

Extract from

Hemphill, D. & Blakely, E. (in press). *Language, nation, and identity in the classroom: Legacies of modernity and colonialism in schooling*. New York: Peter Lang.

1 Narratives of Progress and the Colonial Origins of Schooling

In the West and regions influenced by the West, educators operate within a system structured by modernity and colonialism, though the history and legacies of both remain largely unrecognized and ignored in the field. Despite the fact that schooling is a primary forum for the transmission of language, citizenship, and culture, it is rare in recent decades for teacher preparation programs and schools of education to address the historical origins or cultural specificity of learning and identity. This absence of theory and history contributes to the wide pendulum swings that often occur within the field from: phonics to whole language reading instruction; bilingualism to English-only mandates; portfolio assessments to pencil-and-paper tests; or US national policies like the No Child Left Behind legislation to the Common Core Standards. Each generation of new teachers comes into the profession with little access to knowledge of what has gone before and without the theoretical resources to move beyond two-sided debates in order to investigate how language, nation, and identity unfold in their classrooms.

Many seemingly natural or commonsense policies and practices within the field of education—the age-graded organization of students, the chronological division of history from prehistoric to modern civilizations, and the exploration of regions and cultures one at a time, with sequential units, for example, on Native Americans or China—may appear inevitable or neutral to educators. Yet these patterns are implicated in the distribution and normalization of social hierarchies and systems of difference that privilege certain forms of knowledge (abstract, decontextualized, or scientific) and certain communities (Western, developed, or “civilized”).

A modernist paradigm has dominated Western thought since its development around the time of the European Enlightenment in the 18th and 19th centuries. Primary elements of modernism include:

- a privileging of logic, rationality, science, and observable evidence as the most reliable, legitimate paths to truth and knowledge;
- an emphasis on overarching metanarratives—theories that seek to “explain everything,” like the narrative of progress that organizes history in an ever-upward march towards advanced civilization;
- a reliance on form over content that, for example, focuses on research procedures and not context in the scientific method, or emphasizes process in legal proceedings;
- a tendency to see things as binaries (either/or), such as mind/body, rational/irrational, science/humanities, male/female, White/Black, or self/Other; and
- a conceptualization of subjectivity that defines the individual as being of primary importance, and characterizes the “normal” adult self as rational, stable, autonomous, fully transparent to itself, and responsible for its actions.

The main tenets of modernism are so thoroughly embedded in the conceptual frameworks, languages, and socioeconomic systems operating in the West that they seem natural and timeless. Countering Western social hierarchies and systems of difference requires unpacking the normative binaries in Western discourse and articulating how the tenets of modernism undergird Western institutions like schools.

The Invention of Childhood and “Developmentally Appropriate” Curriculum

Before Western industrialization, age was not the primary criterion for ordering lives. Children were not segregated from the full range of adult activities and work, but labored alongside their relatives at home or on a farm. The separation of the workplace from the home that accompanied industrialization led to the development of age-graded, child-focused bureaucratic institutions, such as pediatrics and compulsory schooling, which began to monitor, organize, and define childhood. From these institutions a discourse emerged that imagined childhood as an innocent, vulnerable, and transient stage, requiring a range of protective services. Though now widely considered a “natural” stage of life, childhood is an historical invention and product of modernist binaries—work/home, child/adult, and mature/immature. The naturalization of these binaries and the modernist conceptualization of subjectivity has rendered childhood essentially separate from adulthood. This naturalization has created a hierarchical relationship between adults, who are presumed to be stable, rational, and fully transparent

to themselves, and children, who have yet to achieve this state. Institutions like schools, as a result, are required to promote the advancement of children.

Children in the West are described almost without exception in terms of a linear narrative of progress. Childhood is delineated into many stages, where children are viewed as advancing in sequential stages from the primitive scrawls of a preschooler through mastery of advanced skills. A narrative of progress underlies many of the hierarchies that operate within school systems. The pay scales of instructors, for example, where preschool teachers are paid the least and university professors the most, reflect the inherent assumption that the pedagogical requirements for teaching the youngest students are less than the requirements for teaching the most “advanced, rigorous” courses.

This narrative of progress has been operationalized in schools, particularly through the division of students into grade-levels and the adherence to age-based stage theories that promote “developmentally appropriate” instruction. This curricular direction for young children leads to the constant measurement of children’s progress and hyper-assessment based on a mythical norm. Examples of the broad range of stage theories that have influenced Western education include: Jean Piaget’s stages of cognitive development; Lawrence Kohlberg’s stages of moral development; Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs; Erik Erikson’s stages of psychosocial development; and Daniel Levinson’s stages of adult development, among others.

The widely cited Swiss developmental researcher Jean Piaget suggests that there are four sequential, fixed stages of human cognitive development: sensorimotor; pre-operational; concrete-operational; and formal-operational. Through these stages, Piaget charts how a child moves from initially acquiring information through sensory experiences to eventually employing deductive, abstract reasoning. The majority of curricula adopted in the US and other Western countries are based on Piaget’s developmental theories, which are generalized to all ages and cultures, though they were developed from only observations of his own children. The *Ages & Stages* evaluations and learning activities used by Head Start and many other public and private preschool programs in the US go even further than Piagetian research claims; they break down activities and instructional strategies into four-month micro-increments for children aged one month through five years. “Developmentally appropriate” curriculum assumes that there is consistent development and progress even over short spans of time. It assumes that children will be able to perform the same in any setting—and at any time—when assessed. This type of bureaucratization is a pervasive practice in education that amplifies uncritical universalization of Western norms.

Descriptions of childhood in educational, social work, and psychological literature almost without exception present stage-based models of youth and of identity, marking the transition to adulthood as a moment of identity crisis. Adolescents, for instance, are considered to be in a deficit state of “becoming”; it only has meaning in relation to the rational adult they are expected to become. The binary division of youth from adulthood and the corresponding deficit-based model of adolescence is not, however, an objective developmental state. As youth development theorists Sunaina Maira and Elisabeth Soep note, the idea of “youth-as-transition” is culturally constructed. This division is neither natural nor universal, but exists for historical and cultural reasons; it is, they argue, “necessary to the division of labor and the hierarchy of material relations specific to various forms of the capitalist state” (2005, p. xxiii).

In the West, the prevailing image of adolescents is one of hormonally-driven individuals, highly subject to peer pressure, impulsivity, and a desire to rebel or separate themselves from their adult caretakers. This unquestioned image shapes the disciplinary and surveillance systems that schools put in place and the kinds of intervention programs they offer, from self-esteem workshops to drug and gang intervention programs, sex education, and parent support groups. These interventions are widely accepted as necessary and inevitable, often without any recognition of the history, norms, or national and commercial interests that underlie the Western “storm and stress” model of adolescence.

