

## Bridging the Local/Global Divide: Theorizing Connections Between Global Issues and Local Action

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In this chapter, our purpose is to theorize the methodological possibilities for doing research that connects the local and the global. Indeed, the virgule in our title is significant. In many ways, it marks the focus of our attention in this chapter, for it represents the relationship between these seemingly distinct contexts—local peoples, communities, and actions and global “forces” or systems that shape and affect flows of capital, culture, and information as never before. While we will present arguments for both the productive and destructive potentials of globalization, like others (Auerbach, 2005; Barton & Hamilton, 2005), we believe that an examination of the relationship between local and global warrants more attention than determining which side trumps the other. Indeed, as Appadurai (1996) suggests, “globalization is a deeply historical, uneven, and even *localizing* process” (p. 17, italics in original).

Our work, then, is conceptual as we define key terms and review scholarship relative to globalization, English literacy education, and the New Literacy Studies (NLS). It is also methodological as we explicate the rationale and philosophical assumptions that underlie approaches to research that might bridge the local/global divide and illuminate their relationship. Moreover, it is cautionary. As the title and preface to this volume attest, we are openly committed to literacy research that “advocates for social justice, fosters, political action, and produces real change in the lives of oppressed and marginalized people” (Blackburn & Clark, this volume). But, as we will argue, we believe this work must come from the local, and that in so doing, scholars should attend to the socially situated aspects of literacy in context (Barton, Hamilton,

& Ivanic, 2000). It should, however, not limit its focus to the local; rather, researchers must work deliberately to understand and reveal the relationships between the local and the global, and, in doing so, they must name their political commitments, expand their notions of literacy, and provoke their imagination as they do their work.

## Globalization

The indications of globalization are ubiquitous. There are McDonald's all across the world—from Acapulco to Zagreb. Coca-Cola is available everywhere from Algeria to Zimbabwe. As these two examples suggest, globalization is profoundly intertwined with economics and capital. There are, however, other significant aspects of the processes of globalization beyond the economic. Suter (2000) names public order globalization—think the United Nations, for example—and popular globalization—consider Amnesty International and Greenpeace, in addition to economic globalization. Similarly, Lechner and Boli (2000) add political and cultural to economic globalization. Chua (2003) argues that to a “great extent, globalization consists of, and is fueled by, the unprecedented worldwide spread of markets and democracy” (p. 7), but she also recognizes ethnic hatred as a part of globalization. These “series of processes,” as Gunn (2005) describes globalization, “occur unevenly across the world, ... [and] affect and influence people's knowledge, thoughts, attitudes and actions which also impact the materials conditions under which people live” (p. 2). But the nature of this impact deserves exploration.

Scholars characterize the effect and influence of globalization in quite different, even conflicting, ways. Consider, for example, the contrast between Amnesty International and ethnic hatred, both of which are pointed to as manifestations of globalization. Heyck (2002) argues that globalization almost always comes to local communities as an “abusive and culturally destructive force” (p. 19). As Western influence extends and indeed dominates (Block and Cameron, 2002), local communities can be “obliterated by external demands” (Cullingford, 2005a, p. xi). This often results in “increasing economic inequality and growing possibility of environmental disaster” (Block & Cameron, 2002, p. 4). The interpersonal impact of globalization is also significant. According to Cullingford (2005b),

What young people learn about other countries are often the most obvious and crude of cultural images .... The world is not seen as a place where people can understand

each other. Certain parts are accepted, as long as they can be made familiar. Others become even more alien in the process of globalisation. (p. 33)

Given these dire consequences, it is tempting to work to put an end to the impacts and effects of globalization, its potential for hatred and alienation.

However, even some of these same scholars consider positive implications of globalization. As Block and Cameron (2002) remind us, “Individuals are not the dupes of overpowering structure and events, but active, reflective agents in the ongoing construction of social reality” (p. 4). Individuals and local communities act on their own behalf and in more informed, informative, and influential ways as a result of globalization. For example, Oliver (2005) asserts that communication networks associated with globalization have “enabled localized social actors to be aware of events on a larger scale” (p. 13), have “enabled minorities to communicate their ideas and ideals to audiences which could not previously have been contemplated” (p. 12), and thus have enabled individuals “to exert an influence and to a degree, a system of checks and balances, over the apparently formidable social and economic forces at work” (p. 14). In other words, globalization has “open[ed] up new possibilities for local resistance on the part of subaltern groups” (Block & Cameron, 2002, p. 5). These possibilities allow for a challenging of authority (Oliver, 2005). In doing this sort of work, local communities can be “transformed and strengthened in their own identity” (Cullingford, 2005a, p. xi) and may even come to understand and thus tolerate different communities better (Cullingford, 2005b, p. 33).

