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Chapter 5

Youth, Risk, and Equity in a Global World

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GIRLS LIKE LAXMI: YOUTH AT RISK IN A GLOBAL WORLD

The uniformed girls sat cross-legged on the carpeted floor of a second-story classroom situated off the inner courtyard of a large private school in a north Indian city. There they studied, read, and wrote, the walls of their schoolroom lined with computers protected by cloth dust covers, its big ceiling fans scarcely disturbing the heavy heat of early March. On this afternoon, they bent over notebooks, writing in fits and starts, stopping to whisper and laugh with each other, then returning to the task at hand, which was a summary of their initial thoughts of what to share about themselves as well as what they would like to ask of youth in the United States and South Africa. “How do boys treat girls there?” one young woman ventured. “What subjects do students study in school?” queried another. They wrote notes and questions in Davangari script, and they chatted with each other and their teacher in Hindi, but they spoke and wrote passably, if haltingly, in English when prompted to interact with their American visitors. These adolescent girls were preparing to participate in an international exchange project with youth in other countries, in effect a multimedia pen pal activity, made prescient and possible by the social networking capabilities of our digital age and our global world (Hull & Nelson, in press).

This scene will strike some readers as commonplace, as unremarkable perhaps, one that is daily duplicated, albeit with local variation, in schools, cities, and countries around the world. And, so it is: Young people attend school, read and write,

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engage with mediational technologies, and take part in activities designed in some way to broaden their understandings of other cultures and places. Yet the situations of these particular girls are anything but ordinary, unless as part of “ordinary” we also include poverty, deprivation, and risk—as indeed we should if, as some estimate, approximately 80% or 6 billion of the world’s population is “socially and fiscally at risk” (Appadurai, 2000). Take Laxmi,¹ for instance, a girl of 13 who attends the school described above. She rises at 6:00 a.m. each day, then walks, by 6:30 a.m., to a home where she does domestic work for a wage of 700 rupees (US\$14) a month. Laxmi’s mother died when she was 11; her father, a rickshaw driver, provides no support to their family of six children, and the family is now headed by Laxmi’s sister.

After her morning job Laxmi returns home, fetches water from an outdoor communal pump, fills her house’s receptacles, and washes dishes and utensils. In the afternoon, she goes to her school, which she attends via scholarship, a scene from which we have just detailed. After school she helps her sister with the evening work at home, then leaves to clean another house, returning late. Laxmi not only longs for a different life but also intends to achieve it through study and hard work; she dreams, in fact, of becoming an artist, and she wistfully remembers seeing a movie once with her aunt, one that engages her imagination about possible futures. Laxmi’s material situation, characteristic of the demographics and lifeworlds of her classmates (cf. Sahni, in press), is not uncommon. Nor, of course, does her desire for a good life set her apart. What is uncommon is her access to educational resources that go some distance in positioning her to create it.

This is a chapter for girls like Laxmi, or more properly, and long-windedly, a chapter that selectively reviews those educational literatures that should be relevant to helping us understand and improve the lot and life chances of girls and boys like Laxmi and their equivalents everywhere.² We intentionally began this review, which appears in a U.S. journal, with a vignette from India, a country whose linguistic and ethnic diversity, whose international reputation for advances in information technologies, and whose considerable progress and remaining challenges related to taming poverty and offering education to a large proportion of its population are well known. It is our observation that as we conceptualize risk, equity, and schooling inside the U.S.’s geographic borders, we most often do so without taking into account what can be learned from the material facts and ideological points of view of youth in countries, societies, and communities apart from our own, including and especially “transforming” and “developing” nations and their diasporas. We respectfully suggest, and we hope our chapter illustrates, that such a narrow and isolationist view is an anachronistic and unhelpful one. The point of our chapter, however, is not so much to levy a critique against U.S. or more generally “Western” educational policies and interventions in relation to youth—indeed, thoroughgoing critiques abound (e.g., Bottrell, 2007; Finn, 2001; P. Kelly, 2001; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2008)—but to assemble and juxtapose literatures that help us see these issues anew.³

Arguably, the most important economic, cultural, and social trend of the past half century continues to be globalization, the radical intensification of flows of capital, people, services, expertise, goods, texts, images, and technologies around the world and across national and regional borders. The nature of globalization's effects, its uneven spread, its accompanying possibilities and injustices, and even the question of whether it is at the end of the day a radically new phenomenon or the continuation of an age-old process continue to be debated vigorously and with feeling (Stiglitz, 2003). In the academy, scholars from a range of fields—history, economics, political science, cultural theory, and anthropology—are challenged to retain or regain their disciplinary footing and perhaps their contemporary relevance in the face of this complex and undeniable phenomenon, a challenge that is engaged sometimes with excitement but almost always with angst (Appadurai, 2000, 2006a; Lukose, 2009). As we explore below in a selective way, educational researchers hailing from a variety of traditions have taken a seat at the globalization table, wanting to understand its implications for, variously, students' skill sets; teachers' preparation; and, more radically, the rethinking of the forms, purposes, and, usefulness of current conceptions of schooling (i.e., Burbules & Torres, 2000; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996; Luke & Carrington, 2002, 2008; Spring, 2008; Stromquist & Monkman, 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004; Suárez-Orozco & Sattin, 2007).

Our particular interests in education in the context of globalization center on notions of risk and at riskness. What is the nature of risk for young people—Laxmi and others—we want to ask, in our determinedly global world? Who becomes at risk, and at risk of what? What are the most important challenges for educators and researchers in this context, and what are our most profound opportunities?

Globalization has an impact on cultures by virtue of processes of imposition, juxtaposition, and interpolation, and the metaphors used to describe its influence often draw on images of interconnection: networks (Castells, 2000, 2004), constellations (Massey, 1998a, 1998b), spaces (Appadurai, 1996), and webs (Appiah, 2005). The philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (2005) captures the positive valence of this phenomenon:

Planes and boats and trains, satellites and cables of copper and optic fiber, and the people and things and ideas that travel all of them, are, indeed, bringing us all every more definitively into a single web. And that web is physical, biological, electronic, artistic, literary, musical, linguistic, juridical, religious, economic, familial. (p. 216)

Yet in the post-9/11 era, most would agree that in the United States our propensity for welcoming interconnection has lessened; we think in terms of fissures and chasms between ideologies and cultures while globalizing flows loom large as frightening trends that might engulf us against our will, taking jobs, lifestyles, and lives rather than connecting and enriching us. As Benhabib (2002) notes, "Global integration is proceeding alongside sociocultural disintegration, the resurgence of various separatisms, and international terrorism" (p. viii). In this view, in a globalized world, we are all at risk (cf. Beck, 1986/1992, 2000), not only our youth, and the leading

metaphors used to characterize our vulnerability include clashes, attacks, and wars of cultures, faiths, and civilizations.

Helpfully, and hopefully, contemporary political and philosophical theorists have provided ways of thinking about our current world's intensifying conflicts that can help us reframe such debates. Their metaphor of choice is often conversation and dialogue. Benhabib (2002), for example, firmly maintains that deliberative democracy can be sensitive to political and cultural differences, allowing these differences to be voiced, contested, and negotiated. On the other hand, she disavows certain strong versions of multiculturalism whose *raison d'être* are supporting identity and difference movements in which the rights of women and children in minority cultures can be compromised (cf. Wikan, 2007). "Practical autonomy, in the moral and political sphere," Benhabib (2002) writes, "is defined as the capacity to exercise choice and agency over the conditions of one's narrative identifications" (p. 16), including identifications within one's own culture as well as outside it. In a complementary way, Sen (2006) celebrates not only the multiplicity of affiliations that make us all "composites" as human beings but also the freedom to decide which identity is important in a given context.

Appiah (2005), too, emphasizes the ties that should bind us, choosing "cosmopolitanism" as a strategy, a challenge, and a means for balancing difference and universality.⁴ He writes, "We have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship" (p. xv). Beyond such obligations, Appiah believes that the notion of cosmopolitanism also entails respect for legitimate difference. When those differences result in practices motivated by opposing and alienating values, our most important tool is dialogue. In this worldview, there is no path to walk except one that leads us to explore our moral obligations to "strangers," overcoming our many fears (Appadurai, 2006a), and to construct a global ethic that constantly asks, what is it that we owe to others because we all belong to the human community? Thus, we might ask with him, what do we owe to youth like Laxmi?

