

## The Cultural Production of the Educated Person: An Introduction

Around the world, modern schools are central to the social and cultural shaping of the young. Relatively new to history, especially for those people situated on the margins of industrialization, institutions of mass schooling often remove children from their families and local communities, encouraging mastery of knowledges and disciplines that have currency and ideological grounding in wider spheres. As articulated early on by Durkheim (1956) and others, these schools have served to inculcate the skills, subjectivities, and disciplines that undergird the modern nation-state. No matter how the knowledgeable person is locally defined, regardless of the skills and sensibilities that count as indicators of “wisdom” and intelligence in the home and immediate locale, schools interject an educational mission of extra-local proportions.

Thus, set in the space between the local and the national, modern schools provide a contradictory resource to those students who might benefit from their teachings and credentials. Ironically, schooled knowledges and disciplines may, while offering certain freedoms and opportunities, at the same time further draw students into dominant projects of nationalism and capitalist labor formation, or bind them even more tightly to systems of class, gender, and race inequality. On a more personal level, subjection to the school’s ministrations can yield a sense of self as knowledgeable, as “somebody” (Luttrell, this volume), but it also may encourage a sense of self as failure. Encounters with formal education can result in a feeling of responsibility for one’s lowly social standing.

Schools have also proven themselves a contradictory resource for those who would fit the young to a particular vision of society. Not surprisingly, schools and education often become sites of intense cultural politics. Local educational practices and ideologies may be pitted against those of national priority. Groups identifying themselves perhaps by ethnicity, perhaps by moral orientation, may feel unfairly subjected to the educational values of a more powerful group. Struggles, sometimes submerged and virtually invisible, sometimes clear and dramatic, erupt. Politics can engulf the curriculum. Coalitions form and reform trying to appropriate the schools to their own ends. And students, often the voiceless objects of educational reform, may become recalcitrant.

## 2 *Levinson and Holland*

*The Cultural Production of the Educated Person* explores these conflicts and contradictions. The volume comprises eleven original case studies addressed to the social and cultural projects of modern schools, and to the contestations or accommodations, dramatic and not, that emerge in and around and against them. Our definition of the "school" is broad, yet specific: a state organized or regulated institution of intentional instruction. We include not only formal educational programs for the young, but also "nonformal" government training schemes, adult education, and the like.

Education is even more broadly defined. We follow the usual anthropological practice of distinguishing education from schooling. Anthropologists have long recognized the existence of culturally specific and relative definitions of the educated person (e.g., Hansen 1979:28, 39, 244; Borofsky 1987; Lave in press). Although the degree to which cultural training is formalized, situated at a remove from activities for which the training is intended, and provided on a mass scale may vary, anthropologists recognize all societies as providing some kind of training and some set of criteria by which members can be identified as more, or less, knowledgeable. Distinct societies, as well as ethnic groups and microcultures within those societies, elaborate the cultural practices by which particular sets of skills, knowledges, and discourses come to define the fully "educated" person. In this volume, for instance, Shaw shows how the "great tradition" of Chinese Confucianism helped define a notion of educated person in terms of filial devotion and service, while Rival describes the Huaorani educated person as constituted by certain culturally salient activities, such as chanting and tool-making.

Regardless of whether they are legitimized by formal institutions, we consider local forms of education significant. Some educators may have difficulty treating these forms seriously or considering them alongside those enshrined by schools. Yet such a vision is necessary. Otherwise, there is no vantage point from which to appreciate the shape and degree of contestation that goes on around schools, even in places where modern schools have been in place for over a century. Nor is there ample scope to recognize that, despite what may seem to be the homogeneity of a group, cultural production is ongoing, and hegemonic definitions of the educated person may be contested along lines of gender, age, and, in stratified societies, ethnicity and class.

The case studies in this volume chart a new direction for "critical" educational research. Such research is fundamentally local and ethnographic, yet moves beyond the school to examine links between local cultural practices and the community, the region, the state, and the economy. Along with this broadened interpretive perspective, we also urge a more extensive comparative base. Challenging the Eurocentrism of most prior critical research, we draw on studies of schooling in a variety of locales in order to address the global dimensions of educational process and change. Moreover, in carrying forward this process of interpretive and empirical broadening, we urge a consideration of two key terms.

We argue that the concept of “cultural production” allows us to better understand the resources for, and constraints upon, social action—the interplay of agency and structure—in a variety of educational institutions. We also argue that a culturally specific and relative conception of the “educated person” allows us to appreciate the historical and cultural particularities of the “products” of education, and thus provides a framework for understanding conflicts around different kinds of schooling. In the process of explicating these two terms, we hope to articulate a distinctive model that is emerging in critical and qualitative educational studies.

A more precise description of the studies in this book depends upon placing them in the context of major theoretical shifts which have taken place within critical educational studies over the last two decades. Describing these developments will be the first task of this chapter. We shall briefly sketch the concepts of “social reproduction” and “cultural production,” which gathered momentum in the 1980s. We will argue that the 1990s are witness to a broadening of horizons in the critical study of schooling. Infused by the field of cultural studies, with its focus on identities, and by practice theories, with their accounts of the production of cultural forms, critical educational studies build upon, but do not limit themselves to, an understanding of schools as one of the major sites of struggle for classes disadvantaged by advanced capitalism. Such studies have arrived at the point, in fact, where the concept of cultural production can be developed in “relative autonomy” from the problematic of class reproduction. Other forms of power and subordination, other critical concerns are now addressed, sometimes in addition to, sometimes in place of, class. Indeed, we forward the concept of a culturally variable “educated person” in order to displace structural (read class) “reproduction” as the privileged vantage point from which to view all forms of cultural production.

Our second task in providing a context for the papers is to explore the differences between schools, as sites for the production of educated persons, across cultural and social space. Much of the critical education literature has developed in and focused upon schools in privileged, Western societies—that is, in societies positioned favorably in world political and economic systems. There are, of course, differences among these Western societies. Streams of educational literature reveal different historical circumstances and different social formations of privilege, which in turn give rise to varying theoretical and practical preoccupations. In British studies, for example, issues of class, and now race and gender dynamics, have dominated theorizing about education, whereas in the United States, cultural differences based on race and ethnicity have been more salient. Yet the empowerment, displacement, or de-skilling of first-generation schoolgoers that we see in Third World countries is a different sort of process (see Rival, Levinson, Rockwell, Skinner and Holland, this volume). The citizen-building goals assigned to schools in countries such as Mexico or Nepal cannot be the same as those expected of schools in the United States or Europe. Also, patterns of class mobility, ethnicity, and gender can be quite different in developing coun-

tries (at times of rapid economic growth, schools may indeed contribute to fluid social mobility). For these reasons, it is time to more clearly expand the horizons of critical educational theory to include processes occurring in places other than the privileged societies of advanced capitalism.

From here we move on to an extensive review of the literature, along with a discussion of key concepts in critical educational discourse. Readers interested in moving on to a restatement of our argument, as well as an introduction to the case studies, can skip to the section on "Building Strengths and Charting New Directions," on page 21.

## DEVELOPMENTS IN CRITICAL EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

### Social Reproduction

Our insights into schools are informed by current developments in anthropological and sociological studies of schooling. Over the past fifty years, these developments have proceeded through a series of theoretical and methodological debates. At first, guided by liberal assumptions about the role of schools in a meritocracy, where upward mobility was assumed to be an outcome of talent and effort, researchers (sociologists, for the most part) described the institution and analyzed educational outcomes. Designed to imitate the research products of the hard sciences, these pictures of schools came largely in the form of survey and experimental data (Karabel and Halsey 1977). In the mid-1970s, beginning for the most part in Europe, these studies were challenged by more critical approaches. Schools have since become the topic of an extensive critical literature, and surveys and experiments have been replaced, to some extent, by investigations of a more historical/ethnographic sort.