## English Literacy Education

The impact of globalization—negative, positive, and otherwise—has not eluded education in general or English literacy education in particular. Masny (2005) argues that globalization has reconfigured “curriculum, pedagogy, teaching, [and] learning” in local contexts (p. 179). Similarly, Gunn (2005) asserts that the “processes of globalization have produced a reconsideration of the aims of education, the content of education, the processes or methods by which it is delivered and the ways in which the outcomes are assessed” (p. 1). Some, like Gunn, argue that the “complexity within and between cultures,” as a result of globalization, has provoked societies to prioritize education in ways that seek to exert control over education, particularly in terms of objectives, content, strategies, and assessment (p. 5). In other words, globalization demands that we see how diverse education is from one context to another, which sometimes results in political leaders challenging educators to be more

consistent across contexts, as evidenced by content standards and standardized tests, for example. Consequently, the power of local communities to determine policies and programs that respond to and fit their specific needs is usurped, as evidenced by the effects of the No Child Left Behind legislation in the United States (Kohn, 2004) as well as the colonial resonance of the testing system that maintains in Singapore (Chandrasegaran, 2006; Kong, 2006).

Morgan (2005), however, argues that this push for uniformity, particularly in “highly developed Western societies,” has the potential of being disrupted by globalization (p. 44). Some scholars (Block & Cameron, 2002; Oliver, 2005) argue that this disruption of control and uniformity has already begun to happen. With respect to curricula, Oliver (2005) claims, “educational systems which were previously rather insular in curricular terms are now beginning to turn outwards, and embrace other cultural forms” (p. 19). He also explains that because it is more difficult to assume a position of expertise, teachers are required instead to assume the role of facilitator “who organizes and manages learning experiences, rather than transmitting knowledge” (p. 20). Block and Cameron (2002) refer to this as the “demise of ‘method’” and assert that it will make it “more feasible for teachers to acknowledge and work with the diversity of the learners in their classrooms, guided by local assessments of students’ strategies for learning rather than by global directives from remote authorities” (p. 10).

We understand both the negative consequences as articulated by Gunn and the positive consequences as discussed by Block and Cameron, Morgan, and Oliver as realistic possibilities, and given that, we want to help make our work push against the former and bolster the latter. In order to accomplish this, we need to look more closely at the impact on English literacy education. Although we are interested in literacy education in general, here we focus on English literacy education in particular because of the unique role the language of English plays in the processes of globalization.

Globalization has positioned English as the privileged language (Masny, 2005). As Luke (2004) asserts, “English itself has become a global form of capital” (p. 92). He even compares this positioning of English to the McDonaldization of the world, that is English, like McDonalds and Coca-Cola, is a “mode of Empire and colonization” (Luke, 2004, p. 86). He states that many view English as a “hegemonic force, a force affiliated with capital that both threatens and endangers vernacular, regional, and national languages, a perception bolstered by empirical evidence of accelerated language shift and loss in the face of globalizing English” (Luke, 2004, p. 92). In these ways, English represents the aspects of globalization that we strive to fight against.

Luke (2004) has observed, however, that English speakers in diverse local contexts around the world are disrupting the notion of English as monolithic by “creolizing its lexical and syntactic forms, and developing regional and indigenous textual and generic forms, including new English literatures written by second and third language speakers that engage with non-Anglo/American themes, contents, and ideologies” (p. 92). Witness, for example, the hybrid literacy practices of Mexican and Central American taggers in U.S. cities (see, e.g., Katz, 1996; Moje, 2000). Luke’s observation lends support to Masny’s (2005) claim that global education can “counter the power of global English” (p. 179), particularly if people read the world, word, and themselves in ways that “raise consciousness of the effects of globalization” (Masny, 2005, p. 181). In other words, English literacy education can be implemented in ways that foster the use of literacy for local strength.

Whether one understands globalization in negative terms (Chua, 2003; Heyck, 2002; Roy, 2005), positive terms (Bhagwati, 2004; Friedman, 1999), or both (Block and Cameron, 2002; Cullingford, 2005a&b) most people seem to agree on its inevitability (Auerbach, 2005; Masny, 2005; Morgan, 2005; Suter, 2000). So the question is not how do we end globalization in order to end its destructive effects. Rather, the question is how do we work within and against globalization in order to challenge the destruction and foster the positive possibilities, particularly in the realm of English literacy education and research.