In the following review, then, we attempt to situate discussions of at riskness within a discourse of the global, but also, following Benhabib and Appiah, we keep the moral entailments of living in a global society in view and attempt to sort out the implications that may accrue from this stance for future educational research. We look first at how notions of being at risk as a young person have been formed in the United States, influenced through the lenses of the disciplines of psychology and sociology; how resulting notions of risk and their implications seem to have spread internationally; and to what effect. Next, we review recent literature that has examined global youth, a diverse scholarship hailing primarily from cultural studies and anthropology that attempts to describe and theorize the experiences of youth around the world as they confront the challenges of contemporary life. We see an "aesthetic turn" in this scholarship and in the actions and products of youth, and we discuss it here. Although there is much to appreciate in this work, we also note what strike us as blind spots. For instance, this research includes a stimulating exploration of the nexus of youth, popular culture, and globalization, yet it often seems to neglect other

important contexts for identity formation and learning, including formal schooling. We conclude with descriptions of promising projects and research related to youth at risk and equity in a global world, including a teacher education effort associated with the school that Laxmi attends.

BOYS LIKE JOSÉ: CONCEIVING RISK IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

In a fourth-grade classroom in Southern California, a 9-year-old named José worked diligently on any assignment his teacher asked him to complete. José and his brother had immigrated from Mexico with their mother when José was 6, and they had lived in California for 3 years. José estimated that he was “a little bit good” at English, “a little bit good” at reading, and “bad” on his biannual reading benchmarks (Shin, 2004). If test scores are to be taken as measurements of good skills, as they assuredly are in the United States and many other countries, he was accurate in his self-assessment. At the end of third grade, José was labeled “Far Below Basic” by his score on the California Standardized Test (258 out of 600 possible points); he was also, after 3 years of school, still labeled a “beginning” English language learner, based on his end-of-third-grade California English Language Development Test score. He came in with very low “reading benchmark” test scores—he had only achieved “middle of Grade 1” status—and would be a candidate for retention based on reading scores in fifth grade if he did not improve in the fourth grade. José and his peers at “Washington Elementary” were immersed in testing: They took 35 tests per year, approximately one test per school week.

There is little doubt, then, that José had been found to be educationally at risk. His teacher and principal, as well as his school’s literacy coach, considered him at risk of failing to read beyond a first-grade level; at risk of retention in fifth grade (one of the “retention years” for low reading scores in California); at risk of failing out of school with continued test score failure; at risk of failure to learn English; at risk, as an expectant middle school student, of failing to acquire the subject-matter foundation needed to succeed in high school; and, looking further down the road, at risk of failing to satisfy California’s high school requirements that govern college admission. In the background of José’s difficulties with school lay the difficulties, the risk factors, if you will, of being a particular kind of global child, one whose parents had joined the movement of people across any number of national borders in search of jobs, refuge, and futures and who are likely to encounter joblessness, legal trouble, poverty, and health problems along the way (cf. Nazario, 2007).

There is no denying that in the United States identifying and ministering to students who are educationally at risk have long been foci of education and educational research (Deschenes, Cuban, & Tyack, 2001); that such interests intensify in times of crisis (Apple, 2001; Flores, Cousin, & Diaz, 1991); and, as we shall illustrate, that U.S. conceptions of youth at risk have had policy and practice implications that stretch far past our national borders, influencing both developed and developing countries, where conceptions of risk and categories related to adolescence previously

differed, were not prominent, or did not exist. As Carnoy (2007) notes in the context of the surprising results of his comparison of schooling outcomes for youth in Cuba, Brazil, and Chile, "The urgency and the ideas about school improvement [in the United States] have spread to developing countries. . . . The mantra is that smarter graduates will make the country more competitive and increase economic growth" (p. 4). Indeed, the policies and sanctions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 can be viewed as the most recent neoliberal interpretation of U.S. longstanding interest and perceived responsibility in this arena (Hursh, 2007). The extent to which the work to ameliorate risk factors has been effective and the extent to which the new stresses and possibilities of globalization render this work of limited utility for youth like José remain to be seen.

A variety of critical accounts provide commentary on the origins of the practice of labeling students educationally at risk in the United States (Cuban, 1989; Hudak & Kihn, 2001; Hull, Rose, Fraser, & Castellano, 1991; Rose, 1989, 1995; Valencia & Solorzano, 1997; Zehm, 1973). There are also deeply critical accounts of a broader sociological and psychological literature, especially in the United States, Great Britain, and Australia, that takes as its aims identifying the "risk factors"—that is, growing up in poverty and being from a single parent household—that contribute to making youth susceptible to "risk behaviors," such as drug use, gang membership, crime, and dropping out of school (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001; France, 2008; Schonert-Reichl, 2000; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). The critiques of these literatures are diverse, and they often center on the individualistic and deficit-oriented nature of accounts wherein young people are defined solely in terms of, and are blamed for, aberrant behaviors, whereas context-sensitive explanations are given short shrift. In the educational literature, related concerns have been raised about the locus of blame assumed to reside within individual youth, their families, or their cultures (Deschenes et al., 2001; Flores et al., 1991). Ironically, although contextual factors such as poverty have been brought to bear in the risk factor literature, conceptualizations of youth as at risk remain conceptually stunted, a reminder that context can be taken into account in reductive ways.

In this section we consider how the phenomenon of globalization has recently intersected with thinking about and programs and policies for and research on youth and risk (Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Spring, 2008; Suárez-Orozco, 2007). Both José and Laxmi are growing up in a global world, and, as variously poor, immigrant, female, urban, and brown, they have long been situated, on local and world stages in multiple societies, as disadvantaged. Unhelpful thinking about youth like them in research and policy marches steadily along, adhering to well-worn ideological, methodological, and theoretical paths, despite a changing world. In this regard, we submit that because of their sphere of influence, the United States and other "developed" countries bear a special responsibility to change this situation. Indeed, the U.S.'s determined interest in accountability and testing, which holds José so tightly in its clutches and which arguably has increased rather than lessened his risk of failure, has spread widely (cf. Meier & Wood, 2004; Zacher, 2008).

Several themes emerge from the combined bodies of globalization and risk literature. First and most predominant is evidence that globalization itself is indeed making at-risk youth more at risk (cf. Katz, 2004) in a variety of ways. However, processes of globalization, it is often observed, are uneven and unpredictable, and for youth at risk there is evidence of the creation, albeit often serendipitously, of previously unavailable potential for mobility. Second, and equally though differently prevalent, is the “skills question.” Long a staple in the U.S. policy arsenal, especially in times of economic downturn (viz., *A Nation at Risk*; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), worries (re)surface about the kinds of skills youth do and do not have, their level of preparedness to compete for jobs in global markets, and the lack of preparation they may receive in today’s schools for tomorrow’s jobs (Nayak, 2003; Stromquist, 2002; Stromquist & Monkman, 2000). A third theme has to do with the export of—and in some cases the imposition of—ideologies and practices around accountability, at riskness, and larger conceptions of teaching and learning. We discuss the implications of research that shows how these Western ideologies are being grafted onto educational institutions in developing and transforming societies through agencies such as the World Bank (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2008).

Increasing the Risks of Risk

It is clear that globalization has complicated notions of at riskness in multiple ways (Schonert-Reichl, 2000). As Appadurai (2006a) explains, our global world is substantially different from earlier periods, in part because of changes in the role of capital in the global economy, increases in (electronic) information access, and the increasingly extreme wealth of some individuals, regions, and nation states and extreme poverty of others. These factors, visible or invisible though they may be to those who study youth in different locations in the world, mean that the world is changing and that those who would work with youth who are “growing up global” (Katz, 2004) should take note. Ulrich Beck (1986/1992), writing about the changes brought about by modernity, asserts that we live in a “risk society”; we further note that children and youth are the least capable of defending themselves from potential societal risks. The most negative aspects of globalization—financial instability, increased violence, ethnic cleansing, terrorism, child labor, and the sex trade—have increased the kinds of risks to children’s safety and security in ways that are almost impossible to calculate, even with the risk factor calculations employed by some sociologists (cf. France, 2008).

According to UNICEF, there are 2.2 billion children in the world; 1.9 billion of these live in developing countries. Of the 2.2 billion children in the world, an estimated 1 billion live in poverty, based on assessments of the existence and quality of shelter, water, sanitation, education, information, health, and nutrition (see www.unicef.org). There are numerical “bulges”—large population groups—of youth in many developing countries; in El Salvador, for instance, youth younger than 18 make up half of the population. When combined with the effects of immigration, transnationalism, global flows of people, and extremely poor national economies, youth “bulges” make for uncertain futures for youth and adults alike. More and more

research shows how the patterns of global migration and immigration leave many poor children at risk (Chavez, 1991)—the left-behind children of Central America are one example. Although fathers and, increasingly, mothers go north for employment as laborers and nannies in America, children are left behind, sometimes for years, to survive financially on remittances sent home (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Nazario, 2007). Similar situations are occurring in China, where up to 20 million rural children have been left behind, often with grandparents, while their parents migrate to cities to find work (Xinhua, 2007).

