Introduction

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This volume is about education and schools, textbooks, and pedagogies in the countries of the Asia-Pacific. The chapters in this volume offer critical and reconceptualist curriculum studies and policy analyses of various national and regional educational systems. All of these systems face significantly complex challenges linked to new social and economic formations, cultural globalization, and emergent regional and international geopolitical instabilities and conflicts. The chapters in this volume offer empirical and theoretical insights on the issues of what counts as official knowledge, text, discourse, and discipline; how they should be shaped; who should shape them; and through which social, cultural, and institutional agencies they should be administered and practiced.

There are, of course, various possible approaches to such issues,—which focus on "identity," "hegemony," "nation," "gender," and "culture," no matter how unstable such concepts might be. Until recently, however, educational researchers have drawn principally from two limited approaches in the available literature and texts on the Asia-Pacific. The first approach consists of a general descriptive and comparative discussion of policy, history, and context, often with little specific documentation of the actual politics involved in teaching, learning, curriculum, and pedagogy at macro and/or micro levels. The second approach has tended to present comparative views of "Asia" from the standpoint and perspective of Western and Northern epistemologies and disciplines.

Both are, in part, the legacies of comparative education and Western "area studies." Both have their genesis in European and North American university studies of the "Other"—fields that were often supported by Western governments and their surveillance and intelligence arms, churches and religious organizations, and, later, nongovernment development and aid agencies. Much of this work has tended to position countries, systems, and educators of the Asia-Pacific within discourses of aid, "development," poverty amelioration, and, most recently, neoliberal discourses that call for the "modernization" of such systems through marketization, economic rationalization, and new managerial models (see also Stiglitz, 2001). Hence, there has been a de facto relegation of the Asia-Pacific to studies of education in "foreign" context and, however unintentionally, treatment of its communities

and systems as exotic or "exceptional" objects within the fields of curriculum studies and educational policy. These approaches have been destabilized, first by successive waves of postcolonial and indigenous epistemology and theory, as well as feminist and women's perspectives, and more recently by varied and complex analyses of the push/pull and local/global dynamics of globalization—with much of the most interesting and innovative cultural studies and social science work coming from scholars in Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

The works contained in this volume present a diverse set of tools from social theory and critical educational studies for addressing a range of pedagogic contexts and curricular practices which many have increasingly found troubling and in need of attention. The chapters in this volume do not fall neatly and tidily into any of the overarching theoretical categories or standpoints (such as "postcolonial," "neo-Marxist," "feminist," "poststructuralist," and "postmodernist") that have become de facto grids for recent Western research on the issues of curriculum and pedagogy. They do, however, address scholarly fields and concerns, as well as developing and ongoing intellectual and political projects, and—as instances of grounded theory—they open up analyses and readings of the world and so make intervention possible.

The writings collected here disrupt many popular mythologies about education in Asia and the Pacific. These include base suppositions about the "Other": that Asian pedagogy is exclusively "rote learning"; that educational systems and governments in the Asia-Pacific are faced with classical "developing country" issues; and that institutional and state formation in the Asia-Pacific can be assessed on a North/South, West/East, or left/right continuum as moving inexorably towards neoliberal economic and social policy and Western "democracy" affiliated with the United States and Europe. Further, there is a broader supposition underlying most Western curriculum work: that issues of ideology and curriculum content are principally "developed country" concerns; that Western and Northern concepts and approaches of "multiculturalism," "cultural appropriateness," affirmative action, and so forth can be unproblematically generalized across national and regional contexts; that the educational systems of these countries are either anachronistic colonialist or authoritarian throwbacks; or that the teachers, administrators, scholars, and bureaucrats of the Asia-Pacific are simple ideological "dupes" of national governments, Western graduate schools, and multinational corporations.

The pieces in this book create a range of tensions around these circulating myths and stereotypes and attempt to respond to critical questions—some unresolved and some still preliminary. At the same time, we want to live and model the undoing of some truisms that no one has as yet been game enough to speak of: the assumptions that critical, theoretical, and metatheoretical work on teaching and curriculum is done solely in North America,

the United Kingdom, and Australia, and that this work is "too hard" or suppressed among scholars and systems in the Asia-Pacific; that emerging scholars coming "out of Asia" are concerned principally with technical issues such as English as a second language and educational administration; and that only work done by sophisticated Western and Northern scholars and researchers can and should count in the critical analysis of education and globalization.