## The Call for the Global in New Literacy Studies

In order to answer this question, we turn to literacy theorists; more specifically, we turn to New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Rowan, Knobel, Bigum, & Lankshear, 2002; Gee, 1996; Street, 1993, 1995, 1999). NLS are characterized by a “focus on an understanding of literacies as multiple and situated within social and cultural practices and discourses” with a particular interest in the “role of power” (Schultz & Hull, 2002, p. 21). NLS scholars argue that literacy events and practices (Anderson, Teale, & Estrada, 1980; Heath, 1983; Hornberger, 2001) are never autonomous. Rather, they are always ideological (Street, 1999). Based on this conceptualization of literacy, Street (1995) made a call for “ethnographies of literacy” (p. 119), which was answered by a wide array of studies that powerfully captured the situatedness of local literacies (i.e., Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000). Such work, however, has recently been critiqued for its perceived failure to recognize the global.

For example, Wallace (2002) acknowledges the “value of studies done by literacy ethnographers” but insists that “our business as language educators is ultimately with the wider picture, with forms of language which have currency beyond the particular and contingent, which will prepare our students for the unpredictable futures of the era of fast capitalism” (p. 107). She, therefore, challenges literacy researchers to accept the need to “deal with the realities of globalization” (p. 109) by being less concerned with “personal or local empowerment” and more concerned with the “longer-term challenge to social inequity in a wider sense” (p. 111).

Similarly, Brandt and Clinton (2002) point to the “limits of the local” (p. 337). They critique what they call the social practices model of literacy, which seems to be synonymous with NLS, for “exaggerating the power of local contexts to set or reveal the forms and meanings that literacy takes” (p. 338). In doing so, according to Brandt and Clinton, scholars who adhere to the social practices model of literacy, fail to consider the ways in which literacy “travel[s], integrate[s], and endure[s],” and as a result, they miss “literacy’s transcontextualized and transcontextualizing potentials” (p. 338). In order to capture these potentials, Brandt and Clinton suggest that literacy scholars conceptualize literacy less as an object and more as a participant. They claim that “literacy is not wholly produced or reproduced in local practice but rather it is a contributing actor in it” (p. 353). By conceptualizing literacy as a participant, they argue, scholars can capture the change and movement of literacy beyond local contexts and thus more effectively capture literacy in relationship to the global.

Auerbach (2005), like Wallace and Brandt and Clinton, asserts that literacy scholars “need to define ‘context’ not just as situational or institutional domain in the New Literacy Studies sense, but also in broad geopolitical terms” (p. 365). In fact, she insists that, “In these times, the forces of globalization that shape families, communities, and schools must be considered in any analysis of literacy” (p. 365). Her proposed solutions, however, vary dramatically from Wallace and Brandt and Clinton. Rather than turning away from the local, as Wallace suggests, Auerbach advocates for “exploring possibilities for connecting local initiatives to the wider global forces that contextualize them (in terms of analysis, research, and critique), [and] forging linkages with grassroots organizations or movements that are challenging the forces of globalization from above” (pp. 376–377). Moreover, Auerbach, in contrast to Brandt and Clinton, actively rejects the personification of literacy, particularly literacy as a “motorforce for social change” (p. 363). She points out that text is often used “as an instrument” (p. 364) to separate, alienate, and oppress as much as it is used to liberate and empower. Significantly, she talks about how

text has been used for oppression or empowerment, not what text has done in the name of either oppression or empowerment. Building on Auerbach, we argue that literacy does not travel, integrate, or endure in and of itself. When it travels, it does so because people take it from place to place. When it integrates, it does so at the hands of people in places. When it endures, it does so because people continue to take it up, again and again, from context to context. Literacy is used by people in social contexts. By conceptualizing literacy as an object or a tool, rather than an actor or participant, Auerbach recognizes the limits of literacy rather than the limits of the local.

This understanding of literacy as limited and the local as potentially extensive, in terms of influence, helps us to start to answer our question: How do we work within and against globalization in order to challenge the destruction and foster the positive possibilities, particularly in the realm of English literacy education? Our question is not unlike the one posed by Auerbach: “How can literacy education contribute to shaping and resisting dominant forces of globalization?” (p. 366). According to her, the answer does not lie in “literacy education per se, but rather a political project that connects the local and global” (p. 370). The idea of political projects connecting the local and global is quite distinct from other English literacy education projects that have focused on how literacy education can accommodate changes provoked by globalization, “protect the local,” or “provide access to the global” (Auerbach, 2005, p. 366), and, as such, it is much more promising. Therefore, we explore the connection between the local and global in detail below.