The storm and stress depiction of adolescence was originally advanced by psychologist G. Stanley Hall in response to a perceived growth of juvenile delinquency during rapid urbanization at the turn of the 20th century in the US. Hall, who was an early leader in American psychology and the first president of the American Psychological Association (APA), argued that child development is akin to the history of human evolution—the ascent from savagery to civilization. Based on this narrative of progress, Hall claimed that reasoning with children was a waste of time. Public education, he thought, should not be about intellectual attainment, but about indoctrinating obedience to authority and devotion to the state. He disapproved of open discussions or critical thinking exercises, and supported corporal punishment. Though many of Hall’s ideas are now unthinkable in the field of education, his depiction of the storm and stress of adolescence and its three major features—conflict with parents, mood disruptions, and risky behavior—continue to be tacitly accepted.

With the emergence of psychology as a scientific discipline in the 1950s, Hall’s storm and stress model became a universal depiction of youth. The

1950s marked the triumph of psychology over religion as the preferred system for understanding behavior. As sociologists Gary Alan Fine and Jay Mechling argue, “The prestige of scientific psychology received a boost from the Progressive Era’s worship of expertise and the subsequent marriage of behaviorism and ‘scientific management’ in American industry and bureaucracy” (1993, p. 123). Psychology, and the social sciences in general, served the war effort “from analysis of propaganda to the treatment of the traumas of war” and by the late 1940s had “established its credentials with the American public, who looked increasingly to experts for advice on rearing children” (Fine & Mechling, 1993, p. 123). Many American parents, for instance, began to look to “experts” like Dr. Spock as sources of child-rearing wisdom, discounting the knowledge of their own parents or forbearers. Psychology supplanted and often discounted traditional perspectives on childhood, leading to the idealization of childhood and play and fostering notions of childhood as a time of innocence, with the primary aims of “having fun” and “fitting in.”

Beginning with the proliferation of TV sets in the 1950s, middle and upper class youth were also exposed daily to mass media that modeled their lives. Inundated with televised versions of themselves in *Father Knows Best*, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, or *Leave It to Beaver*, the middle class came to believe in the universality of their family organization and norms. This “typical” family was, however, an aberration or a new invention: “Middle class parents and their baby-boomer children believed they were the normal American family, and it is the 1950s’ family that became the benchmark for judging ‘threats’ to the family over the next four decades” (Fine & Mechling, 1993, p. 123).

What emerged alongside the 1950s construction of the “normal” child was its “threatening alternative: the juvenile delinquent” who was linked to the working class. Undesirable behaviors were blamed on the influence of mass media and popular culture practices like rock and roll and the decline of the traditional family. Rock and roll, originating in African American rhythm and blues (R&B), emerged as a major threat to the traditional American family. One psychiatrist, writing for the *New York Times*, in the early 1950s branded rock as “a cannibalistic and tribalistic form of music” (Altschuler, 2003, p. 17). “Brewed in the hidden corners of Black American cities,” wrote another media commentator, “its rhythms infected White Americans, seducing them.... Rock and roll was elemental, savage, dripping with sex; it was just as our parents feared” (Altschuler, 2003, p. 8). Rock and roll was also a threat to the established popular music industry, still invested in big bands. Crooner Frank Sinatra, disavowing the riots of swooning bobbysoxers

at his own performances a decade earlier, pronounced this self-serving verdict on rock: “It smells phony and false. It is sung, played, and written for the most part by cretinous goons, and by means of its almost imbecilic reiteration and sly, lewd, in plain fact dirty lyrics it manages to be the martial music of every side-burned delinquent on the face of the earth” (Palmer, 1995, pp. 135–136).

The 1950s version of the typical family and its juvenile delinquent counterpart lingers and continues to frame discussions of youth identity and understandings of “at-risk” youth. In educational and psychological discourses, exposure to mass media and popular culture remains a primary threat for youth, leading to interventions that limit gaming, cell phone use, and media consumption, or policies to ban contemporary music forms. Hip-hop is censored, in the same pattern as 50s rock and roll, for its suggestive lyrics and blamed for contributing to youth delinquency and violence. The prestige of psychological and scientific discourses that describe and define youth, along with the hierarchical division of cultural products into high culture and low or popular culture, promotes the criminalization of youth identities and the disproportionate labeling of minority or low-income youth as “at-risk.” The effect of applying storm and stress models, invariant linear stage theories, and related categories leads to a focus in education and psychological discourses on adolescent problems, the dominance of remedial and intervention programs for youth, and the maintenance of Western knowledge hierarchies and systems of difference.

The Spread of Formal Education

The narrative of progress that underlies the age-graded, developmental conceptions of the individual also organizes an understanding of society’s historical development. Time, in the West, is imagined as a progressive, forward movement of “humanity from slouching deprivation to erect, enlightened reason” (McClintock, 1995, p.9). The organization of history into an inevitable and unceasing linear path of development began in the era of the Enlightenment—also called the Age of Reason—in 17th- and 18th-century Europe when newly emerging academic disciplines developed “rational and scientific” understandings of the past and present. History was then organized as a chronological tale of progress from prehistoric times to the modern era of advanced civilization. The idea of progress and perfectibility is “the grand idea of the twentieth century,” observed the poet Charles Baudelaire (qtd. in McClintock, 1995, p. 10).

The idea of progress is an enduring legacy of modernism that has become a metanarrative or overarching theory that seeks to explain everything.

This metanarrative of progress describes all of history as a constant forward movement, ever upward towards greater economic, political, social, technological, spiritual, and personal development and achievement. Though taken for granted as a universal, “objective” means of structuring time, the linear metanarrative of progress represents but one way to view historical movement. Other cultures have conceived of history quite differently: as a process of rise and fall; as a continuous decline; or as in Chinese history, a series of cyclical repetitions.

In the West, it is unquestioningly accepted that the spread of formal schooling is the product of advancing progress, democracy, and enlightenment. This rational, linear account, however, obscures the national and commercial interests behind the development of formal schools. Public schools were not set up exclusively to promote democracy or other enlightenment goals, but rather to meet the increased knowledge requirements of industrialized labor, assimilate new immigrants, and meet the growing need to build consumer markets. The rise of industrialization and capitalism compelled the development of widespread common or public schools in Europe, the US, and across the colonies of the West.

Before the 1800s the educational system in the US, for example, was highly localized, available only to elites, and generally focused on religious instruction. The General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony decreed in 1647 that every town with 100 families or more should have a Latin school to ensure that Puritan children learned to read the Bible and understand Calvinist principles. In the early 1800s the aim of schooling shifted to support the growing need for factory labor; in 1805 the New York Public School Society was established by wealthy businessmen to provide education for poor children. The schools employed a “Lancasterian” or monitorial model, where a single master taught hundreds of students, employing older students to pass lessons down to younger pupils with an emphasis on rote skill building, discipline, and hierarchical obedience (Tyack, 1974).