In such situations, economic benefits do accrue, but emotional and social problems engendered by absent adult-age workers are equally problematic for youth and their families in the left-behind communities. The enforcement of immigration law can have unexpected international consequences as well. For example, foreign-born U.S. youth who belonged to gangs in Los Angeles were deported to El Salvador after changes in immigration laws (G. A. G. Vasquez, 2005); when these youth got to El Salvador, a foreign country to them, they were marginalized. The end result was the doubly troubling “deportation of Southern California youth and the transplanting of U.S. gang cultures to El Salvador” (G. A. G. Vasquez, 2005, p. 103). Indeed, one of globalization’s less-discussed and more negative effects, some argue, is the increasing transnationalism of gangs (e.g., the *Salva Maratrucha*, a Nicaraguan gang based partly in Los Angeles; Johnson & Muhlhausen, 2005).

Another way in which processes of globalization are claimed to put at-risk children more at risk is through the global spread of a corporate curricular ethos dispersed purposefully via the World Bank and other international agencies (Kincheloe, 1997) as well as via mediascapes through which images and products are spread. The agencies that feed into this transnational flow do not generally attend to whether youth have the financial wherewithal to make purchases and be capitalist consumers; rather, they seek “to teach the young that consumption can assuage dissatisfaction and that consumption, identity, and pleasure are one,” which in turn “reifies the general shift from a society of producers to a society of consumers” (Kenway & Bullen, 2008, p. 21). Countries such as Singapore worry that their youth are “a generation devoid of national roots and patriotism” (Koh, 2008, p. 199) because, as participants in this global corporate culture, they engage in excessive consumption and seem to be becoming too Western. The metaphor of consumption applied to texts, images, and mediascapes is also cause for concern in relation to critical conceptions of reading. That is, there is an important distinction to be made between the consumption of texts and their critical interpretation. The fear is that, in a global, media-saturated world bombarded with information, images, and multimodal representations, youth may become passive consumers rather than active interpreters of texts. For scholars such as Kenway and Bullen (2008), such risks require a “postcritical pedagogy” that young people may use to develop a “critical global political sensibility” (p. 30).

If secular, corporate approaches are seen as a threat to the ideological development of youth, religion also plays an important and complex role in discussions of youth and risk. In the United States, faith-based initiatives have received encouragement

through infusions of federal dollars during the past decade, and the efficacy of religiosity and the “faith factor” in “avoiding violence, achieving literacy, promoting employment, and achieving other desirable secular social goals among disadvantaged urban youth and young adults” (DiIulio, 1998) has been hopefully and keenly explored (cf. Larson & Johnson, 1998). There is a long and venerable tradition, for example, in some African American communities of relying on religious faith and practice to protect youth from societal ills and dangers and to inculcate knowledge and skills not provided through formal schooling (cf. Moore, 1991; Moss, 2001; Stanton, 2006). As well, religion governs many coming-of-age rituals that are important for young people the world over, as societies signal the passage of youth into new realms of adult identity and responsibility. In other moments, contexts, and circumstances, however, we are also primed to look with worry on youths’ induction into religion. When a given immigrant community’s religious rituals appear unacceptably alien, or when religion is used to justify violence or oppression (Wikan, 2007), or when religious beliefs are seen as negatively implicated in educational practice, religion can be viewed as increasing risk as well as a practice, community, and/or belief system that provides refuge (Sarroub, 2002). To be sure, judgments of what constitutes oppression or retrograde educational practice are value laden; we are reminded of Benhabib’s (2002) and Appiah’s (2005) discussions of the complex dialectic of universalism and local beliefs. There are class-based complexities as well; for example, both radical Islamic and evangelical Christian movements have appealed especially to the poor. What does seem clear is that the likelihood of faith-induced risks and the need for mediation concerning divergent belief systems have intensified with globalization. In a global world, then, the ways that youth negotiate religion—their own and other people’s—may both increase and decrease risk.

Finally, to draw some of these issues into focus in a specific study, we highlight the long-term ethnographic work of Katz (2004). Writing about findings from her research projects in Sudan and in New York, Katz argues that children’s development and economic development are inseparable and that both are particularly visible and inextricably intertwined in the context of a country in the midst of implementing a specific economic development plan. Following children in the rural town of Howa, Sudan, from the age of 10 (in 1981) through their young adulthood, Katz documents the effects of a rural development agenda on their daily lives and the changes in modes of social reproduction that occurred as the village inhabitants were pressed to change aspects of their livelihoods in the name of agricultural and social progress. She suggests that there are “young people in danger of being excessed by the processes of capitalist globalism” (p. 258) both in the town of Howa and in New York City, where she later continued this research comparatively. Katz describes the displacement of these youth, and the accompanying deskilling and community destabilization in both Sudan and America, as life in “the shards of capitalist modernity” (p. 259). Although some are made more mobile because of processes of globalization—the migrant worker sending reparations home—others are financially or politically immobilized and unable to leave increasingly worsening situations

(e.g., the Burmese). These are the youth who are not even at risk of failing to be competitive, as they have not yet made it to the skills-for-competition table.

Skills for Competition

A second theme in educational literature on globalization and risk is a concern about whether youth are acquiring the necessary skills that will allow them to eventually compete in globalized markets (Spring, 2008; Stromquist, 2002; Stromquist & Monkman, 2000). Two international tests—the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests, run by member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, respectively—exemplify some of the complexities involved. In slightly different ways, PISA and TIMSS measure the performance of students in developed countries on Western standardized literacy and mathematics tests. These tests seek to answer such questions as the following: How well are young adults prepared to meet the challenges of the future? What skills do young adults have that will help them adapt to change in their lives? (ACER, 2003; see <http://www.acer.edu.au>). These are indeed important questions, and the attempts undertaken by such agencies are laudable for their scope and efforts. Each agency tests in more than 50 countries, a truly global effort. In individual test countries, the comparison of test results can either alleviate or make more dire predictions that youth are less prepared for the future by present schooling methods. They can also offer first steps to models for more equitable achievement. Schleicher's (in press) analysis of the 2006 PISA data shows, for example, how parents in a country such as Finland, with the highest PISA scores, can “rely on high and consistent performance standards across the entire school system” regardless of their own socioeconomic statuses.

There are a variety of critiques, both implicit and forthright, of these testing efforts. What counts as a marketable skill, and how to develop human capital based on those skills, are increasingly debatable, as educators and policymakers attempt to come to terms with the requirements of an information age, knowledge economy, and global world. Like capital itself, Beck (1986/1992) argues, the risks inherent in modernity are unequally distributed. Drawing on Beck's work, Nayak (2003) contends that processes of globalization have made transitions to labor markets more risky for youth, because of both a lack of skills and shifting labor markets and national economies. Various efforts are underway to document and describe those new requirements, including the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (see <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php>). Reconceptualizations of such new requirements often emphasize flexibility, global awareness, and collaboration. In Suárez-Orozco and Sattin's (2007) description of what youth will need in regard to these new skills, they write,

The skills, sensibilities, and competencies needed for identifying, analyzing, and solving problems from multiple perspectives will require nurturing students who are curious and cognitively flexible, can tolerate ambiguity, and can synthesize knowledge within and across disciplines. They will need the cultural sophistication to empathize with their peers, who will likely be of different racial, religious, linguistic and social origins. They will need to be able to learn with and from them, to work collaboratively and communicate effectively in groups made up of diverse individuals. An education for globalization should aim at nothing more nor less than to educate “the whole child for the whole world.” (p. 19)

To devise instruments to test such skills and dispositions is, of course, a challenge, but to reimagine schools to teach them is a deeper problem still, one that recasts worries about economic competitiveness across a global world to include worries about equity within societies (cf. Grubb & Lazerson, 2006). Suárez-Orozco and Sattin accompany their description of new skills with the worry that “schools continue to teach sclerotic facts and have no way of coping with the increasing ambiguity, complexity, and linguistic, religious, and ethnic diversity that defines the world” (p. 12).