## Connecting the Local and Global

Although the economic, hegemonic nature of globalization is most prominent, to be sure, there is also, according to Oliver (2005), a “much more amorphous process operating” (p. 11). In this process, “local and global events become more and more intertwined” (Lechner & Boli, 2000, p. 3), such that they are “key elements in a dynamic equilibrium of societal transformation” (Oliver, 2005, p. 10). And though often the global seems to dominate the local, it is also the case that the local interprets, shapes, resists, absorbs, avoids (Lechner & Boli, 2000, p. 109), adapts, refashions (Heyck, 2002), and even constrains that which is global (Oliver, 2005, p. 12).

For example, in a study of a local Thai community’s use of the Internet, which is one manifestation of globalization, Hongladarom (2001) found that the “Internet and local cultures both determine each other. While the Internet is a window to the world where influences can be received, the content of the

Internet is obviously determined by what is posted or uploaded to interconnected computers” (p. 321). As Hongladarom found, “An outsider would feel as much lost in the cyberspace of SCT [the most popular Usenet newsgroup in Thailand] as they would be when dropped in the midst of a Thai town” (p. 321). In other words, although the community of focus in this study was impacted by global ideals via the Internet, the members adapted these ideals to suit their own ideals and constrained people beyond their local community from effectively entering their own community with their distinctively local use of language.

This is to say that the local is not purely vulnerable to the global; rather, the global and the local are in a “symbiotic relationship” (Oliver, 2005, p. 10). The interplay of global and local “makes possible plural or hybrid identities, challenging the assumption that people must identify with a single imagined community” (Block & Cameron, 2002, p. 7). However, such consequences of this relationship require what Morgan (2005) calls *compatibility* between globalization and local knowledge. He warns that compatibility is only possible when it is built on “equality, tolerance and balance” (p. 45). Similarly, Heyck (2002) argues for a “human-centered system,” which, she warns, “cannot simply be willed into existence” (p. 289). Rather, such a system must be “built on the base of respect for the dignity of each person and the right of each community to choice. This presupposes a commitment to justice and equality” (p. 289). Local communities, however, cannot depend on such compatibility or commitment; they can strive for and even demand it, but they must be strategic in their efforts.

Heyck (2002), in her study of three Latin American communities grappling with the effects of globalization, found that in two of the three communities, educational initiatives were effective strategies for dealing with globalization (p. 20). For example, the Guaraní of O'Connor Province in the Chaco of Bolivia started a “school for their children and [held] up education as a way to preserve their language and their past and to secure their children's future” (p. 285). Klein (2005) also points to schools as possible sites of resistance and talks about “students kicking ads out of their classrooms” (p. 200) as an example. Gough (2000) advocates for such “resistance to the homogenizing effects of globalization” (p. 339). He suggests that educators avoid translating local representations into a “universalized discourse” and proposes, instead a “process of creating transnational spaces in which local knowledge traditions in curriculum inquiry can be performed together” (p. 339). A transnational space may include a wide array of performances of local knowledge and an exploration of the relationships—both similarities and differences—among them

rather than a superficial and artificial representation of commonalities across people and communities, which would be a universal space.

This tension between universal and transnational plays out interestingly in the realm of English literacy education in particular. Wallace (2002), in contrast to Gough, argues for the universal and against what Gough calls transnational and Wallace calls plural. Wallace argues that the

emphasis on the multiple character of literacies may trivialize and relativize their significance; there is a danger that in emphasizing parity we may fail to acknowledge those power relations which are so strongly associated with certain literacies, as opposed to others, most evidently school literacy. (p. 102)

Based on this, Wallace claims that educators should acknowledge and respect but neither nurture nor privilege the multiplicity of literacies. She argues that the “concerns of teachers should be less with personal or local empowerment than with a longer-term challenge to social inequity in a wider sense” (p. 111). As the scholarship on globalization more generally suggests, however, it is more productive to examine the relationship between the local and global than to pretend that the latter more or less eclipses the former.

Educational scholars interested in literacy, even those from quite different positions within the field, acknowledge that there is much to be learned from the relationship between the local and global. For example, Auerbach (2005) advocates for “critical analysis that connects the individual and the local with the broader socioeconomic forces” (p. 377). Barton and Hamilton (2005) consider the link between the local and global to be a rich opportunity for understanding power issues (p. 20). Even Wallace (2002) recognizes the value of “addressing issues which may resonate locally but which have global implications” (p. 111). Therefore, we are committed to examining the relationship between the local and global.