In the US and many other parts of the world, schooling was also developed to assimilate native-born, as well as newcomer or immigrant children, into an imagined cultural norm. The influx of immigrants from Ireland and other places in Europe in the mid-1800s, along with the annexation of Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, and California from Mexico, led to the development of formal schools in the US to assimilate immigrants and “civilize” native peoples. In 1864, Congress made it illegal, for example, for Native Americans to be taught in their native languages, establishing Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) off-reservation boarding schools where children from ages four and up were taken with the aim, as one BIA official said, to “kill the Indian

in him and save the man” (Pratt, 1973, p. 260). By the end of the 19th century, public education was available throughout the US; all states by 1918 had laws in place requiring children to attend elementary school. The turn of the 20th century saw a renewal of deep concern in the US that the newly arriving immigrants, clustered in urban enclaves, would diminish or mongrelize American culture. Mandating schooling became the answer to such fears. The pledge of allegiance was invented in 1892 and mandated to start the school day. Schooling became the primary way to Americanize Irish, Germans, Italians, and many other primarily European immigrant groups into America’s imagined cultural “melting pot” (Gu, 2001).

In addition to nation-building, curriculum and schooling have been organized historically to shape knowledge and student identities to comply with economic interests. According to economic historians Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, one of the primary aims for expanding schooling is to prepare children “for adult work rules, by socializing people to function well, and without complaint, in the hierarchical structure of the modern corporation” (1976, p. 21). The need to create a stable, skilled workforce remains a central, frequently stated, and well-accepted purpose of schooling in many nations. Business community concerns continue to shape both the structure and content of schooling. The need for a workforce that can navigate technological advances and globalized markets have led to many 21st-century curriculum reform movements in Western nations. School districts across the US, for instance, worked in the early 21st century to align their curriculum to meet the demands of the new globalized economy, as articulated in the Common Core State Standards. State and federal laws and funding stipulations require each local school district to standardize and assess the technical, mathematical, and abstract reasoning skills that are intended to help students compete in this global marketplace. Behind this policy, and prior standards-based instruction movements like the No Child Left Behind policy, is the key argument that “the main purpose of schooling is bolstering the US economy and its national sovereignty and security” (Sleeter & Stillman, 2005, p. 31). The history of formal education is thus intertwined with the history of nation-building and the rise of industrialization, capitalism, and imperialism.

Nation-Building, Ideology, and Hegemony in the Classroom

The tacitly accepted metanarrative of progress in Western discourse defines nation-states as the logical evolutionary development from tribal cultures or “primitive” societies, which are represented as living in backward simplicity and deprivation. Nation-states are represented in school curriculum (geography, social studies, and history lessons) as the uncontested, inevitable

organization of the globe. Nation-states are not, however, a neutral means of organization, argues historian Anne McClintock: “Rather than expressing the flowering into time of the organic essence of a timeless people, nations are contested systems of cultural representation that limit and legitimize peoples’ access to resources of the nation-state” (1995, p. 353). Nations are not organized through natural physical, geographical divisions, nor are they simply the default entities of historical evolution. They are a specific cultural invention, intended to structure social relations. The nation, anthropologist Katherine Verdery suggests, needs to be treated as “a symbol, and any given nationalism as having multiple meanings offered as alternatives and competed over by different groups maneuvering to capture the symbol’s definition and its legitimating effects” (1996, p. 228).

The global legitimacy of the nation-state as the political unit that exercises power over territory was first established in the 18th and 19th centuries by European and later North American global powers. When nation-states replaced the Church as the defining authority, a new discourse was needed to stabilize the nation-state and legitimize the emerging hierarchical structure of social relations. Historian Stephen Toulmin describes this shift:

The new European system of states, built around absolute claims to nationhood... depended on stable systems of social relations within each nation. Given a historical situation in which feudalism could no longer provide a general mode of social organization, fashioning the new system of Nation-States meant inventing a new kind of class society... In the 16th and 17th centuries, the clear threat to social stability and loyalty was seen as the growing number of ‘masterless men’ not merely vagrants, but those people (e.g., printers, charcoal burners) whose ways of life did not attach them securely to the vertical chains of reciprocal obligation that had been constitutive of traditional society (1990, p. 96).

“None of this happened overnight,” continues Toulmin, “it took time for a fresh pattern of relations, within and among nation-states and between states and their churches, to settle down, become familiar, and shape ‘commonsense’ attitudes” (1990, p. 91). This common sense and “everyday rationality” is produced through institutions, like schools, which maintain the class-based systems of the nation-state and normalize specific kinds of citizenship through various educational, medical, and psychological discourses (Foucault, 1973, 1977).

Political theorist Benedict Anderson (1991) refers to nations as “imagined communities,” in the sense that they are systems of cultural representation through which people come to imagine a shared experience of identification with an extended community. These imagined communities are created by inventing cohesive national narratives that portray a shared

history, common purpose, and unifying national interest. Schools serve as a primary setting for the creation and distribution of this shared past and common national interest. Nation-building—defining and assimilating citizens—is a key task of schooling in most parts of the world. In the US, educational researcher Wan Shun Eva Lam suggests,

This assimilationist process is found in the cultural literacy propaganda that aims to deal with difference by eradicating it—all Americans should read from the same largely white, Western canon and adopt a common set of values and linguistic conventions (2006, p. 1).

The transition to the Common Core Standards reflects this nation-building agenda, where the adoption of nationwide standards is intended to provide teachers and parents with a common understanding of what students are expected to learn. As written on the Common Core website,

Consistent standards will provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012).

The production of “good citizens” is a central aim of schooling, as described a century ago as “factories in which the raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life” (Beyer & Liston qtd. in Sleeter & Stillman, 2005, p. 44). Assimilation and the production of “good citizens” occurs primarily through the mandating of English in the US public school system, where resources are deployed to help English Language Learners (ELLs) catch-up to their monolingual peers. School measures often classify ELLs as at-risk or isolate them in lower-level remedial classes, measuring their progress in English-only tests that dismiss or ignore multilingual proficiencies.

Assimilation occurs not only through language instruction, but also through citizenship education. Starting in kindergarten, citizenship education and patriotism are the main goals of social studies and history instruction. The California Social Studies and History content standards for public schools, for example, begin as follows: “1.0) Students understand that being a good citizen involves acting in certain ways.” The standards go on to name the important elements of a shared national knowledge, defining American identity in particular terms: “Learn examples of honesty, courage, determination, individual responsibility, and patriotism in American and world history from stories and folklore.” By the end of kindergarten, students are expected to

recognize national and state symbols and icons such as the national and state flags, the bald eagle, and the Statue of Liberty... [and] know the triumphs in American legends and historical accounts through the stories of such people as Pocahontas, George Washington, Booker T. Washington, Daniel Boone, and Benjamin Franklin (California Department of Education, 1998).

Historical narratives that permeate the US educational system, including the classic American legends of Johnny Appleseed, Paul Bunyan, Casey Jones, or John Henry, function, not only to craft a shared past, but also to produce specific kinds of citizen-consumers who support the socioeconomic systems of the nation-state. Standard narratives presented in large publishing-house textbooks mandated across the US (and reproduced in commercial media products, such as “Disney’s American Legends”) include stories that define American identity and forge patterns of consumption, often without recognition of the actual historical events behind them. The legend of Johnny Appleseed, for instance, tells the story of how a pioneer named Johnny Chapman spread apple trees from Pennsylvania to Indiana, helping to build the nation. Excluded from the school-based and Disney-sanitized version of this tale is the fact that Chapman planted apple trees in order to bring hard cider alcohol to the frontier (Disney Studios, 2001).