One scholarly movement that has addressed this fear is the field of “adolescent literacy” (Cassidy, Garrett, & Barrera, 2008). During the past 15 years, its worthy aim has been to redress the pedagogical neglect of teenaged readers and writers by researchers and educators (for early examples, see Alvermann et al., 1996; Alvermann, Hinchman, Moore, Phelps, & Waff, 1998; Finders, 1997; for more recent work, see Alvermann, 2002, in press; Moje, 2002; Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, & Morris, 2008). This work suggests that adolescence in the United States is a period fraught with particular potential risks of failing to acquire the 21st century literacy dispositions, credentials, and practices believed necessary to outfit young people for productive educational and vocational futures. One gap in this research is its overall inattention to global or even international issues (for an exception, see Sarroub, 2005; 2008). On the whole, it remains a relatively Westernized (American [e.g., Morrell, 2002], U.K. [e.g., Brozo, Shiel, & Topping, 2007; Hopper, 2005], and Australian [e.g., Ryan, 2005]) endeavor.

A flash point in debates about the globalization of particular skills, knowledge, and dispositions surrounds the worldwide use, promotion, and teaching of English. To be sure, the ability to communicate across geographies, countries, and cultures, often by means of information technologies and via multiple modalities, has come to the fore as a quintessential need for our times, and such communication is largely and increasingly done in English (McKay, 2002; Pennycook, 2007a, 2007b). Indeed, most national school systems offer instruction in English as a second language (Edge, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Spring, 2008). Although the spread of English is viewed unproblematically by some (Crystal, 2003), there is considerable worry that the spread of English as the global language is resulting in the neglect and destruction of indigenous languages, a phenomenon that not only lessens the cultural richness of the planet but also disadvantages numerous children who are not allowed to learn in their home languages (cf. Canagarajah, 1999), making them further at risk as a byproduct.

Take the case of South Africa, a country in which English has been superimposed over all native languages in schools. There is very little literature in native languages: "Particularly in rural areas, but even in peri-urban and urban settings," writes Bloch (2006), "any print that might be abundant is in English or another ex-colonial language" (p. 22). So entrenched is the disempowerment of language and education policy that "a severe form of home-language deprivation is experienced by Xhosa-speaking learners in . . . schools which do not offer isiXhosa as a subject, let alone as a LoLT (Language of Learning and Teaching). Predictably, drop-out and failure rates are high" (Plüddemann, Braam, October, & Wababa, 2004, p. 40). These researchers claim that educational failure and dropout rates in South African schools are directly linked to the absence of the mother tongue as a language of learning in school; several others have also convincingly made the case for the paralyzing effects of the hegemony of English and other colonial languages in Africa (Bloch, 2006). Here we see the risk of putting another generation of South Africans—particularly the "born free" generation (Masland, 2004)—through a system of education in a superimposed language.⁵

On the other hand, the pan-African localization initiative, with Internet localization for African language support and extension, online dictionary development, and other features, is high on the development agenda (Osborn, 2006). Other attempts are also being made to overcome the dearth of the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in the South African education system (Abel, 2001; Arua, 2001; Brock-Utne, Desai, & Qorro, 2004; Watson & Pienaar, 2007). The new national language and education policy prescribes mother-tongue instruction alongside other languages and English (up to sixth grade). Although the policy has been in existence for some time (see Plüddemann et al., 2004), it has not always seemed practical to implement (cf. Bekker, 2003; Dyers, 2004).

Exporting Accountability and At Riskness

The exportation of Western notions of accountability and risk is a third key theme in this literature. The World Bank (2008) has led the charge to empower youth, to focus on their needs and potential skills, in a series of reports. The latest of these suggests that

for a country or a region to be competitive, the education system must be capable of providing two types of services. First, it must be able to produce the broadest possible human capital base. If knowledge is increasingly recognized as key to competitiveness, it follows that, the more people have a fundamental level of instruction, the better. Second, if a country or region's "knowledge" endowment is to be ever elastic and growing, an individual's knowledge base must also continuously change and expand. (p. 86)

There is much to laud in any attempt to make countries "competitive" in a global world in which capital "is faster, more multiplicative, more abstract, and more invasive of national economies than ever in its previous history" (Appadurai, 2006a, p. 36). Without the support of organizations such as OECD and the World Bank, there would be many fewer attempts to ameliorate poverty in non-OECD countries.

However, we mention here two main critiques of the effects of the World Bank's work with youth. First, some argue that the ideology underlying the World Bank's many reports and surveys is geared toward "the incorporation of youth in a global, neoliberal economic system" (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2008, p. 302) instead of toward ensuring that youth are "agents of change, citizens and leaders, participants and activists" (p. 302). Sukarieh and Tannock (2008) assert that such reports put work, work skills, and the development of youth as workers above all else. In a similar analysis of the Mexican government's attempts to import Western assessments, Buenfil (2000) claims that the importance of the marketplace—the future employability of youth in a knowledge economy—subsumes interest in other issues related to education for purposes other than creating competitive workers and increasing human capital.

Second, many argue that such reports and tests, and the models of education on which they are based, are part and parcel of continued attempts to maintain hegemonic, Western notions of what counts as knowledge (Appadurai, 2001, 2006a, 2006b; Hoppers, 2000; Mbembe, 2001). These critics assert that such international reports—including World Bank Development summaries (Buenfil, 2000; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2008)—evaluate non-Western countries based on their own (Westernized) standards and make funding recommendations accordingly. We find that these international reports on youth education, and the attendant efforts to implement Westernized educational systems in developing countries, overlook the educational agendas of those countries themselves. Increasingly, however, those countries are talking back. For instance, Thaman (2007), writing as a citizen of Oceania, characterizes globalization and its influence on values as a serious threat to Pacific Islander cultures.

At the other end of the spectrum from such skill-, test score-, and economy-centric perspectives on risk, Suárez-Orozco and Sattin (2007) argue that children in both developed and developing countries increasingly find schools boring and irrelevant. Ironically (given the World Bank's emphasis on training youth for productive work lives), Suárez-Orozco and Sattin also argue that schools are failing to educate an increasing number of immigrants whose work currently fuels, and has the potential to add even more fuel to, the global economy. As a last note, we remind readers that such reports on the state of global education allow us to forget that many children in poorer parts of the "developing" world do not get to attend school at all.

COMING OF AGE IN A GLOBAL WORLD: POSSIBILITIES AS WELL AS RISK

Randy, aka Relix Stylz, is now in his late 20s and thereby is past the age usually ascribed to the category of youth in the United States, but he is not past the designation of youthful in other societies. Most certainly, he is not removed from a deep engagement in youth's cultural forms, especially hip-hop. A warehouse quality control checker who works a swing shift, he is an artist during as much of his nonwork time as he can manage—a writer, musician, performer, rapper, photographer, videographer,

and digital storyteller par excellence. The artistry of his multimodal compositions—narrated poems or raps illustrated and extended by images found, taken, or constructed and usually set to his own music—have been chronicled through research (Hull & Katz, 2006; Hull & Nelson, 2005). Now that video can circulate easily on the Internet, his creative work has reached a wide audience, primarily in the United States but increasingly across the world (see www.youtube.com/user/Relixstylz).

His digital stories draw on his experience as a young African American male, offering his critical take on poverty, race, imprisonment, violence, and mis-education and also revealing his belief in hope, love, family, and social justice. His most recent piece, “Absolute,” which juxtaposes images of atrocities in Darfur with the plight of African Americans past and present, reveals both his global consciousness and his commitment to local action. Having completed this digital story, he took it to a street corner in his city where most people do not venture and showed it to any youth who had the time to stop, watch, and listen, engaging with them over what they perceived its message to be (Hull & Nelson, in press). Like Laxmi and José, Randy would be considered by most as multiply at risk; indeed, he perseveres financially, hoping to convert his off-work labor into a job in the entertainment sector. And, like many young people who engage with popular cultural forms and new media, he is on the cutting edge of a new global aesthetics and creative practice. In fact, through his biography and his creative work, he prefigures many of the themes found in the literature in the following section on global youth.

In the previous section, we explored some of the ways in which processes associated with globalization are believed to have increased the material, social, and psychological vulnerabilities of young people; how youth have been framed as at risk in our global world; and how these framings are circulated, imposed, and contested. Next, we turn to a different literature on youth culture that is considerably more hopeful, if still wary of the impacts of globalization and the motivations propelling a neoliberal agenda (cf. Best & Kellner, 2003). The same processes of globalization that engender increasing risk for children can also afford some potential changes for the better—for upward social mobility or for destabilizing previously solidified social orders in which youth at risk have had the least possible options. These changes include both the opening up of new financial sources—for instance, the increase in human mobility has certainly led to an increase in the remittances sent home to children in developing countries by their parents (Orozco, 2002)—as well as new educational opportunities and efforts to foster the development of what Appiah (2006) terms cosmopolitan citizens. Studies of global youth culture, as we shall see, and as the vignette of Randy suggests, often emphasize the agency and creativity exhibited by young people in their local social worlds, in relation to and in intersection with global forces, at one and the same time that young people also experience new vulnerabilities via globalization. It is interesting that this literature rarely intersects with the global testing and accountability agenda or risk factor studies or, more generally, educational literature on the “disadvantaged.” One aim of our review becomes, then, to juxtapose the insights and blind spots of such literatures that operate in parallel,

each of which examines youth, risk, and globalization from particular ideological and disciplinary points of view.

