader framing is vital, registering Fraser's three dimensions and two meta-principles.

Broader framing is especially crucial for a region simultaneously striving politically towards post-colonial social arrangements, and engagement with post-Westphalian inter- and trans-nationalisms—all of which must take up ethical responsibility for inclusive participation of diverse and significant population groups who have suffered long histories of institutional disenfranchisement.

Regarding the *what* of justice, we have argued that robust *curriculum* justice needs to: (a) redistribute power-elite cultural capital to those who do not inherit it through birth; (b) distribute the systematising use-value of powerful knowledge (as SRs advocate); *and* (c) connect powerful knowledge *dialectically* with funds of knowledge that carry use-values of diverse social-cultural groups—giving *ethical pride of place* to such FoK. This is a *what* that honours meaningful cultural diversity across *who*-groups that need *recognitional* as well as *redistributive* justice. Regarding the *how* of *representation*, we stand with Fraser that members of diverse affected groups should engage, inclusively and proactively, in power-sensitive democratic dialogue that raises participants' consciousness to assumptions and stakes. Such dialogue would disclose both virtues and problems for justice, encoded in diverse groups' historically accumulated cultural 'knowledge in the blood' (Jansen 2009), working through tensions and contradictions towards stronger South African reconciliations.

Such robust address to the *what/how/who* of curriculum justice, we argue, brings *ethics* prominently into the frame of curriculum selection, and school curriculum work, as a *valued* learning dimension. In contrast, we have shown how SR brackets ethics out, suggesting curriculum is for cognitive-only—not cognitive-*cum*-ethical—learning purposes: yielding an oddly *sans*-ethical version of curricular 'justice'. We argue that schools should create dialogue and activity in which learners engage wider social worlds in intellectual-*cum*-ethical ways, capacitating young people to pursue 'the *good*'—in terms both of distinctive group identities, and across groups—as part-and-parcel of 'the *true*'. Such learning, suggests Moll (2014:94-95), links intellectual development to capacities for feeling and imagination: 'Vygotsky saw a … relation between emotions and imagination—between the affective and the intellectual…. [I]t is essential to facilitate in [learners] a profound interest in, and emotional engagement with, their social worlds through various modes of expression'. (We note that SR proponents, in debates we lack space to render, tend towards defensive reactions

against critiques calling them to recognise ethical dimensions of educational decision. See, for example, Young & Muller 2008 responding to Balarin 2008; Muller 2009 responding to Hall 2009.)

We appreciate how SR stress on powerfully focused cognitive capacities might appeal to South African curriculum developers following the terribly thin 'everyday competencies' promoted in OBE curriculum. We are also mindful of the difficult pragmatics of curriculum design in South African school systems facing great challenges for implementing curriculum, and for augmenting teachers' content and pedagogic knowledge—certainly matters for address by policy planners, teacher educators, and curriculum-focused staff in schools. Considering all this, we can see the attractions of a SR approach in offering disciplinary coherence, against the complex 'liquidities' (Bauman 2000) of post-Westphalian and post-colonial conditions, including the procedural complexities of taking up Fraser's 'inclusion' and 'parity' principles. However, we argue it is always better to face actually presenting complexities in commensurately robust ways, rather than evade or simplify those complexities.

We need further to consider the historical matrix of South African struggles for knowledge, well preceding 1994. SR does not just enter into a breach left by the failed Curriculum 2005 reform. It also enters the long history in which South Africa has been a colonial laboratory for the 'cultural imperialism' (Said 1993) in which global west/north epistemologies have been imposed on the diverse indigenous and enslaved-migrant groups who greatly outnumber 'settler' groups (see Soudien 2010). We suggest the need to reclaim and move forward with the too-quickly bypassed first impulse, post-1994, for culturally inclusive education. There are academic and activist forces in South Africa that have been waiting to bring this impulse again to the fore: a socially redemptive impulse which needs to come into productive dialectic with the knowledge-centred impulse that SR has brought to the table. We suggest that South Africa, as a post-colonial region within a post-Westphalian globalising world, is ripe to become a laboratory for *new framings* of education: to develop approaches to curriculum selection and enactment that consider framing in relation to historic time and place; and to engage in discussion/debate about the *what/who/how* of justice. Curriculum development, and curriculum enactment in schools, should take up the

project of analysing and debating frames, and of proactive re-framing to enable rich realisation of *social-epistemological-ethical* purposes for schooling and wider social life. Such reclamation and forward movement is particularly needed in South Africa, where long histories of marginalisation and disenfranchisement of diverse and substantial population groups need robust social justice redress.

Much remains to be worked out that has been halting and difficult since the great political change of 1994. Debates now need to be opened, not narrowed. SR has served important purposes in helping to pull away from a weak OBE curriculum orientation. However, capacities for bringing ethics-and-knowledge back into focus are now greatly needed, in school and university learning-and-teaching, in non- and informal-educational settings, and for democratic dialogue about curriculum among educational academics, policy makers and wider publics. Curriculum design, we argue, is both a broad social project of great importance to the diverse many, and a project for re-contextualisation in practices of schooling. At academic, policy and praxis levels, there needs to be inclusive and participatory debate on questions of knowledge and curriculum selection.

References

Balarin, M. 2008. Post-structuralism, realism and the question of knowledge in educational sociology: a Derridean critique of social realism in education. *Policy Futures in Education* 6(4):507-519.

Bauman, Z. 2000. *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bernstein, B. 1999. Vertical and horizontal discourse: an essay. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 20(2):157-173.