Worried that Prohibition would ruin alcohol sales in the early 1900s, apple growers reinvented the apple as a healthy, central component of the American diet, creating the marketing slogan, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” The shiny red apple perched on a teacher’s desk is now a ubiquitous symbol of wholesomeness, schooling, and childhood in the US. This image is, however, the product of a discursive, market-driven reinvention to promote specific national and commercial interests. The histories behind curriculum and schooling structures are often hidden, rendering current narratives and images like the red apple for teachers as natural and neutral.

The use of schools to promote nationalism and the production of specific kinds of patriotic citizen-consumers is not limited to the US. As curriculum theorists Kristen Buras and Paulino Motter note, “Since their inception, state education systems have been charged with the responsibility of cultivating ‘common’ values and creating national identity” (2006, p. 257). It is a common sight in public schools in China, for example, to see entrance walls covered with patriotic slogans and images. In one middle school in Guangzhou, a large shining metallic plaque states, “The mother country is at the center of my heart.” Also pictured are a set of patriotic flags and an image of Beijing’s Tiananmen Square with rays of light emanating outward. Chinese students uniformed in red kerchiefs start the day by marching onto

the playground in military formation while singing patriotic songs. Similar nation-building activities, such as flag displays, posted images of national leaders or heroes, and patriotic, often martial, rituals and assemblies are commonplace in schools across the globe.

Curriculum authorities in many nation-states place their nation at the center of history or geography, or impose an imagined national history of a glorious recent or distant past in school textbooks. The Japanese Education Ministry, for example, has proposed controversial textbook screening standards that “require the inclusion of nationalist views of World War II-era history” (Fackler, 2013, p. 2). The Ministry’s unwillingness to recognize in school history texts the atrocities of Japanese military forces in World War II China and Southeast Asia is a continuing source of friction between Japan and other East Asian countries. Similar instances of politically edited history curricula can be seen in the Chinese government’s failure to provide any references to the Tiananmen Square massacres in 1989. Likewise, the current Russian government has worked to fashion a post-Soviet history curriculum that emphasizes Russian imperial cultural heritage, tradition, and patriotism while de-emphasizing the previous Soviet era. These examples, taken together, suggest that schooling and the production of knowledge are contested—never neutral—domains that are inextricably entangled with nation-building.

The notion that knowledge production and institutions, like schools, are not neutral stems from the conception of ideology first introduced by German philosopher Karl Marx and his colleague Friedrich Engels in the late 19th century. Marx argued that the logic of capitalism underlies the historical organization of institutions, maintaining the dominance of a ruling class and the exploitation of a working class. The ruling class, according to Marx, reproduces itself through a political state, employing both physical force and a system of ruling ideas and culture. Marx described ideology as a set of ideas, representations, and actions that influence social relationships in an often distorted way that reinforces and reproduces inequality.

Critical educational theorists Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, and Peter McLaren use Marx’s conception of ideology to call into question the notion that schools are value-free institutions. They see common sense educational policies and value-neutral educational research as masked ideologies. In Apple’s view, schooling “makes the ideological forms seem neutral” (1979, p. 11). He investigates how schools simultaneously promote and conceal dominant ideologies, asking:

- 1) How [do] the basic day-to-day regularities of schools contribute to students learning these ideologies? 2) How [do] the specific forms of curricular knowledge both in

the past and now reflect these configurations? 3) How [are] these ideologies... reflected in the fundamental perspectives educators themselves employ to order, guide, and give meaning to their own activity? (1979, p. 14).

Building on Marx's conception of ideology, Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci investigated how power is maintained through cultural and social forces as much as—or more than—through physical force. Writing from prison in the late 1920s, Gramsci developed the concept of hegemony to describe how cultural values and norms, promulgated by a dominant or elite class, are taken for granted and disseminated even though they are not in the interests of all who adopt them. Social power, Gramsci believed, derives from the ability of leaders to frame problems and offer solutions in a way that taps popular sentiment and thus achieves widespread support. Hegemonic processes, he argues, often act to make subordinated groups complicit in their own exploitation by persuading them to accept existing conditions of inequity as the status quo. Hegemonic forces are at work, for example, when people who are marginalized or exploited by the marketing and production practices of large corporations consume uncritically the media and products of these same corporations.

In schools, hegemony is at work when some students accept that the gap in their academic performance is a product of a natural lack of skill, intelligence, or effort rather than institutionalized forms of racism or limited resources. The belief that high-achieving, elite students attain their status through competing in a fair and open system ignores that “being elite” requires a whole portfolio of signs (attending the right schools, wearing the right clothes, and having a designated set of possessions, degrees, trips, and experiences). Poststructuralist Jean Baudrillard argues that signs are increasingly detached from any reality they are meant to signify. This means that academic designations, such as “at-risk” or “ELL” may have less to do with a student's reading level or language proficiency, than with the portfolio of signs that accompany this identity—minority status, participation in the free or reduced price school lunch program, or accent.

To illustrate how institutions assign and maintain deficit identities, linguistic researcher Guadalupe Valdés offers the story of a young immigrant Latina student named Elisa, who worked hard in middle school and high school to escape what Valdés calls the “ESL ghetto.” She even changed school districts to register for mainstream, college-bound classes where her ESL record would not follow her; during her senior year she took the ACT and SAT and prepared for college. When Elisa moved to another state, however, and took the regular English placement test at a local community college, she was told that she could not take mainstream classes and would

have to register for ESL writing. As Valdés observes,

The tiny flaws in [her written] English... were too much for the sensitivities of community college teachers. Elisa was told that she will not be eligible for enrollment in credit-bearing, college-level instruction in the regular English sequence until she finishes the sequence of ESL courses (2001, p. 145).

Educational institutions create and maintain identities, like ELL designations, through the assessments and policies that aim to assimilate students and standardize learning outcomes and expectations.

Schools construct and maintain, often without recognition, the symbolic boundaries of the nation, policing who is and who is not a member of the nation-state and who has access to its resources. They evoke “the ideal national,” an invented identity, with an often corresponding ethnicity that represents the nation-state. As social theorist Sallie Westwood puts it,

Racisms are part of the complex which organizes the imaginary of the nation—producing homogeneity, organized through the state, which defines, through the legal/military complex, the borders of the nation, not only in terms of territory but also in terms of the geographies of exclusion that constitute citizens and aliens (2000, p. 31).

Cultural Invisibility, Cultural Capital, & White Privilege

The hegemonies and racisms of the nation-state are produced and distributed in schools through curriculum, where historical narratives, often distorted and partial renderings of the past, are validated. In the true/false and multiple-choice testing regimes schools employ, the responses that fit the national narratives (such as “Columbus discovered America”) are marked correct. For students who “know a different reality (Columbus was lost and thought he had discovered the continent of India)... to answer true means the youngster... ‘sells out’. To answer ‘false’ is to get the answer wrong” (Sue, 2004, p. 766). The role schools play in perpetuating national hegemonies and racisms has been addressed to some extent in the field of education, primarily through multicultural education reforms that seek to add perspectives to the curriculum (such as Native American viewpoints on Columbus’ arrival). These additions are inadequate, though, as the hegemonies of the nation-state are also distributed in less visible ways, through institutional norms, classroom routines, and other forms of knowledge construction. These routinized schooling practices comprise what Giroux and Penna call the “hidden curriculum”: “The unstated values and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure of meaning in both the formal content as well as the social relations of school and classroom life” (1979, p. 22).

Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo uses the term “cultural invisibility” to describe how people in dominant positions frequently fail to recognize the nature of their own culture, or that they even have a culture, since their beliefs, language, practices, and worldviews are constantly reinforced by the institutions, people, and media that surround them. Rosaldo suggests that acculturation, often carried out in the schools, especially through language instruction, acts to “produce postcultural citizens of the nation-state” or “people without culture.” Rosaldo elaborates:

Full citizenship and cultural visibility appear to be inversely related.... Full citizens lack culture, and those most culturally endowed lack full citizenship.... Upward mobility appears to be at odds with a distinctive cultural identity. One achieves full citizenship in the nation-state by becoming a culturally blank slate (1989, pp. 199, 201).

Cultural invisibility operates, argues Rosaldo, to make privileged White communities believe that they are “without culture.” He offers the example of the homogenous retirement community of Sun City, Arizona, where,

the men are by and large retired professionals.... Most of the women were housewives.... Most Sun Citians are Protestants.... Politically, they are conservative and vote Republican. Yet the sources of this uniformity remain largely invisible to Sun Citians. To themselves, Sun Citians appear to be so many self-made, rootless nomads whose social origins are quite diverse. For them, their current circumstances have produced their cultural transparency (1989, p. 143).

As cognitive psychologist Barbara Rogoff further describes, “The cultural practices, traditions, values, and understandings of middle-class European American communities may be less visible to people of this heritage precisely because people from a dominant majority often take their practices for granted as the norm” (2003, p. 85).

“Whiteness is transparent,” clinical psychologist Derald Wing Sue echoes,

precisely because of its everyday occurrence. It represents institutional normality, and White people are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, average, and ideal.... [Schools are the] gateway to knowledge construction, truth and falsity, problem definition, what constitutes normality and abnormality, and ultimately, the nature of reality (2004, pp. 764, 766).

Teachers, embedded in Western paradigms, tend to view the social and language practices of schools as standard or normal, since their existing worldviews generally match the demands of schooling. Educators, notes sociolinguist James Gee, “are often so deeply embedded in their social

practices that they take the meanings and values of the texts associated with those practices for granted in an unquestioning way” (2003, pp. 29–30). The monoculturalism of schools keeps educators from recognizing the ethnocentrism inherent in their values and assumptions.

Cultural invisibility often leads to pathologizing cultural values that are outside the mainstream. This occurs, for example, when teachers are directed to call local child and family service (CFS) agencies on the suspicion of sexual abuse after discovering that a sister shares a bed with her two brothers, or a middle-school age child sleeps together in the same room with his parents. The handout, “Guidelines to Determine Reasonable Suspicion,” often provided to teachers at the beginning of a school year, includes lists of questions to help determine whether a student experiences sexual abuse: “Do you like it when people hug you? Where do you sleep? Where do others in your house sleep?” Teachers, embedded in Western, middle-class childrearing practices, may assume that these questions are universally valid, yet what constitutes “abuse” or “neglect” varies widely according to the childrearing practices of particular cultures or families. Failure to consider the economic circumstances that might lead a family to share a single bed or the family’s views on co-sleeping can lead to the unwarranted criminalization of families. Rogoff notes how “folk wisdom” in middle-class communities portrays the nighttime separation of adults and children, especially older children, as essential for healthy psychological development and acquisition of independence. This is a relatively uncommon practice, however, from a global and historical perspective. As Rogoff writes,

Communities that practice co-sleeping include both highly technological and less technological communities. Japanese urban children have usually slept next to their mother in early childhood and continued to sleep with another family member after that. Space considerations appear to play only a minor role (2003, p. 198).

Upon hearing about the US custom of placing children alone in their own room, Mayan and East African parents were shocked, finding it unthinkable to leave children alone. Rogoff observes: “This shock at others’ cultural practices parallels the disapproval often shown by European American middle class adults over the idea of children sleeping with their parents” (2003, p. 198).

According to social theorist Pierre Bourdieu, the sense that one’s own culture is universal “ignores the social-historical conditions which have established a particular set of... practices as dominant and legitimate” (1991, p. 5). Teachers’ expectations for how students behave and communicate (how they tell stories, initiate discussion, raise questions, wait for a turn in

conversation, or signal paying attention) are all culturally mediated practices that may be unknown, awkward, or unwelcome practices for students in varying degrees given their congruence with home practices. Children from middle-class, Western cultural backgrounds may arrive at school already adept at the social and linguistic patterns necessary for academic success. They have practice in taking turns in conversation, focusing their attention on a single object or task, telling stories following a linear sequence, and responding to known-answer questions. As Rogoff recounts,

Even before attending school, children in some communities where schooling is central begin to participate with their family in the sort of discourse that often occurs in tests and schools. Middle-class European American parents often play language games with their toddlers that involve test questions in the same format as the known-answer questions used by teachers and testers (such as ‘Where is your belly button?’). Familiarity with questions that serve as directives to perform in specific ways can make a difference in whether children respond as expected by the tester [or teacher], creatively play with the materials, or warily try to figure out what is going on (2003, p. 247).

Bourdieu refers to the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully navigate cultural institutions, like schools, as cultural capital. He applies Marx’s notion of economic capital, or concentrated wealth, to the cultural realm, arguing that there is certain cultural knowledge that has substantial economic value. Schooling often serves as the gatekeeper for attaining cultural capital. As Apple writes: “Not only is there economic property, there also seems to be symbolic property—cultural capital—which schools preserve and distribute.” (1979, p. 3). This distribution of cultural capital is not limited to student competencies, but includes parental knowledge about how to navigate the school system, advocate for students, or understand school and teacher expectations.

In addition to cultural capital, Bourdieu identifies two other forms of capital—symbolic capital, meaning the accumulation of prestige, celebrity, or honor, and linguistic capital. Bourdieu uses the term linguistic capital to describe the capacity to produce expressions that are suitable for particular contexts. When there is congruence between linguistic knowledge and the demands of particular social settings such as schools or workplaces, one can “reap symbolic benefits by speaking in a way that comes naturally” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 21). However, when a community’s language practices do not match with the language demands of a particular institution or setting, then their language is assigned a limited value. As Bourdieu notes, “Obligatory on official occasions and in official places (schools, public administrations, political institutions, etc.), this state language becomes the theoretical norm

against which all linguistic practices are objectively measured” (1991, p. 45). Entering school with a set of congruent social and language practices is one part of what scholars call “white privilege,” defined as “the unearned advantages and benefits that accrue to White people by virtue of a system normed on the experiences, values, and perceptions of their group” (Sue, 2004, p. 764).