The roots of global youth studies are found in the well-known “Birmingham School” of cultural studies, which began in the United Kingdom at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) and focused on working-class youth. Willis’s (1977) *Learning to Labour* is an early and still perhaps the most celebrated example of this kind of work. In his ethnography, Willis documented and theorized the process by which a group of working-class White boys embraced an antischool culture and thereby sealed their own fates, perpetuating their working-class position. Scholars at the CCCS in turn drew their inspiration from the well-known U.S. sociological tradition of ethnography that flourished at the University of Chicago in the 1960s and focused on subcultures, especially among youth, labeled deviant by the mainstream (cf. Hebdige, 1979).

Although these literatures did not use the terminology of “at riskness,” they clearly focused on youth who would, in different traditions, be gathered under this label. The virtues and shortcomings of these antecedent literatures have been rehearsed many times. For example, this scholarship is renowned for bringing to light the social reproduction practices and processes of such youth (cf. Skelton & Valentine, 1998) but has been taken to task for the limitations of a class-based analysis that has neglected gender and culture and valorized resistance (cf. Huq, 2006; McRobbie, 1991, 1993). It has been celebrated for calling attention to the importance of popular culture and young people’s “symbolic creativity” (Willis, 1990), but it has been pilloried as well for its limited and limiting constructions of subcultures. For thoroughgoing reviews of these founding literatures, as well as the newer work that attempts to redress some of its shortcomings through a theorization of “new ethnicities” (Hall, 1997), see also Bucholtz (2002), Nayak (2003), Rampton (1999), and Turner (1996).

The recent work that we feature below has attempted to move beyond the limitations of the older cultural studies approaches. Even more important for our project, we bring to center stage work that locates itself, and the youth it portrays, in the global moment. Although accounts of youth cultures from the perspective of cultural studies abound, scholarship on young people that is alert to the promise and hazards of globalization is still relatively scarce, as is work that deliberately expands its purview beyond U.S., U.K., or Western perspectives. We agree with Bucholtz (2002), who argues that “a full account of youth as cultural agents . . . must look not only to the U.S., Britain, and other postindustrial societies for evidence of youth cultural practices, but also to young people’s cultural innovations in other locations around the world” (p. 539). We would add that those youthful innovations are currently imbricated by the global in ways never before possible for most young people and that youthful agency, long theorized by cultural studies approaches, both draws new life and faces new challenges from unprecedented and unprecedentedly uneven cultural, economic, and technological flows (also see Best & Kellner, 2003).

How do youth, diverse in location, privilege, ideology, and aspiration, experience their coming of age in a global world? What obstacles do they face, and what

potentials might empower them? What awarenesses, what habits of mind and body, mediate their encounters with local and global activities? And, for those youth such as Laxmi and José, whose vulnerabilities are more apparent than most because they are thought to be multiply “at risk,” what does a global world offer, and what does it portend? How might we usefully interleave such understandings of coming of age in a global world with literatures on education and risk? These are the kinds of questions that we believe could helpfully motivate a global youth studies more responsive to risk as well as promise.

The following review draws primarily from three edited volumes, selected because of their deliberate focus on contemporary research on youth culture situated at the confluence of global and local (cf. Grossberg, 1993). We paid particular attention to empirically based chapters in transnational or non-Western contexts; a focus on these contexts composed the majority of the chapters in two of the three volumes, or approximately 30 chapters and individual studies. Maira and Soep’s (2005) *Youthscapes: The Popular, the National, the Global* takes its initial inspiration, as its title suggests, from Appadurai’s (1996) notion of “scapes”—ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes, mediascapes—that are suggestive of the multiple perspectives and dimensions of global cultural flows. Young people’s experiences range over all of these, and by appropriating Appadurai’s terminology, Maira and Soep call attention to the centrality of youth in global economic, cultural, and social processes. Studies of youth culture and globalization have not often intersected, perhaps because “much work on globalization and transnationalism has tended to focus largely or explicitly on adults, and youth are assumed to be incomplete social actors, or subjects less able to exert agency in the face of globalization” (p. xxii). They set out to redress the balance by calling attention to “the ways young people *themselves* understand or grapple with globalization” (p. xx).

Nilan and Feixa (2006a), editors of *Global Youth? Hybrid Identities, Plural Worlds*, are interested “in the social construction of identity, in young people as creative social actors, in cultural consumption and social movements—the distinctiveness of local youth cultures in a globalized world” (Nilan & Feixa, 2006b, p. 1). They are adamant that the forces of globalization do not merely homogenize youth, destroying local variation and imposing Western values, but rather that cultural interactions result in “hybridizations” whereby both “global cultures are assimilated in the locality, and . . . non-western cultures impact upon the West” (p. 2; cf. Luke & Luke, 2000). They introduce research by non-Western researchers on youth cultures from 11 countries on five continents. Contributors to Dolby and Rizvi’s (2008) *Youth Moves: Identities and Education in Global Perspective* focus on multiple meanings of mobility in a global age, or “how youth ‘move’ within these new geographies of modernity” (p. 5). Such movements include the literal movement of people through travel and immigration and for education; the figurative movement of images, texts, and information constructed, sent, and received through digital technologies; movement through imagination (Appadurai, 2001); and mixtures of literal and figurative movement as diasporic communities are formed and maintained.

These authors are also interested in how youth themselves produce the conditions that will change their futures. Although they pay some attention to schools as important sites for youth, they believe, as do the contributors to the other volumes, that “other sites are also both pedagogical and formative of the increasingly global terrain on which youth find themselves” (p. 6)—including the arenas of work, technology, and consumer culture.

To analyze the chapters in these volumes for what they might tell us about youth who are growing up in a global world, we devised, through open and iterative coding, approximately 20 categories and subcategories related to youth and globalization. They can be summarized as follows: (a) the extent to which globalization is experienced as hegemonic or as having multiple, at times unpredictable impacts, as well as resistances and receptiveness on the part of youth to Western and U.S. influences; (b) “hybrid” practices as the result of global flows and hybridization as a global habit of mind; (c) the process of identity formation for youth, including the creation of and interconnections among transnational, national, and local senses of self; (d) the nature of youth agency in a global world, including manifestations of resistance, young consumers as choosers, and “reflexivity” about global processes; (e) the confluence of popular culture, consumption, and identity in youth culture the world over; (f) an aesthetic turn, the centrality of symbolic creativity in youth culture, manifested in the consumption and production of music, video, language, and fashion, its global influences, local variations, and reliance on digital media and technologies; (g) the creation, reclamation, and reconfiguration of desirable spaces for interaction, consumption, play, and creativity—spaces both literal and metaphorical, actual and digital; and (h) trajectories within and toward education and work, or the lack thereof, including labor around aesthetic practices. These we explain and illustrate below.⁶

Appropriating and Recontextualizing the West

If globalization is a unidirectional force, colonizing, destroying, or homogenizing local cultures (the so-called McDonaldization phenomenon), then we can expect its impacts on youth to be routinely pernicious. But globalization is rarely characterized in this way in the youth culture literature, although many scholars and others express their misgivings and worries over its impacts and implications. References are made, for example, to the destructive hegemony of English (Dallaire, 2006); it is lamented that African American cultural styles define being Black in countries such as Canada (Kelly, 2008); and certain governments, such as France and Singapore, to name only two, adopt policies to protect their languages, prevent brain drain, and control their youths’ adoption of Western values and popular cultural styles. But, by and large, when youth cultures are examined, researchers find, first, a range in the degree of uptake of things Western, across youth cultures internationally and even within a given nation state.

A case study of two middle-class Japanese teenagers showed how their peer group embraced Western popular cultural materials via cell phone technologies, enjoying the display of all things cool through “engaging in shared acts of consumption”

(Holden, 2006, p. 87). Nilan (2006), whose research focused on devout middle-class urban Muslim girls in Indonesia, observed the careful consumptive choices these young women made around cosmetics, music, and clothing, including global popular cultural products personalized by Islamist iconography, that were acceptable within religious law. Nilan described their conscious positioning of themselves as anti-Western and anti-American and their selective consumer choices as the “antithesis to Western cultural hegemony” (p. 91). Shahabi (2006) presented data on three types of youth in Iran, demonstrating the variation within youth cultures there, using the categories “conventional,” “cosmopolitan,” and “radical.” Those she termed “cosmopolitan” youth (who were middle and upper class) embraced many things Western and resisted the authority of the religious state, though not necessarily because of political motivations, whereas the “radical” young people were intent on rejecting the same; yet, both were subject to exposure at school to Islamic values.