Bhaskar, R. 1989. *The possibility of naturalism: A philosophical critique of the contemporary human sciences*. 2nd edition. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester-Wheatsheaf.

Biesta, G. 2014. Pragmatising the curriculum: bringing knowledge back into the curriculum conversation, but via pragmatism. *The Curriculum Journal* 25(1):29-49.

Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, L. 1992. *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Carr, W. & Kemmis, S. 1986. *Becoming critical: education, knowledge and action research*. 3rd revised edition, 103-154. Waurn Ponds, VIC: Deakin University Press.

Daniels, H. (Ed.) 2012. *Vygotsky and sociology*. Milton Park & New York: Routledge.

Department of Education 1997. *Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the twenty-first century*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Edwards, G. 2014. Standpoint theory, realism and the search for objectivity in the sociology of education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 35(2):167-184.

Esteban-Guitart, M. & Moll, L. 2014. Funds of identity: A new concept based on the Funds of Knowledge approach. *Culture & Psychology* 20(1):31–48.

Fataar, A. 2006. Policy networks in recalibrated political terrain: The case of school curriculum policy and politics in South Africa. *Journal of Education Policy* 21(6):641-659.

Fraser, N. 2009. *Scales of justice: Reimagining political space in a globalizing world*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Freire, P. 1970. *Pedagogy of the oppressed: 30th anniversary edition*. New York, London: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc.

Gonzalez, N., Moll, L. & Amanti, C. (Eds.) 2005. *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hall, M. 2009. New knowledge and the university. *Anthropology Southern Africa* 32(1&2):69-76.

Haraway, D. 1988. Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspectives. *Feminist Studies* 14(3):575-599.

Harding, S. 1992. After the neutrality Ideal: Science, politics, and 'strong objectivity'. *Social Research* 59(3):567-587.

Hoadley, U.K. 2006. Analysing pedagogy: The problem of framing. *Journal of Education* 40:14-34.

Hoadley, U.K. & Jansen, J. 2009. *Curriculum: Organizing knowledge for the classroom*. Southern Africa: Oxford University Press.

Jansen, J. 2009. *Knowledge in the blood: Confronting race and the apartheid past*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Kuhn, T. 1962. *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maton, K. & Moore, R. 2010. Coalitions of the mind. In K. Maton & R. Moore (Eds.), *Social realism, knowledge and the sociology of education: Coalitions of the mind*, 1-13. New York and London: Continuum.

Michelson, E. 2004. On trust, desire, and the sacred: A response to Johann Muller's "Reclaiming knowledge". *Journal of Education* 32:7-30.

Moll. L. 2014. *L.S. Vygotsky and education*. New York and London: Routledge.

Moll, L. Amanti, C., Neffe, D. & Gonzalez, N. 1992. Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice* 32:132-141.

Moore, R. 2013. Social Realism and the problem of the problem of knowledge in the sociology of education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 34(3):333-353.

Muller, J. 2000. *Reclaiming knowledge: Social theory, curriculum and education policy*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Muller, J. 2009. Expertise and public life: A response. *Anthropology Southern Africa* 32(1&2):79-80.

Pinar, W. (Ed.) 2014. *International handbook of curriculum research.* 2nd edition. Milton Park & New York: Routledge.

Quine, W.V.O. 1953. *From a logical point of view: 9 logico-philosophical essays.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Said, E. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Shor, I. 1987. *A pedagogy for liberation: Dialogues on transforming education*. Bergin & Garvey Publishers.

Stengers, I. 1997. *Power and invention: Situating science*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Soudien, C. 2010. "What to teach the natives": A historiography of the curriculum dilemma in South Africa. In W. Pinar (Ed.), *Curriculum studies in South Africa: Intellectual histories and present circumstances*, 19-51. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Wagner, J. 1993. Ignorance in educational research: Or, how can you not know that? *Educational Researcher* 22:15-23.

Wheelahan, L. 2010. Competency-based training, powerful knowledge and the working class. In K. Maton & R. Moore (Eds.), *Social realism, knowledge and the*

sociology of education: Coalitions of the mind, 93-109. New York and London: Continuum.

Wheelahan, L. 2013. How competency-based training locks the working class out of powerful knowledge: A modified Bernsteinian analysis. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 28(5):637-651.

Yates, L., Collins, C. & O'Connor, K. 2011. (Eds). *Australia's curriculum dilemmas: State cultures and the big issues*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Young, M. 2005. The knowledge question and the future of education in South Africa: A reply to Michelson's 'On trust, desire and the sacred: A response to Johan Muller's Reclaiming Knowledge'. *Journal of Education* 32:7-17.

Young, M. 2008a. *Bringing knowledge back in: From social constructivism to social realism in the sociology of education*. Milton Park & New York: Routledge.

Young, M. 2008b. From constructivism to realism in the sociology of the curriculum. *Review of Research in Education* 32:1-28.

Young, M. & Muller, J. 2008. The cosmic community: A response to Maria Balarin's 'post-structuralism, realism and the question of knowledge in educational sociology'. *Policy Futures in Education* 6(4):519-523.

Young, M. & Muller, J. 2010. Knowledge and truth in the sociology of education. In K. Maton & R. Moore (Eds.), *Social realism, knowledge and the sociology of education: Coalitions of the mind*, 110-130. New York and London: Continuum.

Zipin, L. 2009. Dark funds of knowledge, deep funds of pedagogy: Exploring boundaries between lifeworlds and schools. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 30:317-331.