If Western/Northern readers are to have an understanding of, and engagement with, the complex push/pull forces of economic and cultural globalization, they must read and act beyond educational and social theorizing that, even where it attempts to be critical, can be celebratory and reinforcing of the power of American and Anglo-European educational economies and research. There is a serious need to move beyond research on globalization that takes for granted the efficacy of the center/periphery, inside/out force that emanates from the North and West. We need to engage with regional, local, and community-specific uptakes and contestations, transformations, and transliterations of the educational discourses and practices that now traverse borders and media (Luke & Luke, 2000).

DIFFERENCE AND THE ETHICS OF GLOBALIZATION

What is "Asia" or the "Pacific"? In the past, the answer might have been simple and transparent—for the colonizer and colonized, for the local community, for the revolutionist and nationalist, or, for that matter, for the neighboring tribes and states drawn together by common struggle or cause. Today, however, equipped at the dawn of the early twenty-first century with somewhat more substantial theoretical and empirical insights, the terms are much more risky and debatable. Whatever they might have been, peoples of Asia and the Pacific have been dispersed throughout the region, giving rise to hybrid cultures, histories, and discourses, and posing new, different, and highly volatile material conditions. It is vital, therefore, that we examine the diverse ways educational systems, school curricula, and pedagogies have responded to these changing and challenging realities.

If education is to be, or can be, about learning to live together across borders and within them, and in and through differences instead of against or in spite of them, then educators and educational systems must tackle matters of diversity and difference directly and explicitly. Across the Asia-Pacific, the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Korea, Hawai'i, and elsewhere, struggles have arisen to develop a vocabulary and optics for seeing the heterogeneity of their student populations. The epistemological and cultural rights of indigenous peoples in countries such as Taiwan, New Zealand, and Australia (e.g., Smith, 1999) and the social and intellectual movements of

Third World women to represent their voices (e.g., Mohanty, 1991) have added a further dimension to the question of whose knowledge and standpoints should count in schools and universities. The events following September 11, 2001, including the U.S.-led war in Iraq, strongly suggest that nations should no longer direct educational systems as if difference (cultural and racial, religious and ideological, social and economic, gender and sexuality) were a momentary historical aberration. We share time, space, resources, and environment with others, and increasingly, one nation's problem has global connections and implications (e.g., China's environmental problems are those of Korea and the United States). The dangerous legacy and tendency of (neo)colonialism—a monocultural and masculine ethnonationalism—is an inadequate educational response.

If there is a new lesson facing educational systems everywhere, it is that teachers, students, teacher educators, and researchers in schools and classrooms must struggle with, argue over, and begin to deal with difference, both within and across nations, regions, and genders. The differences that we face and live take many shapes: student bodies that cross borders as migrants, refugees, and guest workers; minority communities that might have been written off as aberrant or deficient by mainstream educators; the gendered identity of nation (and its citizens and workforce) that is enacted by official educational policies and school textbooks; and ongoing tensions within educational systems over whose knowledges and ideologies, beliefs, and values should count in curriculum and pedagogy. These are not exclusively Western and Northern concerns. Education in Asia and the Pacific has struggled over these issues for years.

Peoples of the Asia-Pacific could argue that economic and cultural globalization began centuries ago—whether through the Macrossan traders who bridged established trading and cultural links between Southeast Asia and Australian Aboriginal peoples, or the Polynesian and Micronesian peoples who linked islands and cultures. Long before the processes of European, American, and Japanese colonization, processes of language and culture blending, hybridity, and exchange were common. At the same time, it is important not to romanticize the histories of cultural contact in the region. These were not benign processes (Miyoshi, 1994); they often involved cultural conflict and violence between tribal and geographic neighbors long before the coming of the missionaries, soldiers, bureaucrats, and teachers from the imperial countries.

Since World War II, the region as a whole has experienced uneven processes of decolonization (and globalization), with some European colonies still extant and some countries once colonized now colonizing the internal and/or external Others. For many countries, the process of "nation building" is as yet incomplete—and for many communities, there are substantial struggles involved in attempting to have their cultural and linguistic

difference and forms of life recognized by governments, educational systems, dominant media, and multinational corporations. Nations and citizens have experienced not only the complexity and difficulty inherent in postcolonial identity formation, but its potentialities as well.