### Coming from the Local

How one approaches such an examination is shaped, at least in part, by one's goals. As an educational literacy researcher, one's goals may be to learn as much about literacy as possible. Such a scholar may be focused on how knowledge, particularly of English literacy, has economic leverage and is thus commodified (Masny, 2005). Alternatively, one may focus one's work on literacy but with the goal of working for social change. This is our goal. Given this, it is most appropriate to look at the global from the local. Muppidi (2004) argues that not doing so can result in a failure to recognize differences and thus “can be seen as deeply complicit in the production of colonial globalities” (p. 102).

Moreover, Heyck claims that prioritizing the global in an examination of the relationship between the local and global tends to “describ[e] but not fundamentally alte[r]” the consequences of globalization (p. 11). This, she asserts, is a luxury that people in local communities cannot afford. Rather, these people “must react in order to survive. They have no choice but to take action. They must at least alter their consequences, if not the trend itself” (p. 11). Therefore, Heyck challenges scholars to attend to the “concrete strategies and actions” and the “motivating faith and vision” of people in local communities (p. 11). She demands that we take notice of “growing pockets of resistance where communities have organized to create what they hope will be workable alternatives, breathing spaces allowing them to survive long enough to adapt” (p. 13). We value Heyck’s insights and guidance and assert that they apply not only to the three communities on which she focuses but to all subaltern communities, including those in North America. Masny (2005) argues that “minority communities” in particular need to develop critical understandings of the relationships between the local and global. With respect to literacy education, Masny (2005) suggests that globalization makes it “all the more important to read the world, the word, and self through a critical reading, especially as a member in a minority community” (p. 180). We are particularly interested in the use of literacy as a tool for social critique and change. Such work might include students investigating personal injustice in their lives and issues of social justice in the wider world, as in Jessica Singer’s 9<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. American classrooms (Singer, 2006) or work like Arnetta Ball’s (2006) tracing the global connections, challenges, and possibilities for teacher education across South African and U.S. settings.

Literacy researchers with this commitment can strengthen their efforts by developing a thorough understanding of the local and its relationship to the global. In fact, Luke (2004) argues that in order for literacy education to even be “credible and viable,” literacy scholars must work to develop a “more grounded understanding of what is at stake for students in a new millennium, in risky economic and social environments, in possible worlds virtual and real, face-to-face and global worlds, lived between many cultures and languages” (p. 94). In other words, not only should we examine the relationship between the local and global, we should do so with a “more grounded” approach. Similarly, Gough (2000) claims that the “real ‘bridge to the future’ is assumed not to be constructed from abstractions such as globalization but, rather, from the deliberate choices, decisions and actions we make in more mundane matters” (p. 333), including, we add, English literacy education. Auerbach even suggests that “traditional language or literacy classrooms can become contexts in which to explore local issues as a means to connect to broader community/global

struggles” (p. 371). While we do not limit our work to classrooms, we agree with Auerbach’s ideas and believe that they can be effectively applied to a wide range of educational contexts, including but not limited to schools.

Because of our commitment to examine the relationship between the local and global from the perspective of the local, it is worth articulating how we are conceptualizing the local. Drawing on Morgan (2005), we understand local knowledge to be based in the “indigenous, in the traditional and established” (p. 35) and to be some times understood as synonymous with culture (p. 36). Like Gough (2000), we believe that “diverse local knowledge traditions can be sustained and amplified transnationally while resisting the forms of cultural homogenization” (Gough, 2000, p. 335). Moreover, like Castells, we believe that “local communities and agents of civil society do have the power to challenge the new global order” (Heyck, 2002, p. 21). In other words, we understand local communities to be diverse and powerful. With this vision and faith, to use Heyck’s words, we use the remainder of this chapter to consider *how* and *why* to do the work for which we are arguing, some general tenets that we believe should guide such work, and some possible tools for accomplishing literacy research that connects global issues and local action.

### Doing Political Work That Connects the Local and the Global

Taking to heart Auerbach’s (2005) queries and caveats regarding the limits of literacy and education, we turn our attention back to our earlier question: How do we work within and against globalization in order to challenge the destruction and foster the positive possibilities, particularly in the realm of English literacy education and research? Based on our examinations of prior scholarship, our engagements with the authors in this collection, and our own research, we would assert some tenets in response. Not answers, per se, these views serve more as an articulation of the ethical and epistemological commitments that we, and the other contributors to this book, hold in doing literacy research that works for social change. Likewise, they suggest a methodological orientation that recognizes the necessary entanglements of epistemologies—how we claim to “know” about something or someone; and ethics—how we come to understand and empathize with an *other* (Bernstein, 1991).