A second finding across the studies of youth culture that we reviewed, in relation to worries about the hegemony of globalization, is the recontextualizing (Bauman & Briggs, 1990) of ideas, artifacts, and values as well as a pluralism of discourses and cultural forms. Niang (2006), studying S en egalese “bboys” (or break boys, Bronx boys, bad boys—all synonyms for male participants in hip-hop culture), noticed that their use of African American culture was “much more complex than simple imitation” (p. 168). As others who study the international appropriation of hip-hop have observed (Pennycook, 2003; Spady, Alim, & Meghelli, 2006), local variations and blends abound. Nuttall (2008) examined not only hip-hop practices but also what she termed, following Foucault (2005), the “self-stylization” of mostly middle-class youth associated with post-apartheid “Y” culture in Johannesburg, South Africa. In this context, youth also draw on Black American culture to “rework” it.

Shepler (2005) writes about former child soldiers in Sierra Leone. There “legions of youth with no hopes for education or employment” (p. 119) were conscripted as child combatants and committed atrocities during the war, but postwar they learned to make use of local and global discourses and cultural forms—for example, ideas from NGOs about the helplessness, innocence, and the rights of children; Rambo films and many other circulating popular media products; and local models of forgiveness—to begin finding their ways back into their local communities. To sort out the social and cultural influences on the child soldiers, Shepler argues that “these children are globalized in that they are caught up in sweeping international forces, and they are globalizing in that they are strategic users of global discourses and cultural artifacts” (p. 121). We find Shepler’s argument a helpful way to resolve the at times strident tension between the risk literature and the youth studies scholarship. Youth and children are in both subtle and obviously horrific ways vulnerable in our world, but as the examples above begin to suggest, they are also active, inventive, creative beings, busy making what sense of it they can, drawing on the local and global cultural resources to which they have access.

Hybridization: A Global Habit of Mind

The term “hybridity” is ubiquitous in the youth cultures literature and suggests somewhat more concretely how global cultural forms can mix or blend with rather than cannibalize the local. Long used in postcolonial literature (e.g., Bhabha, 1994), it has also been popularized through Bakhtin (1981), who used it in reference to the polyphony of dialects, registers, and languages found within even a single culture. We believe that accounts of hybridity go some distance in the youth cultures literature in illustrating how local youth are creative participants rather than global dupes or victims in processes of cultural production and consumption (cf. Knobel & Lankshear, 2008; Kraidy, 2005). Once more, then, we see global youth studies taking care to characterize youth as more than merely at risk. In the introduction to their edited volume, Nilan and Feixa (2006b) recount in some detail their choice of “hybrid” as a descriptor for “identities” in the title of their book:

On the one hand, hybridization is a process of cultural interactions between the local and global, the hegemonic and the subaltern, the centre and the periphery. On the other hand, hybridization is a process of cultural transactions that reflects how global cultures are assimilated in the locality, and how non-western cultures impact upon the West. (p. 2)

Reports of blendings of musical traditions are common in this literature. Valdivia (2008) mentions “reggeaton” as popular currently among Latina/o youth in the United States but predicts in the fast-moving culture of youth that in another year this blending of Caribbean, Hispanic, and Anglo traditions will be old news, already transformed. (Similarly, youth in Los Angeles who devote themselves to the urban dance form called “krumpin” claim that to miss an evening of practice means to be out of date, so quickly do the moves evolve [see LaChapelle, 2005].) Hybridization also describes processes of ethnic, national, and diasporic identity formation. Butcher and Thomas (2006) studied young people from migrant backgrounds in Sydney, Australia, primarily second-generation Middle Eastern and Asian youth, and found them actively attempting to define themselves at once as contemporary Australians, as connected to their families’ cultural backgrounds, and as a part of global youth culture. This sometimes confusing process is captured by a 15-year-old of Lebanese descent, when asked to describe his cultural background: “Well I can’t decide what I am. Sometimes I’m like ‘what’s up bro’ and other times I’m like ‘g’day mate.’ Sometimes I eat woggy food and sometimes I eat meat pies” (p. 64).

Butcher and Thomas (2006) provide several striking examples of staggeringly hybrid identity work among youth who hail, and whose families hail, from different multiple countries, who speak multiple languages, and who partake of multiple traditions. They describe the mixing of cultural forms and identities that they observed among youth as “ingenuous,” “inventive” (p. 69), and adaptive, and following Amit-Talai and Wulff (1995) they predict that resulting intercultural skills and dispositions prepare these young people well for poly-ethnic settings of the future. Indeed, one productive reading of the global youth literature could take as its purpose gleaning

concrete examples of the habits of mind, interpretive skills, and interactional strategies and expectations that are gathered under rubrics such as “global awareness” in lists of 21st century skills (e.g., Partnership for 21st Century Skills; see <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php>). It could be argued, then, that many contemporary youth, by virtue of necessity, are themselves at work lessening their own at riskness in our global world. It is important, however, not to romanticize or overestimate this necessity or to abdicate institutional responsibility for fostering such valued skills, dispositions, and identities. Petrova (2006), providing a counternarrative, has explored the emergence of contemporary skinhead cultures that “represent intensely hybrid identity formations” (p. 202); these formations are, by and large, anything but desirable responses to global exigencies.

Conceptualizing Agency Beyond Resistance

The calling card of early cultural studies work was its sustained interest in theorizing resistance as a quintessential instantiation of youth agency. As has often been noted, the Birmingham School framed their analyses in reference to postindustrial Britain and conflicts among social classes. So it was that Willis’s (1977) working-class lads were viewed as putting themselves at risk by contributing to the reproduction of their own working-class status through their rejection of school. Now, of course, the settings for cultural studies of youth extend far beyond the United Kingdom to globalizing postcolonial contexts, whereas interpretive frames that rely only on class-based analyses and that privilege White male experience are considered less than salutary. An important focus for future theorizations and empirical research, we believe, is how agency and resistance might be best conceptualized in relation to global youth (cf. Bucholtz, 2002; Grossberg, 1993; Maira & Soep, 2005) as well as how these concepts intersect with the understandings of youth at risk.

The studies we reviewed suggest several directions. In general, this scholarship decouples youth agency from traditional notions of resistance, and at its most convincing it examines youth agency as realized within particular historical, social, economic, and cultural contexts. Youth are generally represented as active, creative, and productively engaged, almost always in popular cultural worlds rather than school; often as reflective and strategic, especially in relation to consumption; and more rarely as politically alert and involved in working toward social change. Even when youth are obviously vulnerable, and the social, political, and economic dangers of their lives are clearly in view, at riskness is usually not dwelled on in this literature, nor are institutional, pedagogical, or programmatic interventions generally offered (for an exception, see G. A. G. Vasquez, 2005). This is, no doubt, a disciplinary entailment rather than a lack of interest; cultural studies scholarship is not customarily called on to provide solutions, and its focus on popular culture has privileged out-of-school and non-institutional contexts. However, the insights about youth gleaned through global youth studies seem to us richly informative for classroom inventions and teacher education and for rethinking conceptions in the educational literature of youth as at

risk or disadvantaged. On the other hand, schools and other educational settings deserve attention, via serious reconceptualizations, not merely as incidental sites for identity development via popular cultural means (cf. Dolby, 2001) but also as genuine venues for learning and for trajectories toward work, career, and citizenship in a globalized world.

The following examples make concrete some of the points about agency, resistance, and risk summarized above. In the context of a globalizing South India, Lukose (2008) examines the “consumer agency” of young women. She uses as an example for analysis the controversial “Miss World” pageant, which liberal and conservative women alike decried (albeit for different reasons), and the choices that young women make around clothing—the selection, for example, of the “churidahs” as a garment of compromise between traditional Indian and Western tastes. Her analysis brings to light unexpected subtleties around consumption, demonstrates that agency does not automatically connote resistance, and calls attention to the importance of understanding consumer agency and other instances of youth cultural practices within historical, political, and economic contexts. Indian girls, she argues, make their choices regarding fashion within a colonial and postcolonial discourse about consumption.