Without a doubt, the critical perspective has always been informed by a strong commitment to ideals of equality in education. Like so many others, including the contributors to this volume, we have actively appropriated Western discourses on equal rights and opportunities, and we have dedicated a significant part of our lives and careers to exploring whether these rights and opportunities are indeed offered by public education systems, across race, class, and gender lines. Moreover, we agree with Connell (1993:19) that this ideal of equality demands both "distributive" and "curricular" justice, that is, equality of educational access as well as curricular knowledge and representation.

It is for this reason that, like many educational scholars, we were drawn to the first wave of critical studies of schooling which emerged in the 1970s. With the breakdown of functionalist and "scientific" hegemony in the social sciences, the "new sociology of education" brought important perspectives to the study of schooling.<sup>2</sup> Scholars such as Althusser (1971), Young (1971), Bernstein (1973), Baudelot and Establet (1975), Bowles and Gintis (1976), Sharp and Green (1975), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), Apple (1979, 1982a), and Giroux (1983) elaborated a radical critique of the social effects of schooling in the so-called

liberal capitalist democracies.<sup>3</sup> In particular, these scholars endeavored to show that schools were not “innocent” sites of cultural transmission, or places for the inculcation of consensual values. Nor could schools be understood as meritocratic springboards for upward mobility—the great leveling mechanism, according to dominant liberal ideology.<sup>4</sup> Rather, critical scholars argued that schools actually served to exacerbate or perpetuate social inequalities. In their view, schooling responded less to popular impulses for advancement and empowerment, and more to the requirements of discipline and conformity demanded by capitalist production and the nation-state. In Althusser’s (1971) most (in)famous declaration, ideology “interpellated” subjects: Schools were among the most powerful “ideological state apparatuses” of modern capitalism, hence places where the student-as-subject would become ideologically positioned to assume his or her role in the class structure (see also Anyon 1981). By the end of the 1970s, “reproduction theory” had emerged to explain how schools served to *reproduce* rather than transform existing structural inequalities.

#### From Social to Cultural Reproduction: The Work of Pierre Bourdieu

While most of these early critical studies used the trope of reproduction to characterize enduring class *structures* in a capitalist economy, Bourdieu and his associates inaugurated a highly original approach to the reproduction of the *cultural* bases of privilege. According to Bourdieu, the highly skewed valuation of cultural styles and competencies was what buttressed an unequal social order. Michael Apple’s (1982a) edited volume was one of the first to build on Bourdieu’s work and clearly address cultural as well as “economic” reproduction in education. Dimaggio (1982) and Lareau (1989) also mined Bourdieu’s insights on the cultural basis of class privilege, while Delamont (1989), Weiler (1988), and Holland and Eisenhart (1990) attempted to extend these insights to account for the cultural reproduction of gender privilege, and women’s continued subordination.

Bourdieu first developed the idea of “modes of domination” through his comparative work on French schools and the Kabyle peasants of Algeria. The Kabyle, whom Bourdieu had studied ethnographically (1977b), reproduced their unequal social standings through face-to-face, often agonistic encounters. Drawing on discourses of shame and honor, prominent Kabyle (men in particular) developed stocks of “symbolic capital” which were key to their control over labor resources in the community. Symbolic contests of honor carried out face to face were thus key to the reproduction of the domination of one man over another, of one family over another, among the Kabyle. These contests not only reproduced unequal social and economic positions, but also the value of the symbolic capital of honor itself. In France, on the other hand, a highly differentiated and bureaucratized class structure evidenced a more impersonal means of cultural reproduction. In France, Bourdieu suggested, schools performed the complex work of validating and distributing the symbolic capital which enabled dominant groups to maintain their economic advantage.

Bourdieu's understanding of the role of schools in French society (Bourdieu and Saint Martin 1974; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) differed from Althusser's structural Marxist formulation. Specifically, he developed the concept of "cultural capital" as a social resource analogous to, and complexly intertwined with, economic capital. "Cultural capital" refers to a kind of symbolic credit which one acquires through learning to embody and enact signs of social standing. This credit consists of a series of competencies and character traits, such as "taste" and "intelligence." Because of this credit, the actions of people with higher social standing automatically achieve greater currency and legitimacy. Those of lower standing, by contrast, receive no such legitimacy. For Bourdieu, "cultural capital" is convertible to economic capital through advanced academic credentials, or in the way that it helps its bearers, for example, to secure loans, find business partners, or otherwise receive the benefit of the doubt in financial decisions. Yet it is nonetheless separate from economic capital, and valued in and of itself. French schools, according to Bourdieu, give those of superior social standing an unfair advantage in reproducing their stocks of cultural capital.

How do they accomplish this? French schools allow elite groups to maintain power by only recognizing as "intelligent" their cultural capital, that is, *their* tastes for certain cultural products (art, literature, film, music), their manner of deportment, speech, style of dress, consumption patterns, and the like. In other words, only those particular tastes and skills possessed by elite classes are recognized as signs of "intelligence" by schools. Exams, rewards, and other disciplinary procedures ensure school success for those who already possess this particular "intelligence." Those who don't, of course, stand a good chance of lower achievement, and even failure. While those of lower social standing, such as the urban working class, may acquire some of these special styles and competencies, their background will always give them away. In this manner, French schools reproduce the value and content of the cultural capital of elite groups (Bourdieu 1974:42; see also 1984:387).

This process of schooling imposes a kind of "symbolic violence" on nonelite students, in which "instruments of knowledge . . . which are arbitrary" are nevertheless made to appear universal and objective (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977:115). Such symbolic violence has a stultifying effect upon its recipients. As they develop a sense of their social position, and the relatively degraded value of their own cultural-linguistic resources in given social situations, nonelite persons also tend to develop a "sense of their social limits." As these limits become permanently inscribed in a person's "*habitus*," he or she learns to self-censor and self-silence in the company of those with greater social standing. The recent work of anthropologists Helán Page (1994) on the "white public sphere," and Signithia Fordham (1993) on a Washington D.C. high school, can be seen as extending the idea of symbolic violence and cultural capital. Fordham, for example, dramatically demonstrates the results of symbolic violence in the self-silencing of African-American women in schools (see also Luttrell 1989).<sup>5</sup>

Bourdieu's account of cultural reproduction has thus constituted a significant addition to the "new sociology of education." Still, we would call attention to three important limiting features of this whole body of early work—Bourdieu's, as well as that we classify as social reproductionist. First, given its generally neo-Marxist orientation, early reproduction theory privileged class structures as the prime determinant of life chances.<sup>6</sup> It wasn't until the 1980s, under the impact of socialist-feminism and critical studies of race, that scholars began to more fruitfully explore the intersection of class, race, gender, and age structures.<sup>7</sup> Second, virtually all accounts of schooling and inequality in the reproduction literature focused on Euro-American societies. Few scholars attempted to apply its insights to expanding educational systems in non-Western or former colonial societies (see Foley 1977, 1991; Rockwell in press a for exceptions). Third, and perhaps most importantly, reproduction theory had come to rely on highly schematic and deterministic models of structure and culture, as well as simplistic models of the state and its supposed use of schools as instruments of control. As Connell (1983) phrased it, schools had become the "black boxes" which, perforce, reproduced the structural requirements of the capitalist economy and state.<sup>8</sup>

To be sure, though theories of social and cultural reproduction have suffered criticisms, they formed a basis for work we describe below, and thus continue to be useful for our understanding of schools. In particular, Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital helps us to think through the potential role of schools in establishing new forms of symbolic capital while displacing old ones. And as Bourdieu himself exemplified with his work on the Kabyle and the French, such a perspective can be helpful for exploring the effects of schooling across historical and cultural contexts.