Echoing Street (1995) and scholars of the Lancaster School (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000; Gee, 2000), we call for ethnographic work that attends to the relationship between local and global. While our interest is not in

which side “wins” in this relationship, we do advocate for coming from the local. And, while we do not necessarily call for full-blown ethnographies, we do suggest that the work that best informs our questions and captures the relationship between local and global should be rooted ethnographically (Wolcott, 1988). Below, we share a list of our initial tenets for doing this work, along with explanations of why and an explication of how this work might occur.

1) *Our research must make the relationships between local and global visible.*

In political terms, this is the only way in which significant agents engaged in these relationships are held to account. Indeed, as Jones (2000) points out, “in the experiences of most people, bureaucracies are large, faceless organizations that operate elsewhere from their local context” (p. 73). She characterizes this, in Giddens’ terms, as “the disembedding of institutions...the ‘lifting out’ of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time and space” (Giddens, cited in Jones, 2000, p. 73). Her work shows how processes of disembedding and globalization are not simply agent-less forces that just “happen”; rather, they occur through language and literacy practices—they are “discoursed into being” (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, Shuart-Faris, & Smith, 2005). “Inscribing talk into text incorporates local historic processes and circumstances within the discursive order of an abstract and disembedded bureaucratic system” (Jones, 2000, p. 88). Through her ethnographic account of Welsh farmers, the local historic literacy practices of their daily farming activities, and national and international bureaucratic processes, Jones provides a rich picture of how the local and global are related.

Appadurai (1991) highlights the importance of focusing on the relationship between the local and global when he states:

...those who represent ‘real’ or ‘ordinary’ lives must resist making claims to epistemic privilege in regard to the lived particularities of social life. Rather, ethnography must redefine itself as that practice of representation which illuminates the power of large-scale, imagined life possibilities over specific life trajectories. This is ‘thickness’ with a difference, and the difference lies in a new alertness to the fact that ordinary lives today are increasingly powered not by the givenness of things but by the possibilities that media (either directly or indirectly) suggest are available. (p. 200)

Thus, Appadurai reminds us that we must resist the urge to glorify, fetishize, or ennoble local people as if they live somehow more pristinely apart from larger, global forces. Rather, he suggests the notion of “global ethnoscapes, a term we might wish to substitute for earlier ‘wholes’ such as villages, communities, and localities” (p. 209) to capture the tension between global

and local and “to illuminate the lived relationships between imagined lives and the webs of cosmopolitanism within which they unfold” (p. 208).

Documenting these relationships, in all of their complexity, might constitute an ethical and epistemological requirement for doing good, valid, and trustworthy research in this vein (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Akin to an audit or evidentiary trail that chronicles and makes evident processes of moving from data to interpretations in qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 523–524), we suggest that making the relationship between the local and global visible through research might occur through documenting a trail of consequence—tracing not only the relationship from local to global and back but the ramifications of the phenomenon or issue at hand, particularly for local participants and stakeholders. This reflects similar calls by scholars such as Kris Gutiérrez (2006) for researchers to chronicle their work in terms of the effects on fairness and justice for all through documentation of what she calls an “equity trail.”

2) *Our research must come from and return to the local.*

There is some debate as to how to approach the relationships between the local and the global, and we understand that one’s goals determine one’s approach. Because our goals, or our commitments, are grounded in “social change and human dignity” (Dixson & Bloome, this volume), we assert that the relationships between the local and the global must be approached from the local. That is to say that our research must start from and trace back to the local because this is where we can document and even foster the challenging of authority, which is often defined by global forces. Again, the need to consider the trail of consequences of any research phenomenon in terms of the local, first, is concomitant with this tenet.