At the same time, transnational flows of people, capital, social movements, cultures, representations, and discourses have accelerated, creating new forms of expression and identity. For example, the international feminism entering the region—one encouraging women of various classes, races, ethnicities, and sexualities to form an alliance and take actions against multiple forms of oppression—marks the reworking of social relations and relationships. So does the spread and popularity of Western/American capitalist cultures throughout the region (e.g., Disneyland, McDonald's, and Starbucks). Such transformations, positive or negative, have been complicated by the emergence of new media and information technologies and the local impact of transnational consumer culture and youth identity. Across these nations, middle-class children are literally building and expanding youth cultures and gendered identities around, say, digital games. Hence, many nations in the region are sites of conflict not only between contending political, economic, social, and linguistic forces within nations, but also between traditional, modern, and postmodern cultures.

While much of the Asia-Pacific is changing, certain continuities remain across the time and space of modern-era educational systems. For example, textbooks have been a principal form of educational technology—grounded in particular narratives, languages and codes, and canons and values. Along with religious texts, they are often the principal means of building particular ideologies, cultures, and economies through languages and narratives of what has been termed "the Center." Textbooks represent modernist educational technologies par excellence in the countries of the region, including Australia, Thailand, Korea, China, and Japan. They have acted as the major mode of information, mediated and re-mediated through face-to-face social relations and language, for the "doing" of information. Surviving changes in government, natural disasters, and the elements, together with wide swings of ideology, the textbook has remained one of the constants of colonial and postcolonial education. Its economies of production remain focal, budget-line items in education departments and major industries in many countries of the Asia-Pacific. Their narratives, facts, and truths remain among the most contestable, controversial, and topical objects of legislative, academic, and popular scrutiny.

Important, as well, are the readers—including, but not limited to, students, teachers, and policymakers—and the meanings they make of these curriculum and pedagogical texts. It is essential for us to take a critical look at the relations between texts and readers from various perspectives within the Asia-Pacific. The geopolitics and culture of the region has historically

been multicentered and multiperipheral. With a multitude of identity for-
mations, the Asia-Pacific has been an exciting site for reading practices, but
also one of the most problematic sites because of the differential powers
operating throughout the region. While specific identities such as Asian
Australians, "locals" in Hawai'i, "nativists" in Taiwan, and Resident Koreans
in Japan have faced different struggles, they all suggest that the decentering
of educational research paradigms preoccupied with Western and Northern
perspectives is not only possible, but productive.

Contributions

The vital question of which grand narratives should count in curriculum and
pedagogy is one that all the contributors to this volume address as they crit-
ically examine the diverse regional and national systems of education found
throughout the Asia-Pacific. In the first chapter, Allan Luke seeks to rene-
gotiate the complex issues this core curriculum question raises in light of
events post–September 11, 2001. In so doing, he frames a central challenge
faced by those seeking to critically examine the connections between school-
ing and globalization. This challenge involves avoiding an uncritical adher-
ence to curriculum grand narratives that lean towards totalization and
essentialism. But he is also skeptical of the tendency toward a naïve cultural
relativism that threatens to disrupt our ability, both as scholars and teach-
ers, to make strong ethical claims about, around, and against dominant
notions of schooling based on systematic efficiency and human capital.

The need to challenge existing metanarratives, and to supersede them
with new theories that take into account both the fluidity of ethnic construc-
tions and the contestability of state policies, runs across the works in this
volume. They provide, collectively, through examples furnished from diverse
sites and locations, a sustained focus on the challenges and contradictions of
state formation, governmental curriculum, and textbook policies, along with
ethnic responses to those policies today and in the past. In chapter 2, Roger
Openshaw demonstrates, through his historical case study, that New Zealand's
debates concerning ethnicity and difference have long been both controver-
sial and contestable. This is especially the case in the social studies curriculum
where, rhetoric not withstanding, both programs and texts have historically
been shaped by political pragmatism, rather than educational concerns.
Openshaw argues that portrayals of Maori culture and history have long been
shaped by the need to project an image of ethnic harmony and social suc-
cess, and that current versions of Maori culture in schools correspond with
the emergence of a new Maori middle class that has learned to operate suc-
cessfully within a neoliberal, corporate, and global environment, where eth-
nic marketing strategies are a significant component of capital expansion.