Thus, the act of “choosing” or “selecting,” usually in relation to being a consumer, is a thread that runs through studies of global youth culture. Sometimes researchers suggest that this quality of reflexiveness (Giddens, 1991) distinguishes global youth as having a particular kind of postmodern consciousness that can even promote an awareness that tends toward the critical (cf. Lash, 1994; Nilan & Feixa, 2006a). But, of course, this is not automatically the case, as Holden’s (2006) study of mobile phone use demonstrates. In this study, youth participated actively, playfully, and optimistically with new technologies but with little awareness of the patterns and significance of their consumptive practices. Figuring out how to position youth to be reflective, a project long valued in critical studies of education, might be reinvigorated by such insights from global youth studies. Echoing Benjamin (2002), Kenway and Bullen (2003, 2008) use the term *cyberflâneur* (also see Featherstone, 1998) to describe a particular kind of youth engagement with and in the global world. Kenway and Bullen (2008) call for a “postcritical pedagogy” that combines being critical of media products with having fun, so that “the earnestness of the critical is balanced with parody, play, and pleasure, and parody, play, and pleasure are understood as political” (p. 23). Such pedagogies include “Reclaim the Streets” parties as well as the design and use of critical political action websites such as www.whirledbank.org (satirizing the World Bank’s mission), www.mcspotlight.org (an anti-McDonald’s site), and www.globalarcade.org, at which youth can “play arcade games and learn about globalization” (Kenway & Bullen, 2008, p. 23).

Once more, careful contextualizations of global youths’ agency, resistance, or seeming lack thereof within historical, political, and social configurations of power, constraint, and opportunity can reenergize our conceptual categories, including our understandings of global and local relationships. Shepler’s (2005) study of child soldiers in Sierra Leone is a case in point. As mentioned earlier, these children

strategically adopted a variety of global and local discourses, creating a bricolage that combined elements from local and Western cultures, including an international discourse about children's rights that frames children as innocent and deserving of protection. Shepler points out the irony of the former child soldiers being able to express agency by claiming none, an insight that allows her to frame a question that captures the importance of careful contextualizations: Where do we locate youths' power? Sometimes that power seems reduced to practices of consumption, as already discussed, or connected to the stylization of self and other creative practices of meaning making, as we see below; but in Shepler's study, the power came from a shift in subjectivity, from the wielding of force to the assumption of helplessness. What an important reminder, as we contemplate risk and equity in a global world and as we extend our worldviews to include the cosmopolitan and the non-Western, that youthful agency comes in many shapes, sizes, and disguises.

Symbolic Creativity and an Aesthetic Turn

During the past 10 years, there has been what we label an "aesthetic turn" in studies of youth culture, in which accounts of participation in popular cultural forms, especially music and media-related consumption and production, have taken center stage, pushing the older tradition of accounting for the class-based resistance of young people to the side (cf. Bucholtz, 2002; Nayak, 2003).⁷ This does not mean that all youth who are so engaged do so without being politically alert or aware. In his study of the hip-hop countercultural youth movement in Dakar, Sénégal, Niang (2006) contends that "the musical and cultural meaning of local rap is constituted in significant critical fields such as inadequate social policy, stultifying social practices, infuriating inequalities, and everyday harsh reality for Africans" (p. 168). However, the road is not smooth, even when one's political vision is clear. The Sénégalese rappers, already members of the majority poor, were sometimes further marginalized by their own communities because of their participation in hip-hop, especially their adoption of distinctive fashion statements such as baggy trousers, and were dismissed as foolish imitators of African American urban youth. Comparing the British Asian underground to French hip-hop, Huq (2006) traces the movement of hip-hop in these countries from the margins to the mainstream, economically but also culturally, as these musical forms receive more acceptance. He makes the point that the music is now international, not American, and that the new hybridized forms belong incontrovertibly to their local contexts and suggest "a decentering of the West" (p. 28). There is, of course, a huge literature on hip-hop worldwide (cf. Condry, 2001 [Japanese B-boys and B-girls]; Durand, 2002 [Francophone hip-hop]; and Ibrahim, 1999 [Canadian Africans adopting hip-hop]).

Our modest point here is that educators interested in youth conventionally viewed as at risk would do well to be mindful of the relationships between youthful agency and music, especially hip-hop, along with other forms of popular culture, for insights about what Huq (2006) terms youths' "productive engagement" (p. 14) and

Muñoz and Marín (2006) similarly describe as “active and creative engagement . . . in the production of meanings” (p. 130). It is surely important to consider why it is that many young people who would be considered at risk in every category, and are mostly if not completely disengaged with school, reveal themselves to be remarkably devoted to and adept at the sophisticated and skillful interpretation and creation of popular cultural forms (cf. Hull & Nelson, 2005; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Kirkland, 2007; Muñoz & Marín, 2006).

We interpret the aesthetic turn among youth not only as a venue on the part of some for engaging in collective politically alert activity but also as the expression of a quintessentially human need to make meaning by engaging in what Willis (1990) termed “symbolic creativity.” Through language, visual arts, dance, music, or a multi-modal combination of these (cf. Finnegan, 2002), youth express themselves through performance, the production of artifacts, and the stylization of their bodies. The significance of such creative activity for young people is perhaps lost for some through the negative connotations of *popular* in popular culture (cf. Bucholtz, 2002; Willis, 1990). However, we can begin to appreciate its role by acknowledging its connection to the active construction of a self. The aesthetic activities of youth, we and others submit (cf. Muñoz & Marín, 2006), join palpably the pleasures of making meaning with the pleasures of constructing and enacting a self. This is quite a potent combination. In their study of music in Columbian youth cultures, Muñoz and Marín (2006) assert that participation in an artistic process, such as music making, “leads young people towards self-creation, to the production of new subjectivities—to the search for, and generation of, *something else* in the domains of ethics, politics, art and forms of knowledge converted into praxis” (p. 132). They describe what they term the “motor forces of creation” (p. 132) that drive or liberate creativity in youth cultures. One example is the ethos of DIY, or “do it yourself,” which encourages young people to believe that “anyone can,” including them. Another example is the importance of searching for one’s own style and making one’s own mark within a culture, a hip-hop mantra.

Included as well among youths’ aesthetically alert practices, also long noted by researchers (cf. Willis, 1990), are self-stylizations—the cultivation of a look, a style, a language, a set of tastes and preferences—meant and used to signal membership and establish group boundaries as well as to set oneself apart individually. In her book-length ethnography, Dolby (2001) demonstrates how “coloured,” Black, White, and Indian youth enacted racial categories in a post-apartheid South African school through choices in clothing, music, and place. Although the site for her study was a school, she observes that “formal schooling is increasingly marginalized and disconnected from the pulse of students’ lives” (p. 9), and she argues instead that “the global context of popular culture emerges as a critical site for the negotiation of race: for the marking of racialized borders, and for their subsequent displacement an rearrangement” (p. 9). Dolby thereby joins symbolic creativity and race. A major finding from her study is that global popular culture—specifically, the selection and combination of global commodities and preferences and their use and signification in a South African post-apartheid context—has become racialized: “Race is defined and

determined,” Dolby writes, “through attachments to particular aspects of popular culture,” and “popular culture is foregrounded as a terrain of struggle, from the school fashion show, to the music played at school events such as dances to school sports” (p. 15).

Also writing about the “born-free” generation of South Africa (Masland, 2004), those first to come of age post-apartheid, Nuttall (2008) describes “Y Culture,” known too as *Loxion Kulcha*. “Y” comes from a radio station called “YFM,” set up in 1996, 2 years after the democratic transition, as dedicated airspace for South African youth. This station played and popularized *kwaito*, a local music form that gained international popularity; a hip magazine; and a fashion label, “Loxicon Kulcha.” The language play in the latter—“loxicon” is a text-message-type spelling of “location,” which is also a synonym for “township,” and “kulcha” is a humorous spelling of “culture”—signifies a remix, the infusion of the township, long isolated from the central city, into a previously White preserve. Nuttall also analyzes a set of advertisements appearing in magazines and on billboards that similarly, but in an edgier way, take up issues related to South Africa’s racial history and, through irony and parody, redraw race in relation to style and class. For example, one advertisement for sports shoes showed several Black and White young people, all dressed in white sports gear, lounging next to a street sign that reads “Whites only,” while a policeman arrests a man who is not dressed in white. The image plays on the apartheid practice of arresting Africans who did not have passes to authorize their presence in a locale and suggests that the crime of the current moment is a fashion faux pas—in effect, that style trumps race.

Nuttall (2008) argues, then, that within such youth cultural forms “selfhood and subjectivity are presented less as inscriptions of broader institutional and political forces than as an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable artful process” (p. 151). The body as canvas, language as play and wit, the production of aesthetic distinctions that mark one as cool, as knowledgeable: These are Foucault’s technologies of the self (Martin, Gutman, & Hutton, 1987) and youths’ *modus operandi* at the current historical moment. In Nuttall’s words, “To be in Johannesburg today is to feel the immense coincidence of the end of apartheid and the rise of globalization, new media cultures and cultures of consumption” (p. 153). Such creative practices around self-fashioning do not, of course, obviate the racialized oppression that endures in South Africa post-apartheid.