3) *Our political commitments must be evident in our research accounts of local/global relationships.*

While our expressed commitments are to start from the local in order to challenge the totalizing effects of the global, we are cautious in this commitment. Gee (2000) reminds us that just making the “social turn” is not enough. He states:

many of us involved in the ‘social turn’ assumed that the movements that made it up were somehow inherently politically ‘progressive.’ That is, we assumed that focusing on the social would unmask the workings of hierarchy, power and social injustice, as well as create more humane, because less elitist and individualistic, institutions (e.g., schools). (p. 184)

What we are arguing for is not just making a social turn. We know this is not enough. Rather, we need to talk openly about our work as political and articulate our political commitments and not worry that such talk will lessen the work's standing as science (Gee, 2000, p. 184). Indeed, judgments regarding the *goodness* of research, both ethically and epistemologically, are inherently linked and can never be viewed separately (see, e.g., Clark & Moss, 1996; Smith, 1993). Gee (2000) suggests we do this good research, in part, by focusing "on actors, events, activities, social practices and Discourses as the 'achievements' of recognition and enactment work" (p. 193). That is, in documenting local/global relationships, we must, in turn, document what gets counted as literacy, where, when, by whom and under what circumstances, as well as accounting for how this happens and to what ends. Indeed, an overt focus on this enactive and recognition work requires that we "own up to our own projects and engage with other people's—especially 'non-academic' people's—projects at a variety of levels" (Gee, 2000, p. 193). We must see our own theories and projects as enactive and recognition work which reveal, explicitly or implicitly, our political commitments (Gee, 2000).

4) *Our research needs to expand the notion of what counts as evidence of literacy as we explore the role of literacy in local/global relationships.*

Hamilton (2000), for example, uses newspaper photographs and other visual data as evidence of literacy events and practices. Her expressed aims are two-fold: to more closely identify elements of literacy practices and, through this close examination, to challenge and elaborate the underlying concepts of *practices* and *events* (p. 16). This latter aim is most germane to our argument, where events are characterized as "local activities" and practices as "global patterns" (p. 18). As Hamilton demonstrates, "looking for visual traces of literacy practices...demonstrates without a doubt that literacy is part of social practice (p. 32). As such, documenting the role of written and visual texts in social practices enables a better understanding of the local/global relationship, demonstrating "how they solidify fleeting actions and interactions across time and space and are implicated in... 'the relations of ruling'" (Smith, cited in Hamilton, 2000, p. 18). Indeed, using newspaper photographs as evidence of literacy practice makes visible how broad, global issues are locally interpreted and patterned across media outlets and contexts. Moreover, the very choices researchers make for what will count as evidence of literacy—or not—are political. What is made visible and what remains invisible, what is present and what is absent, all reflect the pre-existing frameworks and commitments of the observer (Tusting, Ivanic, & Wilson, 2000).

5) *Our tools for engaging in research must be more imaginative in order to better capture the local/global relationship.*

While the traditional tools of ethnographic research are certainly necessary, we contend that their epistemological possibilities and their objects of focus must be expanded in order to do work that both chronicles the local/global relationship and works for social change. Reflecting the methodological (Willis, 2000; Appadurai, 1991) and philosophical (Greene, 1995) calls of others, we suggest that imagination might serve as a significant tool in this work. What this looks like could range from including imaginative works of expression, such as literature, art, and film, as focal objects of study (Appadurai, 1991; Ortner, 1991) to something more like what Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, and Shuart-Faris (2005) call "research imagination," which refers both to the "process of fashioning research and to an ongoing conversation about how researchers imagine the 'other,' themselves, and the world in which we all live" (p. 243).

Methodologically, imagination is key to the enterprise of connecting the local and the global, for bringing together "ethnographic accounts of everyday life and aesthetic questions" (Willis, 2000, p. ix). Once again, we see this as a political commitment. We agree with Willis (2000), who argues the need to avoid "a documentary of detail which does not connect with urgent issues" and instead calls for "well-grounded and illuminating analytic points" which can flow "from bringing concepts into relationship with the messiness of ordinary life" (p. xi). Through ethnographic method and imaginative understanding, we remain focused on our commitments to doing both epistemologically and ethically sound research. Willis (2000) presages Luke's (2004) call for a "more grounded" approach to studying the local/global relationship, suggesting the need for ethnography and imagination in this work:

Ethnography provides the empirical and conceptual discipline. Ethnography is the eye of the needle through which the threads of imagination must pass. Imagination is thereby forced to try to see the world in a grain of sand, the human social genome in a single cell. Experience and the everyday are the bread and butter of ethnography, but they are also the grounds whereupon and the stake for how grander theories must test and justify themselves. They should not be self-referenced imaginings but *grounded* imaginings. (p. viii, emphasis in original).