In chapter 3, Ting-Hong Wong takes his historical analysis of the struggle over difference in the Asia-Pacific to post–Second World War Singapore and Hong Kong, where complex relations between state formation and school curriculum policymaking have long been evident. The ruling group seeks to construct identity, attempting in the process to integrate society: it accommodates and wins the consent of subordinated groups, and it outmaneuvers political opponents. Wong concludes, however, that the state's capacity to include and then transform ethnic culture into a hegemonic curriculum depends on the complex relationships between the state and other racial groups in society. Similarly, in chapter 4, Jyh-Jia Chen seeks to challenge one-dimensional theories that focus solely on the imposition of the state's political ideology by examining the geopolitical process of deregulating national standardized textbooks within the context of Taiwanese state transformation over the last two decades. Chen illustrates how both the state and opposition forces constructed discourses and adopted methods of textbook reform, resulting in the gradual incorporation of reform processes into the official textbook deregulation project.

While the process through which a text is made available to students always requires critical examination, textbooks as products of culture and politics deserve scholarly attention in their own light. Textbooks are sites par excellence of ideological and cultural hegemony for children, who often have little input into the selection of curricular materials. Noparat Suaysuwan and Cushla Kapitzke in chapter 5, in examining three textbooks used by Thai children to learn English, illustrate the ways in which textbooks reflect a contemporary, transitional Thai society. That social transition includes the industrialization brought about by social changes, the increased productivity and improvements in living standards, the weakening of traditional kinship and family ties, and the decline in religious and spiritual beliefs. By representing particular ideologies, versions of childhood, and knowledge deemed appropriate for children, the authors argue, textbooks encourage the uncritical adoption of Western ideas and practices, including consumerism and middle-class lifestyles and values.

In chapter 6, Yongbing Liu utilizes the methods of critical discourse analysis to examine the construction of culture knowledge in Chinese language textbooks. He points out that after two decades of reform, Chinese society now displays many of the features of capitalist societies elsewhere, including structural inequalities. Many school texts, however, continue to promote patriotism and a modernist discourse of science and technology, while simultaneously excluding more problematic topics such as environmental damage, the growing gap between rich and poor, and various social problems. In a similar vein, chapter 7, authored by Dong Bae (Isaac) Lee, looks at selected narratives from textbooks used for teaching the Korean language to early primary school children. Lee focuses particularly on how

texts represent contemporary ideologies based on three key themes: environmental issues, emerging Western lifestyles emphasizing leisure and consumption, and the complex question of reunification. He concludes that there are many silences and absences in textbook narratives, with the result that the social realities of contemporary South Korea, including poverty, crime, social problems, and structural inequalities of gender and class, are not represented or addressed.

While an inquiry into a curriculum text, be it a policy document or a textbook, is extremely important, how a text is used in school and the classroom—a pedagogical consideration—poses another important question to be examined. In chapter 8, Darren O'Hern illustrates the systemic and pedagogical constraints currently limiting the potential of environmental education in China. The goals and priorities of a society sometimes characterized as "the largest developing nation in the world" are emphatically reflected in a managerial view of education and a curriculum that emphasizes technological and economic superiority through teacher-centered instruction. Given current realities in China, O'Hern questions whether the perceived tensions between development and environment can be addressed in a way that might alleviate the nation's growing environmental crisis.

A critical study of education cannot end without asking questions concerning the struggle over identity—be it gendered, raced, or classed—that takes place in and through education. Although always ideologically called upon to form certain identities, students and teachers are "readers" of curriculum and pedagogical texts and practices, and as such they possess an ability to make their own meanings. In chapter 9, utilizing two South Korean commercial high schools as case studies, Misook Kim illustrates not only how vocational education functions to form students' subjectivities in terms of gender and class, but how students respond to such subjectivities. The two commercial high schools she examines had an active involvement in social differentiation. They were ideological in the sense that their regulatory practices and other practices were aimed at producing a gendered workforce among students. Kim also demonstrates, however, that, contrary to the views of earlier reproduction theorists, subordinated groups (the girls in vocational high schools in her case) contest that process of identity formation in a number of ways.