Broadening Bourdieu’s original definition, several scholars argue that the possession of cultural capital is not limited to dominant groups. Educational ethnographer Luis Moll introduces the concept of “funds of knowledge” as a way to describe the cultural resources that minority language groups possess and use. He defines funds of knowledge as “the essential cultural practices, and bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead, and to thrive” (Moll & Greenberg, 1990, p. 321). Critical race theorist Tara Yosso identifies an array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged in traditional definitions of cultural capital. These various forms of capital, Yosso argues, include: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital. Yosso maintains that her work and the related work of other scholars, “expose[s] the racism underlying cultural deficit theorizing and reveal[s] the need to restructure US social institutions around those knowledges, skills, abilities and networks—the community cultural wealth” (2005, p. 82; Franklin, 2002; Morris, 2004; Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995).

Most educators and “most Americans,” argues Sue, “believe in equity and fairness,” but their failure to deconstruct Western institutional norms and forms of knowledge construction makes them “unwittingly complicit in maintaining unjust social arrangements... [T]he inability to deconstruct... [Western norms and practices] allows society to continue unjust actions and arrangements.... Making the ‘invisible’ visible is the major challenge” (2004, pp. 761, 762, 764).

Case in Point: “Universal” Educational Truths: Class Size and Classroom Management Practices

The cultural invisibility of schooling practices leads to the assumption that Western educational policies and practices are standard or universal, applicable to all classrooms and students. Two current widely universalized educational “truths” are: (1) that smaller class sizes are always preferable to larger classes; and (2) that positive reinforcement and encouragement of individual expression are always preferable to punishment and authoritarian control. Studies conducted in Chinese cultural settings (China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong), however, suggest that these are neither universally accepted nor

always valid truths (Cortazzi & Jin, 2001).

Researchers Martin Cortazzi and Lixian Jin report that in China, class sizes average 50 students, and in some instances as many as 70 or more. In part, the large class sizes are due to sheer demographics, but many schools in China that could reduce class size still choose not to. When teachers in China are asked to enumerate the greatest educational barriers they face, they list teacher preparation and quality of teachers and instruction ahead of class size. The larger class sizes enable teachers to teach fewer lessons per week, allowing them more time to prepare their lessons and conduct peer observations, lesson study, and group lesson planning activities.

Despite Western incredulity over the idea of large class sizes, the academic performance of Chinese students frequently eclipses the performance of students from many Western nations in international measures, such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). In observations of Chinese classes, researchers find many instances of interactive activities, despite the expected difficulty of maintaining student interactions in large classes. The lessons are teacher-controlled, but often involve learners quite heavily, depending on explicitly taught grouping routines that structure learning interactions and reduce transition time. Chinese teachers present tightly organized lessons, packaged in terms of preparation, timing, pacing, brevity of activity, and efficient transitions.

Standard discipline practices in Chinese schools also raise doubts about the universality of Western approaches to classroom management. Researcher Irene Ho found that in Chinese societies influenced by Confucian culture, teacher authority and suppression of individuality have historical roots. Ho suggests that student discipline in Confucian collectivistic cultures is based on several principles: (a) expectations of conformity; (b) teachers' moral responsibility for student guidance; and (c) strict measures in discipline. While Western concepts of authority are set against the background of the concept of the free, autonomous individual, Chinese teachers' authoritarian and competitive approach reflects, in their cultural context, care for the student. Chinese teachers in one study, for example, saw student detention not solely as punishment, but as an opportunity to spend out-of-class time with students on a one-on-one basis. While Western teachers often view punishment as a deterrent, Chinese teachers see it as a re-assertion of behavioral norms—a declaration of the system (Ho, 2001).

Orientalism and the “Othering” of Non-Western Cultures

Cultural invisibility renders the products and practices of the West as

normative, universal or “without culture,” while simultaneously “othering” or “exoticizing” non-Western cultural products and practices. “One of [the West’s] deepest and most recurring images of the Other,” argues postcolonial theorist Edward Said, “is the Orient... The Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience (1979, p. 1). “The emergence,” adds cultural theorist Aníbal Quijano,

of the idea of the ‘West’ or of Europe is an admission of identity—that is, of relations with other cultural experiences, of differences with other cultures.... [T]hose differences were admitted primarily above all as inequities in the hierarchical sense. And such inequalities are perceived as being of nature: only European culture is rational, it can contain ‘subjects’—the rest are not rational, they cannot be or harbor ‘subjects’. As a consequence, the other cultures are different in the sense that they are unequal, in fact inferior, by nature. They only can be ‘objects’ of knowledge or/and of domination practices. From that perspective, the relation between European culture and the other cultures was established and has been maintained, as a relation between ‘subject’ and ‘object’ (2007, p. 174).

From the mid-1800s to the present, British, French, and American colonial institutions objectified the Orient by documenting its flora and fauna and describing its peoples and traditions in literature, scientific journals, and anthropological works. Said refers to this produced body of knowledge or discourse as “Orientalism,” which he further defines,

as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (1979, p. 3).

The West’s depiction of the East was used to demonstrate Western superiority over the Orient. “Eurocentrism maps the world,” communication theorists Ella Shohat and Robert Stam argue,

in a cartography that centralizes and augments Europe and North America and ‘be-littles’ other nations or continents. It bifurcates the world into the West and the Rest and organizes everyday language into binaristic hierarchies implicitly flattering to Europe: our nations, their tribes; our religions, their superstitions; our culture, their folklore; our defense, their terrorism (2003, p. 8).

In the common sense division of the world into West/East or North/South, K–12 social studies, geography, and history lessons produce the hegemonies that maintain the West’s centrality and superiority. For example, in McGraw-Hill’s *World Atlas for Intermediate Students*, the focus of the text is the US; maps of this region take up the first 30 pages of the 71-page

world atlas. The US is also categorized with only one of its North American neighbors—Canada. Mexico, though also a part of North America, is divided from the US in the text and is instead included in the four-page section on Latin America (McGraw Hill, 2000).

In addition to promoting its own centrality, Western hegemonies also represent their cultural accomplishments as pure products. The contributions of non-Western cultures are obscured and dismissed in Western accounts, denying the hybridity of European and American cultural products. Marching bands, to take one example, have come to represent All-American schools and the US nation-state with little to no acknowledgment of their roots in Turkish Ottoman culture. Western military marching bands, which symbolized Western military might in the 19th century and now embody American culture at football games and Fourth of July parades, are actually a hybrid product originating in the *Janissary* army bands of the Turkish Ottoman Empire in the 14th century. The Turks were the first to integrate metal and woodwind instruments with loud percussion—cymbals, massive bass drums, bells, triangles, and whistles—into large, imposing ensembles; Turkish families still dominate cymbal manufacturing today. Performance techniques now widely used in Western marching bands—juggling drumsticks, twirling batons, marching in menacing, close formations, and so forth—were all part of the original Turkish *Janissary* band spectacle (Appell & Hemphill, 2005).