### American Anthropology and Studies of Schooling: The Cultural Difference Approach

As reproduction theory continued to be principally developed and critiqued by European and American sociologists, philosophers, and political scientists, American educational anthropologists directed their attention elsewhere. Just as social class had become the central problematic for reproduction theory, ethnic difference had become so for educational anthropologists. This was a logical outgrowth of anthropological concerns at the time. Educational anthropology in the United States had its roots in an earlier literature on socialization and cultural transmission in non-Western, nonindustrialized societies.<sup>9</sup> This literature, perhaps made most famous by Mead's (1961[1928]) description of Samoan childhood and adolescence, documented how such societies maintained social cohesion and continuity through the transmission of core values and knowledges from one generation to the next.

Disrupted by the social upheavals of the 1960s, this work was eclipsed by a new direction in anthropological thinking. With the rise of civil rights and anti-colonial movements at home and abroad, anthropologists increasingly turned

their attention toward modern schooling systems, especially the problems of cultural and ethnic difference in the United States. In the wake of liberal and radical critiques of schooling, anthropologists began to participate actively in policy debates, using ethnographic research to elucidate the reasons for the disproportionate school failure of ethnic and racial minorities.

With a few early exceptions, anthropologists distinguished themselves by contributing finely detailed accounts of “differences,” “discontinuities,” “conflicts,” and “mismatches” between mainstream school culture and the traditional cultures of ethnic/racial minorities. They conducted microethnographic studies of classrooms and communities, attempting to identify differences between their respective communication patterns, linguistic codes, and kinesic and cognitive styles.<sup>10</sup> According to this “cultural difference” approach, ethnic minorities tended to fail insofar as they did not successfully adapt themselves to the schools’ dominant (usually considered white, middle-class) cultural styles or, conversely, insofar as the schools could not provide appropriate “activity settings” (Trueba 1988) to accommodate the minorities. While this approach was extremely important for offsetting racist models of genetic inferiority and “cultural deprivation,” it downplayed the social and historical forces responsible for the reproduction of “cultural differences” in schools.<sup>11</sup> Neglecting to emphasize how communication styles, cognitive codes, and so on were the cultural practices of *variably* empowered groups, historically produced within relations of power, the cultural difference approach tended to essentialize the cultural repertoires of minority groups. As Ogbu (1981) pointed out, the absence of such a critical analysis permitted confident reformists to attempt amelioration of school-based conflicts in cultural styles through remedial programs and “culturally responsive” pedagogies.<sup>12</sup> The deeper, structural context of cultural production and school failure remained obscure and largely unaddressed.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, for different reasons, we find both “reproduction theory” and “cultural difference” theory, as understandings of educational process, largely exhausted of new insight by the mid-1980s. Yet we’ve also been able to identify existing strengths in these approaches, and the developments emerging from them, which we and the others in this volume put to good use. Although no longer a dominant force in critical educational research, questions raised by “reproduction” theorists, especially Bourdieu with his focus on cultural capital and symbolic violence, continue to be important. So too are the questions anthropologists have posed about understanding “cultural differences,” and the basic cultural knowledge of the “educated person.” Finally, we must not forget the origin of the concept of “cultural production” in the reproduction literature.

#### BEYOND REPRODUCTION THEORY: ETHNOGRAPHY AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

The concept of cultural production in educational studies developed as the reproduction literature was considerably nuanced by the introduction of ethnographic



research. These ethnographic studies forced scholars to move beyond the more deterministic formulations of both structural Marxism and poststructural, “productivist” discourse analysis (Coward and Ellis 1977; Smith 1988). Beginning with Paul Willis’ (1981b) watershed study of British “lads,” ethnographers began opening up the “black box” embedded in the reproductionists’ views of schooling.<sup>14</sup> As is well known, Willis’ ethnographic account of the working-class lads of “Hammertown Comprehensive” forever shattered the image of the passive, malleable student implicit in reproduction theory. The lads were vital, active participants who shaped life in the school, preventing its smooth functioning, resisting its oppressive capacities, and largely constructing, through the cultural forms they produced, their own subjectivities. “Social agents,” wrote Willis (1981b:175), “are not passive bearers of ideology, but active appropriators who reproduce existing structures only through struggle, contestation and a partial penetration of those structures.” Through their celebration of a masculinity which strongly resisted and rejected the “middle-class” ideology of the school, the lads, in effect, did end up sealing their own fate. However, the eventual reproduction of their working-class position is only part of the lesson of Willis’ case study. The important point is that the school itself did not unilaterally socialize the lads to conform to their working-class position. On the contrary, the lads were very much a part of the dynamic process.<sup>15</sup>

By the 1980s, numerous ethnographic studies of the dynamics of power relations in schools offered insights into the production of different educational outcomes.<sup>16</sup> Ethnography problematized the reproductionist formula by showing that students created cultural forms which resisted ideological interpellation, and that schools were not monolithic purveyors of dominant ideologies (Foley 1990; Ezpeleta and Rockwell 1983; McNeil 1986). Theorists who had earlier espoused a simpler reproduction model now advocated a more complex understanding of the popular and dominant forces which, historically, come to constitute the typical school environment (Apple 1982b; Apple and Weis 1983; Giroux 1983).<sup>17</sup> The term “contradiction,” appropriated from an earlier Marxist vocabulary, now became common in critical educational studies, as scholars sought to understand how “reproduction” could be both contested and accelerated through actions by the same people, in the same educational institution.<sup>18</sup> As we have seen, then, in critical educational studies the concept of cultural production was originally employed as a means of challenging notions that schooling was unopposed, and thus invariably successful in its reproduction of wider structures. But beyond the importance of adding resistance to reproduction theory, the focus on cultural production considerably broadened the purview of critical educational studies. By the early 1980s scholars had begun to talk more about “cultural production” as an ongoing social process which could occur independently of, but enter into complex relations with, processes of the social and cultural reproduction of class structures. Simply put, studies of schooling and cultural production are now informed by a broader range of critical social theories. Social dynamics arising

between those who control the material means of economic production and those who must sell their labor, certainly remain important. However, class relations are no longer the one and only lens privileged in the critical analysis of schools.

Criticisms of Willis' *Learning to Labor* offer a means to explicate this broadening. *Learning to Labour* was part of a more general intellectual and political project of Willis' home institution in Birmingham, England, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Affected by the reaction of the intellectual/political left in England to Stalin, the CCCS had from its beginnings rejected the determinism and economism of older Marxian thought. Instead, the CCCS emphasized the significance of local cultural forms, and the cultural politics of control and resistance (Hall 1986, 1991).<sup>19</sup> Still, a close look at Willis' book reveals why it was so vulnerable to feminist critiques such as that of McRobbie (1992), who questioned whether Willis had really moved beyond a structural Marxist position (see also Connell 1983, 1987).<sup>20</sup>

Yes, *Learning to Labor* moved significantly beyond social and cultural reproduction theory by paying attention to the cultural productions of the working-class lads. But was that move sufficient to escape the blinders of the older paradigm? Willis' lads embedded their critique of the school in highly sexist and dramatic displays of masculinity, which both expressed their sense of sexual and racial superiority, and their antagonism to "conformist" working-class boys. Nonetheless, Willis consigned the virulent sexism and deep-seated racism of the culture produced by the lads to the theoretical sidelines. His *theoretical* focus was on the lads as representative of the working-class, in relation to school officials viewed as the mediators of dominant-class interests. Willis did attribute great significance to gender. He argued that the aggressive quality of the lads' sexism was central to their eventual complicity in the reproduction of the class system. But he did not give either gender or race any *primary* significance.