In chapter 10, Michael Singh focuses on the need to construct new, more responsive and dynamic multifaceted linguistic and cultural identities. Through interviews with Asian Australians, Singh demonstrates how the Australian colonialist legacy sustains a highly problematic relationship between Indigenous Australians and Asian Australians. As such, it is contested by those who suffer most from it. Accordingly, Singh argues that funds of community knowledge may supply social studies education with material to explore and dissolve the divisions that separate Indigenous and Asian

Australians, ultimately leading to social movements such as Reconciliation and Reparations. Through such innovative pedagogical strategies, Singh hopes that social studies educators can foster a new Australian cosmopolitics that will both actively challenge White Australia politics and make a useful contribution to Reconciliation between Indigenous and Asian Australians.

In a similar critical vein, but with reference to a much different ethnic and social context, chapter 11 focuses on the essentially fluid process of identity negotiation in Hawai'i. In Hawai'i, the cultural and ethnic identity is such that everyone is a minority, which leads to a distinct local identity. Author Gay Garland Reed argues that ethnic labels, as reflected in local, nonlocal, and *haole* terminologies, are historically situated and continuously contested. They depend as much on the cultivation of sensibilities and attitudes as they do on ethnic history and heritage. In Hawai'i, for instance, *hapa* (mixed ancestry) is more common and more accepted than on the U.S. mainland, and the rate of interracial marriage is increasing. In turn, changing demographics has led to a shift in identity construction, which facilitates a repositioning of Whiteness, making it less invisible, less privileged, and less central.

The question of identity and difference is a complex one. In chapter 12, Hiromitsu Inokuchi and Yoshiko Nozaki examine the education of Resident Koreans, the largest minority group in Japan. The chapter is particularly concerned with the way power is exercised to construct the category of Resident Koreans as "different," along with the approaches Resident Koreans have taken to challenge that construction by way of identity formations through Korean ethnic education. Inokuchi and Nozaki conclude that the educational struggle of Resident Koreans has now entered a new phase in which the often taken-for-granted binary categories of citizen versus noncitizen are being scrutinized and deconstructed; this provides significant challenges for both dominant and minority groups in Japan. The authors suggest the need to develop a new curriculum and pedagogy that allows the students of the dominant group to learn the history and experiences of minority groups—and that such an approach is essential to the creation of a national identity reflecting the multiplicity and fluidity of the nation.

In chapter 13, Yoshiko Nozaki examines the current Japanese history textbook controversy over the issues of "comfort women" in terms of scholarly debates over historical research, education, women's voices, and postmodern discourse. The existence of forced military prostitution and international traffic in women during Japan's Asia-Pacific War was no secret to many Japanese, above all to the several million Japanese men who fought in the war. What changed dramatically in the 1990s, however, was the emergence of the comfort women issue as a major Japanese war crime and human rights violation. A politically charged public and intellectual controversy over the nation's history and education ensued, one entailing

the use of postmodern vocabularies. Nozaki argues that although postmodern discourse so far seems to have brought additional confusion to the controversy, such discourses can benefit historical research and education in significant ways if the fundamental questions posed are addressed in a productive manner.

Taken together, the pieces in this volume suggest the complexity of formations of educational policy, provision, and practice in the Asia-Pacific. These tend to stand in relation to quite diverse material conditions—differentially impacted by economic and cultural globalization—and in relation to ideologically varied institutional traditions and practices. The cases here are often not as readily amenable to Western educational, political, or social theory as they might appear. To understand and explain them in-depth, as the authors of this volume do, is to prefigure a "next generation" of critical educational theorizing and methodology that is strongly committed and connected to the transformation of educational struggles taking place in the Asia-Pacific. Today, our educational struggles are personal and global, embracing countries, nations, and individuals. The chapters in this volume provide more complex visions of the past, present, and future; classic and emergent issues; and local dynamics of change, diversity, and conflict within and across countries. Together, they not only map and reframe issues of difference for those of us who work in education in the Asia-Pacific, but also open up and make accessible critical issues of curriculum and policy for teachers, students, teacher educators, and researchers—whether they are in the North, South, West, or East.

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