Standard Western historical accounts further obscure and dismiss non-Western cultures by configuring history to align with the West's narrative of progress, representing, philosopher Enrique Dussel explains, a “pseudo-scientific division of history into: a) Antiquity; b) the Medieval Age; and c) the Modern Age.... [that] is an ideological and deforming organization of history” (1998, pp. 175–176). This organization of history highlights Western inventions and scientific achievements, while dismissing non-Western forms of research and knowledge, presenting the rise of power in the East as the “Dark Ages.” The science, math, and other cultural developments in China, South Asia, and the Islamic World are ignored or reattributed to the West. As law professor Shad Saleem Faruqi writes in the opinion pages of *The Star*, the major English-language newspaper in Malaysia:

Everyone knows about the Gutenberg printing press. Very few know that Pi Sheng developed one in 1040. In science, Galileo, Newton, and Einstein illuminated the firmament, but not much is known about Al-hazen and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi.... Cultural and scientific renaissance flourished in the East long before the European renaissance.... Arabic was at one time the lingua franca of science and technology. A large number of texts written in Arabic were translated into Latin without acknowledgment (2011, p. 2)

“Eastern ideas and institutions are viewed,” Faruqi argues further, “through Western prisms and invariably regarded as primitive and in need of change. The imperatives of globalization have further tilted the balance in favor of the Anglo-American worldview” (2011, p. 1). Said echoes this argument, writing:

the world has become immediately accessible to a Western citizen living in the electronic age, the Orient too has drawn nearer to him... Television, the films, and all the media’s resources have forced information into more and more standardized molds. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization... [has] intensified the hold of the nineteenth century academic and imaginative demonology of the “mysterious Orient” (1979, p. 26).

Thus, the residue of 19th-century Orientalism has seeped into “everyday language and media discourses, engendering a fictitious sense of the axiomatic superiority and universality of Western culture” (Shohat & Stam, 2003, p. 8).

The metanarratives of progress that lead to the tacit assumption that Western forms of knowledge and practices (science, capitalism, individualism, written modes of communication) are more advanced further entail the consideration of “Others” as deficient and in need of intervention or remediation. “Other societies or groups,” writes Sue, are construed

as less developed, uncivilized, primitive, or even pathological. The group’s lifestyles or ways of doing things are considered inferior... This perception means that people of color, for example, are prone to being seen as less qualified, less capable, unintelligent, inarticulate, unmotivated, lazy, and as coming from broken homes (2004, p. 765).

The power of the West is thus not limited to its capacity to destroy, but is exercised, perhaps now most fully, in its hegemonic capacity to produce knowledge, images, and common sense worldviews. Europe did not destroy African artwork, for example, but deprived it of “legitimacy and recognition in the global cultural order dominated by European patterns. [African artwork] was confined to the category of ‘exotic’” (Quijano, 2007, p. 170). African art serves, Quijano argues, as the starting point or inspiration for European art, but “not as a mode of artistic expression on its own, of a rank equivalent to the European norm. And that exactly identifies a colonial view” (2007, p. 170). The roles schools play in producing depictions of Others and maintaining the common sense disciplines and hierarchies of Western knowledge are thus implicated in the imperialist projects of the West.

Schooling and Colonial Logic

Historically, Western expansion has been legitimized by both the developmental narrative of progress that describes the maturation of individuals from childhood to adulthood and the historical narrative of progress that organizes the past into a linear chronology of ever-advancing civilizations. To legitimize imperial projects, Westerners infantilized the people they colonized and imagined that traveling to distant lands was moving backwards through time. In this colonial logic, Western colonizers depicted the people they “discovered” as primitive savages in need of salvation or advancement. As historian Arif Dirlik notes,

By the end of the nineteenth century EuroAmericans had more or less conquered the whole world, and proceeded to produce ideological legitimations for the conquest, as a cultural orientation Eurocentrism itself is a hindsight invention of the Europe/Other binary, not the other way around (1999, p. 12).

In history and social studies curriculum, maps and timelines that divide the world into developed/developing nations or First/Third World binaries are provided to students as authoritative accounts; yet these seemingly neutral tools of chronology and geography represent a hegemonic framing of world history. The historical account presented to US students casts colonialism as the spread of reason and democracy, generally ignoring the loss of indigenous lives and lands. Students begin to learn about colonialism in fourth- and fifth-grade California history through a study of explorers and English settlements in North America. Seventh graders study “the Age of Exploration to the Enlightenment.” Tenth grade includes the study of the worldwide expansion to fuel the demands of industrial nations for natural resources. In this progress-driven history of colonialism, there is no mention of the colonization of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, or islands in the Pacific and Caribbean, and very limited study of US relationships with indigenous peoples.

Education and scholarship have long been a part of colonial endeavors, as a means of establishing sovereignty over new territories and extending the hierarchical relationships that render colonized people in need of “fixing,” development, and modernization. The first modern colonial project of the Enlightenment, Napoleon Bonaparte’s invasion of Egypt from 1798 to 1801, for instance, included scholars and scientists along with soldiers. Anthropologists, biologists, botanists, geologists, engineers, mathematicians, chemists, and artists were sent to capture the flora and fauna and document the physical, social, and economic basis of the country. They were organized by Napoleon into the “*Institut d’ Égypte*.” According to historian Paul Strathern,

Central to Napoleon's dream was to be the creation of an Institute of Egypt [*Institut d' Égypte*] in Cairo. This was to be modeled upon the Institute of France in Paris, of which Napoleon was so proud to have become a member that even in Egypt he still headed his dispatches "Member of the Institute and Commander-in-Chief"—in that order. Indeed, it is his pride on becoming a member of the Institute in Paris that may well have crystallized his vision of himself as more than just a general, more even than a conqueror of foreign countries; rather as a bringer of civilization (2009, p. 191).

The stated objectives of the *Institut* were:

1) Progress and the propagation of enlightenment in Egypt; 2) Research, study and the publication of natural, industrial and historical facts concerning Egypt; 3) To give advice on different questions on which its members will be consulted by the government (Strathern, 2009, p. 191).

Modern colonial projects were therefore not solely about military and economic domination; they included the domination of knowledge, research, ideas, and social relationships. The *Institut* consisted of 48 scholars organized into four sections, reflecting dominant academic disciplinary codifications of the Enlightenment era: mathematics, physics and natural history, political economy, and literature and arts. The scholars held weekly seminars with Napoleon and his generals in order to share scientific findings and plan for the "improvement" of Egypt once the French military had completely subdued the country—an event that never fully transpired; Napoleon's hubristic military and cultural mission in Egypt ultimately ended in failure. The subsequent Western anthropological, medical, and psychological writings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, however, continued to depict the cultures and civilizations of the colonizers—the "scientific observers"—in binary opposition to the "primitive" colonized subjects under observation. This distinction was categorized in racial terms, where advanced civilization was marked as White. "Imperialism," argues McClintock, "is not something that happened elsewhere—a disagreeable fact of history external to Western identity. Rather, imperialism and the invention of race were fundamental aspects of Western, industrial modernity" (1995, p. 5; Said, 1979; Strathern, 2009).