Willis' (1981a and b) response to these criticisms was beneficial yet limited. He elaborated the terms social reproduction, cultural reproduction, and cultural production as general concepts that could be used by researchers concerned not just with working-class males, but with girls and women, racially identified minorities, and so forth. These concepts have been useful and continue to be useful, but they leave a number of questions unanswered:

1. How are gender and race to be conceptualized?
2. How are the *dynamics* of gender privilege and race privilege to be theorized?
3. How are these different social systems interrelated to one another and to class?

The answers seem to lie in a further dismantling of the rigid Marxist paradigm which the scholars at the CCCS had, from the beginning, found unsatisfactory for their project. Gilroy's (1987) book, *Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*,

published a decade after *Learning to Labor*, exemplifies some of the moves in this further deconstruction. Although not focused on schools, and firmly situated within the Britain of the 1980s, *Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* draws attention to economic and social changes that have made the relations between capital and labor less central. In the context of national decline, economic restructuring in Great Britain has resulted in what, from the point of view of economic production, is a large "surplus population." Structural unemployment determines the fate of this surplus population. "How," Gilroy (p. 32) asks, "does political consciousness change when people move forever away from the possibility of waged work and accept the state as the provider of their income?" Alongside the dynamics between labor and capital, we now have significant political and social struggles between institutions of the state and civil society, and this surplus population.

In a related argument, Gilroy directs attention to what he considers the politically important struggles of the present day—those shaped by what some have called the "new social movements." Women's movements, civil rights movements, and environmental movements reflect political consciousness emerging from subordination that may be partially connected to, but certainly not determined by, the extraction of surplus value. These social movements include subjectivities and struggles constituted not around class, but rather around "gender, sexuality, generation, the consumption and distribution of state services, and ecological and regional conflicts as well as those defined by race" (p. 32).

These historical shifts point up another dimension of cultural production—the contingent and fluid identifications of the actors involved in these social dramas. The identities of participants in these new social movements cannot be taken as predefined by class position; neither can they be taken as predefined by any essential aspects of race or gender. In other words, the bases of identity are historical and they change through time and through political process. Focusing on race, though the point may be generalized to other dimensions such as gender, Gilroy writes (p. 39), "'race' is an open political category, for it is struggle that determines which definition of 'race' will prevail and the conditions under which they will endure or wither away."<sup>21</sup>

As the complexity of school-based cultural politics and identity-formation has become more apparent, ethnographers have, like Gilroy, drawn on increasingly diverse sources of critical theory.<sup>22</sup> Foley's (1990) ethnography of "North Town High" provides a good example of a cultural production approach set within a social theory formed from an integration of Habermas, Goffman, and Marx. Foley describes students' "expressive practices" as institutionally situated forms of "communicative labor." Ethnic and class differences in North Town have produced distinct "historical speech communities." Because of this, the instrumental and alienating communication styles comprising the broader capitalist culture work their way into the school, giving pride of place to those students, from locally dominant classes, best able to adapt their own speech patterns to such communicative styles. Indeed, Foley shows how students exer-

cise agency in “learning capitalist culture,” even as the contours of class and racial power structure their differential abilities and desires to master the communicative forms of this culture.

Likewise, in their recent, respective ethnographies of high schools in the northeast United States, both Wexler (1992) and Weis (1990) demonstrate the way in which the social identities constructed in schools are bound up with social movements and political-economic restructuring in the broader regional scene. Both draw, as did Gilroy, on the social movement theory of Touraine and Melucci to move beyond more static theories of class: Wexler provides a sophisticated, social psychological account of how students learn to “become somebody” within the organizational confines of three high schools rather differently positioned in relation to class and social movements, while Weis examines how young men and women at “Freeway High,” a predominantly white, working-class school, form their identities in relation to the discourses and social movements attendant upon de-industrialization and the ascendant New Right politics of the 1980s. Like Foley, Wexler and Weis attempt to show how student identity-formation within schools is a kind of social practice and cultural production which both responds to, and simultaneously constitutes, movements, structures, and discourses beyond the school.

### Cultural Studies and the Cultural Production of the Educated Person

Although we have concentrated on its place in the critical education literature, cultural production theory has been linked to a broader horizon from its inception. This multivalent history allows us, in this book, to bridge the educational literature with a broader anthropological and sociological literature, indeed with the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies. Established in the 1960s, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies inaugurated one of the important methods for the study of cultural forms in social context. As we’ve already suggested, the CCCS’s project was to fill out an underdeveloped part of Marx’s thought—a focus on consciousness and subjectivity. Members of the Centre were affected by similar projects on the Continent, including that of Althusser, and were especially important in producing a very fruitful reading of the early Marxist theorist, Antonio Gramsci (see Hall 1986; Johnson 1986–87; Brantlinger 1990). Raymond Williams’ early work on cultural production, summarized programmatically in his 1977 book, was also important at this stage of the CCCS.<sup>23</sup> Although analogous and complementary to Marx’s project of describing the social forms through which human beings produce and reproduce their material lives, the project of cultural studies instead is the study of the “social forms through which human beings ‘live,’ become conscious, [and] sustain themselves subjectively” (Johnson 1986–87:45). Of great significance is the point that these “forms,” which range from actions, practices, and ritualized behaviors to expressive artifacts and concrete objects, are always produced and read in the process of relating to concrete social and material circumstances.

The broader concept of cultural production we propose here is related to, though not encompassed by, these developments in cultural studies. In anthropology, for instance, cultural production has come to have a meaning broadly similar to that in educational studies. Emphasis has been placed on culture as a continual process of creating meaning in social and material contexts, replacing a conceptualization of culture as a static, unchanging body of knowledge “transmitted” between generations. The upheavals of the modern period, the expansion of multinational capitalism and global forms of media, the creation of new nationalisms and ethnic identities, and the increased recognition of cultural “border zones” (see Rosaldo 1989; Appadurai and Breckenridge 1988; Fox 1991), have all inspired anthropologists to look more closely at culture as process, as something which is continually produced, even as it may be reproduced.<sup>24</sup>

In other areas, such as media and communication studies, the concept of cultural production often relies on a more circumscribed definition of culture, generally denoting culture as “texts,” where “text” is broadly delimited as any tangible form that symbolizes some aspect of the world. From this perspective, cultural production refers to the processes by which new texts, new cultural artifacts and commodities, such as art, music, and video, are created.<sup>25,26</sup> Much of the work in the emerging interdisciplinary field of cultural studies has expanded on this conception of cultural production. Increasingly, much of cultural studies addresses how subordinate groups produce “popular culture” through their engagement with the products and texts of a dominant culture industry (“mass culture”).<sup>27</sup> While this approach is a definite advance over purely textual analyses, most practitioners of cultural studies still perpetuate a muddy, often specious distinction between “dominant” and “popular” cultural forms.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the analytic focus is still on textual forms, and less on “lived” culture. In many such studies, little attention is given to the way in which texts are appropriated into everyday lives as shaped by ongoing social relations and material circumstances. We find most compelling those analyses which have moved beyond the purely “textualist” analysis of popular cultural commodities to study lived culture, without naively celebrating the “popular.”<sup>29</sup>

Earlier, Richard Johnson (1986–87) provided an important statement toward this end. His account of “circuits” of cultural production nicely captures the full range of actors, institutions, and forms of cultural production involved in the relation between dominant and popular forces.<sup>30</sup> Pioneering works in this more comprehensive approach to cultural studies include the CCCS study, *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al. 1978b), Radway’s (1984) work on romance novels, and Lutz and Collins’ (1993) study of *National Geographic* magazine. In this latter study, not only do the authors examine the actual day-to-day tasks of generating the magazine, but they also carry out a content analysis of the photographs, a careful analysis of the magazine’s readership, and a painstaking exploration of the meanings readers make as they engage with the photographs.