Imagination, then, becomes the thread that knits together understandings that are derived with people in local settings, situations, and contexts, to global issues. In fact, Appadurai (1996; 1991) argues that imagination holds considerable power in social life today because of the impacts of globalization. While acknowledging that imagination has always played a role in society and culture, he contends that, because of globalization as represented by mass me-

dia, “more persons in more parts of the world consider a wider set of ‘possible’ lives than they ever did before” (1991, p. 197). While Appadurai is quick to note that this does not imply that the world is now a happier place with more choice and opportunity for all, he does suggest that

even the meanest and most hopeless of lives, the most brutal and dehumanizing of circumstances, the harshest of lived inequalities is now open to the play of the imagination. ... [They] no longer see their lives as mere outcomes of the givenness of things, but often as the ironic compromise between what they could imagine and what social life will permit. (1991, p. 198)

Imagination, then, becomes both a methodological tool as well as a tool for critical consciousness and a possible avenue for social change.

The expressive arts—literature, film, drama—and imagination allow for understanding and interpreting local lives (both the limits and the possibilities), but they also become objects of study in themselves, expanding the range of contexts we might examine in order to understand local/global relationships and work for social change.

Such moves follow scholars of education (Greene, 1995), anthropology (Appadurai, 1991, 1996; Ortner, 1991), and the law (Williams, 1991; Yoshino, 2006), all of whom suggest an expanded methodological role for imaginative and literary narratives, particularly in understanding the lives of the subaltern in a more globally expanded world. Ortner (1991), for example, in her initial ethnographic work on class in America, turned, in part, to the work of novelist Philip Roth, whom she described as “a brilliant ethnographer,” and further suggested that “a good part of the ethnography of America is in novels” (p. 180). Likewise, Appadurai (1991; 1996), in his study of globalization and culture, proposes that “ethnographies of literature” and film provide opportunities for interpreting the role of imagination in social life and enable reflections into “the complex nesting of imaginative appropriations that are involved in the construction of agency in a deterritorialized world” (1991, p. 205). Finally, Yoshino, in his work on civil rights, culture and the law, argues for the use of “literary narrative” as a tool for “cultural action” (2006, p. 26). Indeed, for Yoshino, literature and the imagination work both epistemologically—allowing us to know and understand the general through the particular—and ethically. Epistemologically, stories reveal “the bones of our common human endeavor.... [I]f a human life is described with enough particularity, the universal will begin to speak through it” (p. xii). And, ethically, imaginative and personal stories have “a power to get inside us, to transform our hearts and minds...” (p. 26).

It is no accident that many of the studies in this volume center around imagination and the arts: drama work with teachers around children’s litera-

ture; performance work with queer youth; youth developing digital game worlds; literature as a catalyst for critical awareness and social action around issues of class in middle-grade classrooms; the role of race and silence in the experiences of young, African American women studying British literature. These studies answer, in part, our question: How do we work within and against globalization in order to challenge the destruction and foster the positive possibilities, particularly in the realm of English literacy education and research? In terms of data collection, we gather powerful, personal stories from local communities, and we consider a broad range of evidence of literacy. In terms of analysis, we bring global perspectives to help us to understand these stories better. Overall, this requires imagination, for it is “the imagination, especially when collective, that can become the fuel for action....The imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 7) as the following chapters reveal.

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## Jazz, Critical Race Theories, and the Discourse Analysis of Literacy Events in Classrooms

Adrienne Dixson and David Bloome

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1999) argues that CRT is an “important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction, reconstruction, and construction—deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power.” (p. 10). The use of CRT in education has predominantly focused on the “deconstruction” task (e.g., DeCuir and Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1994) and similarly so in studies employing CRT in analysis of classroom discourse (e.g., Banning, 1999). In this chapter, we explore how discussions of CRT might be a tool for the articulation of the “reconstruction of human agency” task with specific attention to classroom discourse. We build on previous studies of classroom discourse that, in our view, have also focused on the reconstruction of human agency even if they have not specifically mentioned CRT (e.g., Delpit, 1992; Foster, 1995; Lee, 1993; Luke et al., 1994; Morgan, 2002; Schultz et al., 2000), and we build on recent discussions of jazz as an idiom (e.g., Murray, 1976). Moreover, we go beyond more recent uses of Critical Race Theory (CRT) that draw upon its basic tenets to examine and analyze educational phenomena particularly as they pertain to inequity but draw upon an admittedly underutilized objective of CRT—social transformation/reconstruction (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005)—to offer a vision of literacy pedagogy that attends to the complexity of experiences that students, particularly students of color, bring to the classroom.

In order to accomplish this exploration, we present an analysis of one fifty-five-minute lesson from a seventh-grade language arts classroom. In analysis of this lesson, we employ insights from jazz as a form of cultural politics, CRT,