"The objective of colonial discourse," according to cultural theorist Homi Bhabha, "is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (1994, p. 70). An American schoolteacher upon arrival in the Philippines in the early 20th century, for example, described herself as: "one of an *army* of enthusiasts enlisted to instruct our little brown brother, and to pass on the torch of occidental

knowledge several degrees east of the international date line” (Fee qtd. in Rogoff, 2003, p. 345). US colonial discourse produced and reinforced racialization of Filipinas/os as racially black, and by implication, less-developed than White Americans. This racial depiction of Filipinas/os legitimized colonial endeavors to create a new labor force. Accordingly, the vocational education that was designed for African Americans in the southern US served as a template for schools in the Philippines, where students were instructed in agriculture, handicrafts, and housekeeping. The aim of US schooling in the Philippines in the early 20th century was thus to support progress by providing Filipina/os a model for Western cleanliness and order, to motivate the development of a Protestant work ethic, and desire for the new products of the West. As cultural theorist Roland Sintos Coloma notes,

The implementation of the manual-industrial curriculum worked well with the economic interest of the United States to export Philippine goods for foreign interest and consumption.... The US colonial government was invested in ‘prepar[ing] boys and girls in a practical way for the industrial, commercial, and domestic activities in which they are later to have a part’ (2009, pp. 512–513).

Though the period from the 1500s through the 1900s marked the height of European colonialism, physical and symbolic colonialism continues without formal colonies. US colonial projects, for example, continue with disputes over the sovereignty of Native American reservations and indigenous lands in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, the US Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. There are also lingering forms of colonization in many regions across the Middle East, Asia, and Africa where imposed colonial borders and modern nation-state divisions conflict with historical ethnic or cultural boundaries.

The global diffusion of modern institutions and the increasing presence of multinational corporations and media conglomerates, along with the increasing displacement of people from colonized countries and regions, have created new colonial arrangements and a growing “Third World” diaspora within the boundaries of the “First World.” Schools are one of many institutions positioned to bring the Third World into the First. The education of the Third World is shaped largely on what are presumed to be universal, modernizing imperatives; “closing the achievement gap,” for instance, is implicated in the homogenizing processes of Western colonization. Contemporary vehicles of colonialism include the spread of English language use as the unquestioned medium of business and intellectual exchange, as well as the exportation of Western products, media, and institutions globally. The colonialism of the West comprises the physical taking of lands and controlling of economies, as well as the colonization of knowledge, research,

ling of economies, as well as the colonization of knowledge, research, language, social relationships, and subjectivities.

Bringing the Third World into the First or achieving educational equity through the erasure of differences may seem like a laudable equity initiative, but when the goal of education is homogeneity—equal opportunity and equal access—it means adherence to a national identity or norm that perpetuates the same hierarchical systems of difference. English-only mandates or the prohibition of state-sanctioned bilingual instruction in US public schools devalue many possible forms of language and knowledge, reflecting a kind of linguistic colonization. Assimilation practices in general constitute what social theorist Robert Blauner terms “internal colonialism.” Difference in educational policy is often taken to imply inferiority; thus, policymakers and educators define “minority, immigrant, or Third World” students as “at-risk” and in need of “First World” intervention. Tutoring, ESL classes, counseling, and parent education programs designed to “close the gap” or help “at-risk” students and families catch up are all part of this colonizing project (Blauner, 1969).

In general, Western forms of knowledge are perceived as more advanced than non-Western forms. There is substantial evidence of this in higher education, for example, where universities across the globe privilege Western knowledge and institutions. In Thailand’s most prestigious university, Chulalongkorn, for instance, almost the entire faculty of the College of Education in the early 2000s have their PhDs from US universities, and the few that do not, have their degrees from British or Australian institutions. The professional worldview and research agendas of Thai teachers are thus imported from the West, often without regard to their relevance to local schools or communities. Almost all foreign language teacher training at Chulalongkorn, for example, focuses on English, French and German; a new program in Chinese is struggling to become established despite intense interest in learning Chinese among Thai students, and its importance as a global language of commerce. As Faruqi writes of Malaysia,

The expatriate lecturers and external examiners are mostly from the North Atlantic countries. Asian books, Asian theories and Asian scholars are generally not regarded as fit for such recognition. This is despite historical evidence that Chinese, Indian and Persian universities predated universities in Europe and provided paradigms for early Western education (2011, p.2).

Non-Western educational systems are often dismantled and replaced with Western models. As a condition of receiving foreign aid, Latin America and Africa, for example, have had to dismantle their existing educational struc-

tures in order to implement Western educational policies. These global educational reform projects impose Western systems of education under the assumption that they are improvements to “less advanced” local systems, even though many of the imported practices are disputed and problematic in their countries of origin (Apple, 2001; Carnoy, 2000; Torres, 2002).

The reforms frequently demanded by agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank require exporting, for example, standardized testing, scripted curriculum, and market-driven business models of educational administration. Although many of these educational practices have not been particularly successful in the US or other Western nations, the fact that they are newly developed implies that they are “progressive,” and thus appropriate to impose on developing nations. Western educational systems continue to prevail despite the evidence in international assessment comparisons, where nations such as Korea, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan routinely outperform the US and other Western-influenced nations, employing educational policies and practices that differ markedly from Western norms. Importing Western educational practices, thus, cannot guarantee outcomes (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Counter to the metanarrative of progress, importing Western educational policies often exacerbates problems, proving at times more costly and less effective than past, local solutions. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), for example, began to work directly with the coffee industry in Colombia to promote global marketing measures in education. Small rural schools were funded to provide instruction in entrepreneurship, specifically the growing and selling of coffee. One of the school’s teachers, however, considers the mandates of the school’s curriculum as,

nothing more than fieldwork slavery.... Our older students arrive at school at six... and immediately begin working in the field. When and if they arrive in the classroom they are either too tired to learn, hungry, or simply uninterested in simply reading and answering questions in a workbook about the history of coffee (Nuñez, 2006, pp. 54–55).

Despite the promise of ten coffee plants upon graduation, the students have little hope of viable economic gain from their schooling given the local violence, difficulty of securing land, failing coffee industry, and the narrowness of their educational background. As one school counselor reports,

If what these students see every day is math problems dealing with coffee sales, chemical compounds found in coffee from their science class, and Juan Valdez readings in language class, how can they obtain a university license in nursing... or anything else for that matter? (Nuñez, 2006, p. 42).

The idea of becoming coffee farmers is rejected by many of the students. As one student relates, “To them, all I am is a poor person from the *campo* who learns about coffee in school and harvests coffee at home. But I’m not that. I’m not a coffee farmer” (Nuñez, 2006, p. 45). Local conditions or any past educational practices of Third World nations are not only disregarded in the market-driven, colonial logic of the IMF, IADB, and other similar funding agencies, they are also automatically assumed to be inferior to the imported Western practices. The assumption that the presence of Western educational structures is a sign of democratic or economic advancement is a legacy of the modernist metanarrative of progress that upholds the West’s colonial projects.