Transferring these ideas of cultural studies and cultural production to the schools, we see schools as sites for the formation of subjectivities through the

production and consumption of cultural forms. This was one of Willis' important moves. He paid attention to the forms produced by informal, localized social groups interacting in the school—in this case, the lads.<sup>31</sup> His ethnographic exposition of their practice of “having a laff” provides an example. While he examined the microethnographic context of student-teacher relations in great detail, and showed how the immediate context of teacher authority generated an ironic resistance, Willis did not leave it at that. Instead, he convincingly argued that the lads' resistant classroom humor could be linked to the “penetrations” of the basic contractual ideology of the student-teacher relationship. The lads collectively grasped that for working-class students, the proffered exchange of respect for knowledge, knowledge for certification, and certification for a better job, was a false promise. Utter seriousness about schooling was thus a mistaken pursuit. “Having a laff,” among other cultural forms, was their own creation in light of that realization. True, in generating that form they drew upon a variety of sources, including their familiarity with the shopfloor culture of their fathers, which had, in that moment of cultural production, developed in response to new, more oppressive techniques of capitalist production.<sup>32</sup> But “having a laff” was importantly their own creation in response to schooling as they apprehended it, and it was through the production of these forms that the lads' subjectivities, especially their sense of their own labor power, developed.<sup>33</sup>

In reproduction theory, subjects were imagined as being “interpellated” by ideology, and without agency. Reshaped by the more recent focus on practice and production, the larger question is now one of how historical persons are formed in practice, within and against larger societal forces and structures which instantiate themselves in schools and other institutions. Cultural production is one vision of this process. It provides a direction for understanding how human agency operates under powerful structural constraints.<sup>34</sup> Through the production of cultural forms, created within the structural constraints of sites such as schools, subjectivities form and agency develops. These are the processes we seek to evoke with our phrase, “the cultural production of the educated person.”<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the very ambiguity of the phrase operates to index the dialectic of structure and agency. For while the educated person is culturally *produced* in definite sites, the educated person also culturally *produces* cultural forms.

Taking all of these developments into account, then, we are forwarding the concept of cultural production as a theoretical construct which allows us to portray and interpret the way people actively confront the ideological and material conditions presented by schooling. Despite the different meanings which the concept of “cultural production” has in the aforementioned authors' work, we use it to show how people creatively occupy the space of education and schooling. This creative practice generates understandings and strategies which may in fact move well beyond the school, transforming aspirations, household relations, local knowledges, and structures of power.<sup>36</sup> This new stage of analysis and research also allows us to go beyond a solely school-based angle on what we are referring

to as “the cultural production of the educated person.” Outside the school, in diverse spaces of street, home, and family, other kinds of “educated persons” are culturally produced as well.

In this volume, the importance of viewing schools as complex sites for the cultural production of educated persons is underscored in the case studies by Kathryn Anderson-Levitt, Douglas Foley, Wendy Luttrell, and Armando Trujillo, in part I.

In the set of historical-ethnographic case studies that follow in part II, chapters by Laura Rival, Margaret Eisenhart, and Thomas Shaw highlight the contrast between schools and other spaces or activities as competing sites for the cultural production of the educated person. The final set of chapters underscores the importance of a global perspective. We introduce those at the end of the next section, which advocates an expansion of studies of education and schooling.

#### THE WESTERN SCHOOLING PARADIGM IN GLOBAL CONTEXT

Having advanced the argument for a broader analytic perspective in critical educational studies, we now move on to our second major point: the need to more fully develop the comparative perspective. Reproduction and cultural production theories alike have developed largely in dialogue with studies of schooling in the United States, Great Britain, France, and Australia. There has been little effort to extend studies of the cultural production of the educated person, *per se*, to societies in dependent relation to advanced capitalism, and often still in the process of nation building and state formation (Foley 1991). Yet, without a doubt, the historical rise of mass public-education systems has generated powerful, and to some extent convergent or “global,” constructions of the “educated person.”

By now there exists a substantial literature on the origins and expansion of mass public schooling in the nineteenth century. Vigorous debates have attempted to sort out the rationale and social effects of state-organized education. For instance, Müller and co-workers (1987) argue from the European case that the development of state schooling had the effect of further excluding lower classes rather than democratizing educational access. Intersecting with the reproductionist view of schools, they, along with Archer (1979) and Green (1990), present a picture of schooling as largely an instrument of state and elite-class domination. In a similar vein, American revisionist historians (Hogan 1982; Katz 1975; Spring 1972) have emphasized the role that schools played in controlling new immigrant groups, “modernizing” their work habits, and incorporating them culturally into the nation, primarily to the end of capitalist labor control. Boli and Ramirez (1992), on the other hand, reject most of these explanatory schemes. According to them, while mass, compulsory education may have some of these effects, its true origins and functions should be understood culturally, as lying firmly in the economic and cultural individualism of the Christian West. Too, mass schooling developed hand in hand with the hegemony of the nation-state as a political form. The nation-state has utilized systematic education to “ceremoni-

ally induct” students into the twin identities of the modern state citizen: national and individual (1992:30).<sup>37</sup>

In their highly original study of English state formation, Corrigan and Sayer (1985) draw on both Foucault and Durkheim to characterize the *cultural* aspect of modern state formation as a process of “doubly disrupting” the recognition and expression of differences in popular culture. On the one hand, the state engages in a “totalizing” project, representing all people as members of a national community (cf. Anderson 1983; Smith 1991; Alonso 1994). On the other hand, the state also tries to “individualize” people in specific ways—as taxpayers, jurors, consumers, and yes, schoolchildren. Through both of these “disrupting” projects, “alternative modes of collective and individual identification (and comprehension) . . . are denied legitimacy” (Corrigan and Sayer 1985:5). We believe it is crucial to view modern schooling as a fundamental aspect of contemporary state formation, in which a new concept of the “educated person” challenges those which previously existed in popular cultures.

Schools, of course, existed before the modern period, but they did not always have the integrative function which Durkheim recognized as crucial in the transition to the “organic solidarity” of industrialized society. With the rise of the nation-state as a political form, schooling became a crucible of common culture. Yet industrialization accompanied the rise of the nation-state, and schools were also charged with producing and reproducing class distinctions in the service of particular economic and political agendas. In sometimes contradictory fashion, then, the imperatives of political and cultural legitimacy, in addition to economic production, have dictated the construction of public schooling systems (Fuller and Robinson 1992; Ginsburg 1991; Welch 1993). While many former colonial societies initially pursued a strongly socialist form of political economy, most of these Third World states have in fact now accommodated themselves to the hegemony of a capitalist world system. Accordingly, their educational models and systems represent complex variations of the English model Corrigan and Sayer examine. Then, too, many Third World states have retained important features of prior colonial educational systems. England, of course, was one of the principal “educational” innovators in the enterprise of colonial subjugation. In other parts of the world (Keyes 1991a; Rival, this volume), missionaries carried out the early work of colonial education.<sup>38</sup>

More recently, scholars such as Meyer and co-workers (1992) and Fuller (1991) have discussed the globalization and standardization of these Western forms of mass schooling. According to Fuller (1990), especially “fragile” Third World states (Fuller looks primarily at Africa) adopt models of education following the Western pattern in order to “signal” their commitment to Western-style progress and modernization through mass opportunity and meritocratic rules. Often enough, international lending institutions condition their loans to such Third World states upon acceptance of Western schooling models. Yet because these states may still lack the resources and political will to follow



through on this commitment, they end up fomenting a popular demand which they cannot possibly fulfill. Education becomes a mere caricature of Western systems, serving largely symbolic and integrative purposes. Despite these limitations, Meyer and co-workers (1992:1) claim that formal Western-style schooling, and its increasingly standardized curricula, has come to eclipse virtually all other "means of the inter-generational transmission of culture."<sup>39</sup> This is an important point to complement the cultural studies emphasis on the effects of global commodity culture. If it is true that blue jeans, Coca-Cola, and Mickey Mouse define the cultural horizons of ever-increasing numbers of people, so too do the hegemonic forms of mass schooling and its "formal knowledge." Diversity is not only threatened by mass culture, but by models of schooling increasingly divorced from, indeed antagonistic to, a wealth of culture-specific moral discourses and styles of learning.<sup>40</sup>

Helpful as they are for conceptualizing the macro-structural dimension of schooling and educational change, none of these broad-scale educational theories really tells us what happens to students confronting these changes. In other words, we learn little about the cultural production of the educated person through Western-style schooling. There is already a rich, if not terribly prolific, anthropological literature on the introduction and effects of schooling in the Third World, and many of our authors build on this literature. Hansen (1979) and Levine and White (1986) admirably set out many of the issues anthropologists have addressed. Working within a Durkheimian framework, Levine and White pay special attention to the transition many non-Western peoples must make from an agrarian way of life, with its emphasis on "social ligatures" rooted in community, to a more urban-focused, formalized model of education, with its emphasis on individual "options." While Levine and White discuss how such educational changes tend to favor individual ambition at the expense of social responsibility, they scarcely explore the conflicts engendered by such a process. Earlier anthropological studies<sup>41</sup> examined these educational dynamics ethnographically, but paid insufficient attention to the question of power in the relation between state education and agrarian communities. More recently, the essays collected in a special issue of *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* (Falgout and Levin 1992), devoted to "Western schooling in the Pacific," have raised the question of power more centrally.<sup>42</sup> So too have the essays collected by Keyes, on how state schools "reshape local worlds" in Southeast Asia (Keyes 1991b; see especially Keyes 1991a and Vaddhanaphuti 1991).<sup>43</sup> Several authors in the present volume build on these studies and thus further fill the ethnographic gap in this important area.

Even as we consider the impact of Western schooling on non-Western societies, we must not forget that cultural minorities and subordinate groups in First World societies have often been subject to many of the same processes of nation-building and cultural incorporation. Several of our authors (Foley, Trujillo, Luttrell) address the way such groups in the United States respond to public

education efforts. At least as early as 1971 (Wax, Gearing, and Diamond 1971), anthropologists had brought together work which drew important parallels between First World and Third World educational dynamics.<sup>44</sup> More recent studies of the relation between state schooling and local groups, such as those by Reed-Danahay for France (1987), and Rockwell and colleagues for Mexico (Ezpeleta and Rockwell 1983; Rockwell 1995, in press b), take important steps toward understanding the expansion of Western schooling as a global process linking First and Third Worlds. Yet none of these studies ignores the very important local angle, through which we see the richness of particular historical appropriations of schooling. In this volume, papers by Bradley Levinson, Aurolyn Luykx, Debra Skinner and Dorothy Holland, and Elsie Rockwell, comprising part III, link local and comparative perspectives by exploring how concepts of the “educated person” are produced and negotiated between state discourses and local practice.

### Whither Schools? Anthropology and Global Educational Trends

The advent of cultural studies in anthropology has enriched critical educational research, and thus bridged differences between educational anthropology and other anthropological subfields. Yet at the same time, it has highlighted a discrepancy within anthropology concerning the significance of schools. Though contemporary studies of schooling, including the studies presented in this volume, may share the theoretical perspective of anthropologists who have become interested in the *popular media* as a site of the formation of subjectivities, there is still a basic disagreement. Some of the anthropologists carrying out ethnographic studies of media consumption suggest, at least implicitly, that the media are an even more powerful site of socialization and identity formation than schools (Abu-Lughod 1990; Appadurai 1990; Salzman 1993; Mankekar 1993; Silverstone 1990).<sup>45</sup> In our view this project has been undertaken prematurely, at a time when the full effects of schools as alternative or complementary sites of socialization and cultural production have not yet been fully explored.<sup>46</sup>

For instance, in Roger Lancaster’s well-received book on the Sandinista Revolution and the culture of machismo in Nicaragua, he describes families and peer-based “street” culture as important sites for the learning of gender identities. He even evokes the impact of the global media, such as when a boy displays his aggressive masculinity by demonstrating how the Sandinistas will repel foreign invaders: in the manner of Rambo, with machine guns blazing (Lancaster 1992:191–192). Yet in an otherwise brilliant and innovative ethnography, Lancaster barely mentions the role of schools in Sandinista Nicaragua. Schools remain on the margins of Lancaster’s narrative, only dimly structuring economic expectations and family practices (1992:180), or patterns of friendship and solidarity (1992:167–168). The relative absence of schools is especially glaring since the Sandinistas were known to have inaugurated massive literacy and school construction campaigns, and used schools as an important space for producing the revolutionary “new man” (Arnové 1994).

Similarly, Richard Maddox's (1993) fine historical ethnography of an Andalusian town addresses the "politics of tradition" in an increasingly mass-mediated age. Maddox's primary concern is to show how the forms and discourses of "tradition" in Aracena have varied historically in their manner of effecting domination and mediating forms of class consciousness. Ironically, new elements of mass culture, in the form of television shows, consumer commodities, and the like, have been incorporated uneasily into "traditional" social practices. While Maddox does mention the role of a new coeducational high school in displacing earlier, church-based models of social propriety, he does so only glancingly. Yet his own subsequent, more thorough study of the effects of school culture in Aracena has added immensely to his earlier ethnography, and resulted in an insightful account of the relation between schooling and forms of working class practice and identity (Maddox 1994).

Our aim here is not to censure those anthropologists who have largely ignored schools. On the contrary, the authors mentioned above are among those whose work, grounded in sophisticated and historically informed ethnographic description, we and most anthropologists greatly admire. Yet we wish to call attention to this trend, and question its significance for the field. While we believe that attention to the media is important and justified,<sup>47</sup> we urge anthropologists to avoid an exclusive attention to the media which leaves schools largely unstudied and obscure.

We find a number of reasons why schools may be understudied by anthropologists seeking pivotal sites of identity formation and cultural production. Some of these are practical; others, the result of unexamined assumptions and values.

Particularly problematic, no doubt, are the burdens that multisite studies put on the researcher. Despite the clear need for team research in seeking a fuller, more comprehensive account of all the important sites of cultural production and consumption, the lone ethnographer is still the prevalent model in the production of anthropological knowledge (Salzman 1994). We recognize that for individuals facing all the usual problems of carrying out field research, it may be easier to watch television in our informant's homes, or gather round the boom-box with dancing teenagers, than to enter the complexity of school relations. And, team research or no, methodologically and ethically, schools are difficult places to study. Schools generally have gatekeepers from whom permission must be obtained and, of course, maintained. Additionally, sustained observations and interviews are needed to construct a compelling interpretation of the effects of schooling. Finally, the finished product of this research may very likely involve a critique of the very people who made the research possible. A critical school ethnography cannot help but scrutinize the actions of school officials, even if they are not our primary research subjects.<sup>48</sup> Thus, while in practical terms schooling is difficult to study, we believe the continued significance of schools demands that we try.

Is it possible that anthropologists have also tended to take the effects of schooling for granted? In many of the societies anthropologists typically study, formal schooling has now been a part of the local social scene for some twenty or thirty years, perhaps longer. The practices and values surrounding schooling have had ample time to work their ways into the fabric of community life. The more relatively recent arrival of globalized media, on the other hand, has brought stark and (for anthropologists, anyway) intellectually stimulating incongruities to local life. While “imperialist nostalgia” may provide the driving force for popular magazine images of exotic otherness (Lutz and Collins 1993; Babcock 1990, 1993; O’Barr 1994), anthropologists have their own ethnographic imaginary, which increasingly includes photos of loinclothed watchers of “Dallas,” or boom-boxes on the Bolivian *altiplano*. Evidently the sight of children from these groups, dressed for school and carrying books, does not seem as exciting. While new and increasingly pervasive forms of media have captured anthropology’s gaze, we wonder whether the effects of these media are really as powerful as the more socially and economically embedded presence of schools. This is a question that should not be settled by assumption.

Finally, anthropology has for some time largely ignored the likelihood that cultural knowing and identity formation are long-term, developmental processes, and has instead assumed that the study of “adult” forms will suffice (see Wulff and Amit-Talai 1995; Holland 1992). This has entailed an abandonment of fundamental insights generated during earlier periods of anthropological theorization (see Hansen 1979; Blot et al. in press). Ironically, excitement over the effects of media, fomented by the increasingly powerful presence of interdisciplinary cultural studies (Keesing 1994), may eventually upset this favoring of adult forms. Anthropologists have renewed their interest in the role of youth as cultural innovators, since they are often the most active and competent consumers of the new media. Yet the study of schools has still received short shrift.

Perhaps as a consequence of these trends in anthropology in general, the subfield of educational anthropology has tended to develop in relative isolation from broader theoretical currents in the discipline. Levinson (1992) notes that educational anthropology grew largely out of culture-and-personality studies, and thus lacked a legacy helpful for conceptualizing the effects of history, power, and social structure on educational processes.<sup>49</sup> In more recent years, the subfield has made great strides in conceptualizing these effects,<sup>50</sup> yet the broader discipline still largely perceives it as a marginal branch, too “applied,” perhaps too beholden to the pragmatic interests of professional educators, to provide more general insights. Tellingly, Levinson can remember Holland advising him to leave the word “schooling” out of an initial session proposal for the meetings of the American Anthropological Association. Too many anthropologists’ “eyes glaze over,” said Holland, when they see “education” or “schools.”

Have schools thus largely been written out of the emerging anthropological narrative on identity and social change in the late twentieth century? If it is true

that the sweep of critical cultural theory has yet to make itself fully felt in the educational subfield, it is also true that cultural processes under modernity and “late capitalism”<sup>51</sup> have omitted schools, and so produced uneven and less than comprehensive accounts. Ironically, many of the critical frameworks which have been developed in the interdisciplinary field of “cultural studies,” and subsequently taken up by anthropologists, first emerged in British and French work on schools.<sup>52</sup> Yet American anthropologists in particular are largely unaware of this history, and have been slow to recognize the continuing importance of schools as sites of cultural production and reproduction. This is the case even in non-Western societies which have experienced an unprecedented expansion of Western-oriented schooling in the past thirty years or so. While the presence of schools are at least mentioned in virtually every ethnographic work written, there has still been relatively little systematic attention paid to the ongoing effects of schooling in the practices of everyday life.

#### BUILDING STRENGTHS AND CHARTING NEW DIRECTIONS: HISTORICAL-ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDIES

Let us now summarize and restate the goals of this volume, before moving on to the introduction of the case studies.

In this volume, we extend theory and methodology beyond the school itself, disrupting the assumption, frequent outside of anthropology especially, that education is obtained only through schooling. We assert the need to conceptualize the logic of education in its varied cultural contexts. Our concept of the “educated person” is one which suggests that all cultures and social formations develop models of how one becomes a fully “knowledgeable” person, a person endowed with maximum “cultural capital.” To be sure, “education” has increasingly come to be equated with schooling, as the groups serviced by Western-style schools come to internalize the dominant meanings purveyed in formal curricula and school discourse. Still, while we use the “educated person” as an analytic construct, we argue that an indigenous conception of the educated person is variably present in all known cultures and societies. Even *within* societies, subgroups such as those based on race or gender may develop distinct conceptions of the educated person, distinct “ways of knowing” (Luttrell 1989). That such conceptions are often challenged and even transformed in the practices of everyday life is a primary contention of our book.

Students in schools, then, may produce practices and identities consonant with local cultural notions of the “educated person,” but some practices and identities may in fact challenge those notions. Similarly, unschooled people, or early school leavers, may produce practices and identities *against* the schooling enterprise and the formally “educated person” it is said to create. For these reasons, we strive not to focus too narrowly upon formally defined “educated persons” as the only potentially critical products of schools. Schools also create a space for the formation of social relations among people of different classes, genders, castes,

ethnic, and age groups which would be unlikely in other sites. Such relations may come to reconfigure previous alliances, allegiances, and sympathies. They may indeed be empowering. Thus, schools provide each generation with social and symbolic sites where new relations, new representations, and new knowledges can be formed, sometimes against, sometimes tangential to, sometimes coincident with, the interests of those holding power. These paradoxical potentialities of schooling (both for dominant groups that seek to control the schools, and for students), and the way they play out under various historical circumstances, provide the central dynamic of our book.

Our approach is specifically interdisciplinary and international, and includes work both in Euro-American and non-Western settings.<sup>53</sup> These case studies cover a full range of educational levels and sites (primary school to university, urban to rural, formal to nonformal), and actors (students, teachers, parents, administrators, policymakers, school graduates and dropouts, employers, etc.). The authors employ a variety of narrative and theoretical tools within a broadly critical approach. Importantly, each of the studies employs a historical prism to understand the present. In all of the authors, we see a commitment to viewing contemporary schooling within a broad historical and cultural purview.

Historical and cultural breadth, yes, but the authors are also relentlessly local in their analyses. They follow the counsel of Haraway (1988), who rejects totalizing theories that are blind to local conditions and understandings, and which proceed as though the meanings people make of their lives are without significance. Haraway's advice is to pay close attention to local knowledges, yet from a critical perspective, with the aim of producing better accounts which will enable a more enlightened practice.

We have thus attempted to develop a critical language for understanding relations between the school, the cultural traditions of its constituent groups, and a broader political economy. Many might still argue that such a book does little service to the struggles for more empowering and democratic educational arrangements. The language of critique is, to be sure, a language of hope and possibility (Giroux, 1991, 1992), but does it really provide any direction to the debates over policy and reform which comprise the politics of everyday life around schools? What, after all, is the goal of a critically engaged educational anthropology? Can our conceptual toolkit and ethnographic descriptions provide insight for those students and educators most immediately involved in struggles for improving life-chances through schooling?

We argue that *local* analyses must retain a critical perspective on political economy and dominant socio-ideological formations, without losing sight of the particular contingencies and cultural dynamics which characterize local sites.<sup>54</sup> Accordingly, strategy for social change around schooling cannot issue from general condemnations of capitalist education, or racial oppression, or gender discrimination, for instance. As we show in this volume, schools are heterogeneous sites. Different models of the "educated person" are historically produced

and contested in these sites, as both dominant and subordinate groups (and those, like teachers, who often stand “in between”) carry forth distinctive modalities of cultural production. If we are to pursue the democratic ideals of distributive and curricular justice (Connell 1993; cf. Barber 1992, Gutmann 1987), then we must seek to expand educational spaces which might accommodate diverse models of the educated person. In some contexts, this may mean revalorizing mass public education in the face of neo-liberal privatization (Rockwell in press a). In other contexts, it may mean seeking flexible arrangements for apprenticeship and hands-on learning (Lave and Wenger 1991; Illich 1970), or extracurricular youth programs (Heath and McLaughlin 1993). Educational forms and structures should remain as heterogeneous as the people who enact them, and progressive educational movements should not be informed by any singular critical theory. Indeed, part of this call for “local heterogeneity” must also include greater attention to other, heretofore overlooked, sources of theoretical inspiration, such as the “Third World participatory research tradition” Anderson (1994:236–237) invokes, or the antibureaucratic writings of Ivan Illich which Morrow and Torres (1995) resuscitate in their new book.

Finally, while we recognize the wisdom of Haraway’s advice about local knowledges, as critical scholars of education and culture we also note that we often live a contradiction. In our research and writing, through our own ethnographic practice, we may valorize “popular” knowledge and values. We often serve as advocates of subordinated groups, attempting to show the logic, vitality, and dignity of their cultural worlds. We serve, in other words, as vehicles of what has come to be called counter-hegemonic discourse.<sup>55</sup> Yet we also stand at the top of dominant educational institutions. We are the products of their knowledge-making machinery. However much we may have “resisted” this machinery, we bear the handiwork of its imprint. This inescapable fact makes itself apparent in the way we tend to reinforce disciplinary boundaries and accept existing distributions of symbolic capital, thus ignoring the contributions from other domains—such as schools of education, or Third World research centers.<sup>56</sup> Our contradictory formation also becomes apparent to us at odd moments of our teaching, when we find ourselves uncomfortably at the nexus of authority and knowledge we so often examine and critique in our own research. How do we react to college students—often members of precisely those subordinate groups we valorize in our research—who contest our own theories and explanations (see Lather 1991)? Do we encourage a rich welter of voices in the classroom, even when such voices may be inimical to our own “critical” project?

We offer this book in the spirit of attempting to work within, and perhaps even partially resolve, this contradiction. We do this by examining the way the notion of the “educated person” is culturally constructed within, outside, and against dominant, elite- and state-sponsored institutions. By thus showing how the definition of “education” is always negotiated, we hope to decenter our privileged, perhaps elitist conceptions of “proper” knowledge and conduct. Yet even

as we de-center dominant notions of proper education, we also hope to explore and identify those features of state schooling (and its associated “educated persons”) which, on balance, contribute to the democratization of socially valued knowledge, and the creation of more equitable social arrangements. Unlike many studies in the critical tradition, our authors here show that school knowledge can be empowering for subordinate groups, as long as it respects, and even draws upon, the cultural resources of those groups (cf. Vásquez et al. 1994; Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg 1992).

The papers which follow have been organized according to three conceptual points we have developed here in the introduction. In the first part, papers explore the nature of *schools as sites of cultural production*. As we indicated earlier, the concept of cultural production should be extended to account for the practices of a variety of actors within the site. Thus, on the one hand we see schools as sites of learning which hegemonic groups, in alliance with consolidating states and/or expanding bureaucracies, often utilize to form certain kinds of subjectivities. The historically specific models of the “educated person” encouraged in schools often represent the subjectivities which dominant groups endorse for others in society. Like all aspects of hegemony, schools must appeal to popular demands and popular consciousness, articulating them to dominant projects in novel ways. Teachers play a crucial role in enforcing such models of the educated person, though they may in practice challenge or ignore the models bequeathed them by policymakers and politicians. And just as school discourses and practices specify the properly “educated person,” they may also reproduce inequalities by defining and producing the “uneducable person” (Cicourel and Kitsuse 1963; Erickson and Schultz 1982; Fine 1991; Kelly 1993; Mehan et al. 1986). Finally, students and their families exercise agency in responding to the practices and discourses of the school. They, too, engage in the cultural production of practices and discourses which accommodate, resist, or otherwise adapt to the dominant school definition of the educated person.

Kathryn Anderson-Levitt shows how discourses on “readiness,” reading ability, and school intelligence, created through the expansion of bureaucratic and industrial models of rationality and time management, are adopted by American and French teachers and parents. According to Anderson-Levitt, American and French schools are designed to “batch produce” children in ways that restrict possibilities for diverse strategies of teaching and learning. Teachers and parents alike learn to interpret children’s behavior and intelligence according to strict notions of age and maturity. As Anderson-Levitt puts it, mass schooling in the industrial era “has encouraged educators to produce such identities for children as ‘the student who is behind in learning to read,’ ‘the immature child,’ and ‘the December birthday.’ It has led us to measure children’s ages and academic achievements in units of months, not years.” Particularly in the French case, this construction of school performance privileges and legitimizes the position of the



upper middle class, whose children, because of the cultural capital provided by their "milieu," tend to reach advanced reading stages and skip grades more easily than their counterparts. Yet Anderson-Levitt describes how teachers and parents alike, regardless of their class position and often for rather different reasons, come to endorse, and thus reproduce, the dominant construction of "reading ability." We are indebted to Anderson-Levitt for providing a rich local-comparative analysis of a pervasive global phenomenon, and for showing how even so fundamental a process as learning to read in school is subject to hegemonic models of the educated person.

Douglas Foley's study of the "silent Indian" as both discursive "subject position" and willfully subversive popular practice illustrates how the school serves as a site of cultural production. Growing out of his larger study of Mesquaki life in the American heartland, Foley shows how Mesquaki students who attend white schools in Tama, Iowa have been interpreted as "silent Indians" both through the racist discourse of town whites (including schoolteachers) and the liberal relativist discourse of educational anthropology. In response, the Mesquaki culturally produce their own version of the "silent Indian," counterposing the reflective, moral subject of Indian culture to the garrulous, rapacious whites in town. Mesquaki silence becomes a "situational speech style which is used strategically against the whiteman." Thus, the Mesquaki learn to playfully and knowingly inhabit a discursive category not at first proposed by them. In effect, they turn the tables on the dominant discourse of outsiders. As Foley portrays it, the site of the school, and the cultural production of the "silent Indian" discourse which it occasions, plays a major role in the structuring of race relations in Tama.

Wendy Luttrell provides an especially poignant account of how white and black working-class women in the United States return to adult education programs in order to "become somebody" whom the previous conditions of their lives had not allowed them to become. Through an analysis of rich life history narratives, Luttrell relies upon the psychodynamic concept of "splitting" to show how the women must struggle to empower an aspect of self long submerged in oppressive relations. Having been encouraged to stifle the development of their "autonomous selves" for the sake of their families and employers, these women now return to school in order to regain the knowledge and dignity denied them. Luttrell interprets these women's return to school as action in the public sphere, an attempt on the part of the women to confirm what they continue to doubt, that they *are* somebody. Moreover, Luttrell suggests that adult literacy education, which may not always have the "liberating" effects its promoters usually assume, can best serve these women by incorporating their narratives and memories of childhood schooling and work into the curriculum itself. Adult education for working-class women, Luttrell argues, is about establishing an identity, and the cultural capital this identity entails, as much as it is about acquiring specific skills. Thus the school should, and sometimes does, serve as a site for the cultural production of positive identities which may extend beyond the school as well.