The aesthetic turn is increasingly mediated and amplified by digital and electronic technologies that themselves sometimes become an extension of the bodies of global youth—mobile phones, iPods, and, formerly, boom boxes. And now, more and more routinely for some youth across the world, access to multimedia tools for creation and composition, not only and not even primarily consumption and interpretation, are becoming more the norm (cf. Hill & Vasudevan, 2008). In the edited collections that we reviewed, scholars noted inequalities regarding access to such tools and other accoutrements of being cosmopolitan in a global world, principally symbolic and literal mobility. Concomitantly, they acknowledged with angst their

research focus on more privileged youth, often in Western but sometimes too in developing and transforming societies, for whom access and mobility are not at issue. However, the ascendancy of the digital in a global world and the connectivity and geographic and semiotic reach of the Internet are, at the end of the day, taken in the youth cultures literature as givens. There are increasing if uneven numbers of examples, too, of youth in developing, transforming, and non-Western societies who achieve and put to advantage access to digital tools. The central questions become, then—apart from how we might further improve access and equity in regard to the distribution and circulation of tools in new media age (cf. Moje et al., 2008)—the following: How do global youth employ the tools, and toward what ends? What are the implications and complications of their uses for youths' consciousness about self and other, for their literacies, and for their social and economic futures?

Partly because the Internet can reduce distance and increase reach—enabling global flows, to use the common metaphor—those who study technology and literacy recognized earlier than most the value of taking a global perspective on digitally enabled practices of interconnection. Lam's (2000) study of a Chinese American student is a case in point. This teenager used the Internet to create a website about a Japanese pop singer and developed a social network of interlocutors around the world who were interested in communicating about the same; along the way, he significantly improved his English, although he had not been able to make such progress in school. More broadly, Lam's work on literacy learning in transnational digital contexts signals the importance of the Internet as a site for communication across diasporas as well as skill acquisition. Schneider (2005) similarly examined the identity formation of a youthful immigrant but conducted a "reception case history" over a period of years, taking her disciplinary starting point from film studies. Schneider's particular purpose was to explain why Jackie Chan films held such sway as a role model for this young person, who was a Tamil immigrant from Sri Lanka living in Switzerland in the mid-1990s with foster parents.

This young person began watching Chan's movies on TV and proceeded with typical fan activities such as collecting and archiving newspaper articles and promotional materials, compiling lists of films, imitating the star's poses in photographs. He later made brief movies himself, including Jackie Chan trailers and then "Schlegli" films, or "beat-em-up" (Schneider, 2005, p. 145) movies, in Chan fashion. Like the young man in Lam's study, he independently engaged with writing as a part of his fan activities, and he likewise struggled with writing in school. It is important that Schneider demonstrates how Jackie Chan represents not only an Asian male superstar (cf. Soep, 2005) but also a cosmopolitan who is globally successful. In Schneider's words, Chan represented "a necessary symbolic resource for the negotiation of questions of belonging and diaspora identity, and of the conflicts that come with them" (p. 154). What a wealth of information such a study can provide educators about the desires, proclivities, abilities, and the "motor forces of creation" (Muñoz & Marín, 2006, p. 132) that propel their students, who are often generally and simplistically summarized as "at risk" in their increasingly globalized home and school contexts.

Creating, Reclaiming, and Reconfiguring Desirable Spaces

The Internet is daily claimed by global youth as a powerful space for interaction, consumption, play, creativity, and learning. Indeed, a sensitivity to space, place, and landscape (Mitchell, 2002)—actual, digital, metaphorical and mixtures thereof—runs through global youth studies, and it has indeed invigorated social science research during the past decade, resulting in an emphasis on the spatial as well as the temporal and the social (cf. Leander & Sheehy, 2004; Massey, 1998b; Nayak, 2003; Scourfield, Dicks, Drakeford, & Davies, 2006; Skelton & Valentine, 19988; Soja, 1996). We suggest that a mapping of how youth and others, in the context of globalization, its constraints, and its affordances, are creating, reclaiming, and reconfiguring desirable spaces for interaction, consumption, play, creativity, learning, and work is a necessary and important project in pushing forward an equity agenda. As a modest beginning, our review has alerted us to shifting and sliding dimensions in relation to youth and space—what is private, what is public; what is safe and what is dangerous; what is accessible, what is off limits, and where one can dare to transgress; where one can be visible, where invisibility is required, and where there is needed a masquerade; where performance and play come to the fore, and where participation and learning are possible and productive.

Holden (2006) demonstrated that in Japan, where young people have limited space, time, and finances and space is at a premium, mobile phones “provide an insular world of undisturbed thought and invisible social interactivity beyond the confines of an overly-constricted Japanese society” (p. 83). Soep (2005) unveiled the imaginative work of a group of adolescent boys (African American, Filipino American, and Chinese American) who used inexpensive VCRs and camcorders, their free time, and a mother’s basement to “introduce into their domestic space global narratives—about immigration, world politics, organized crime across national borders” (p. 176)—that is, to make a movie, pass time, and stay “clean.” Nuttall (2008) detailed a postmodern cityscape called the “Zone,” an upscale district in Johannesburg and home to Y Culture, described above. A public space, it is also an exclusive one that does not welcome the poor. Yet it is one of the city’s “relatively few up-market open spaces where some manner of the unexpected is possible” and where “a young person (or anyone else) walking around the Zone circulates within an imagined Africa much larger than Johannesburg alone” (p. 156). Hansen (2008) took the cities of Recife, Hanoi, and Lusaka and their youth as a canvas, insisting on the beneficial and necessary juxtaposition of urban and youth studies and investigating their reciprocal importance to each other.

Present and Absent Trajectories

Spaces, places, and landscapes are not only traversed internally but also moved across and through over time, a temporality and movement that should have special importance for youth, traditionally represented as progressing toward an age-determined adulthood that is accompanied by schooling, work, and familial transitions.

However, if there is anything plain and simple that a global view of youth can tell us, or even a nuanced view of youth in the United States, it is that the old patterns of age and prospects have been forever altered. Most young people in our global age cannot look forward to following traditional work, marriage, and family patterns, and their economic futures are uncertain also in the West where, granted, opportunities, resources, and possibilities nonetheless remain significantly greater in comparison to the rest of the world. In the words of Hansen (2008), "Regardless of how youth is defined, limited life opportunities and poor wage-labor prospects are challenging the age and gender ideals that used to guide the social organization of households and families in both the West and the developing world" (p. 9). If not silent on the absence of rewarding trajectories through school and into work and adulthood, most of the global youth literature that we have reviewed mentions these in passing, on its way toward vibrant descriptions of popular cultural sites, aesthetically primed participation, and the agentive production of hybrid cultural forms.

Notable exceptions to this work are Hansen's (2008) examination of the effects of globalization on the lived experience and future prospects of youth in three "developing countries," Nayak's (2003) ethnography of young White men's construction of masculine identities in northeastern England in the context of global change and economic restructuring, and Jeffrey and Dyson's (2008) edited collection of 13 detailed portraits of individual young people around the world and the everyday, daunting challenges they face, including homelessness, joblessness, and religious persecution. Another exception is Soep's (2005) study of boys' self-taught production of movies during their leisure time. It speaks to their longing (like Randy's) to practice the aesthetic labor they hope someday to be paid for and also how unlikely such occupational desires are to be fulfilled. Soep writes, "The reality is that few will land well-compensated, emotionally rewarding, and nonexploitative (on some level) positions in any field, let alone the global entertainment industry" (p. 191; cf. Tannock, 2000). There is a similar and related absence of accounts of the power and promise of schooling as preparation for living in a global world and developing cosmopolitan sensibilities.

This literature is uniformly glum about and almost dismissive of the relevance of schooling as usual for the future trajectories of youth in general and vulnerable youth especially. Some accounts illustrate how easily and unreflectively educators can proceed with conventional assumptions and curricula, marching out of step with young people's histories, identities, and desires for the future. Singh and Doherty (2008), for example, juxtaposed interviews with educators and their international students in Australian higher education, who were mainly of Chinese heritage from Southeast Asia and who comprised an impressive 23% of the total student population. The teachers, who found themselves increasingly part-time and at the economic mercy of multiple employers, made unhelpful and reductive moral judgments about these international students, viewing their motivations cynically and with disappointment. Singh and Doherty lay blame at the feet of an "institutionalized pedagogy that builds its common-sense categories solely from concepts of 'culture,' 'cultural difference,' and fixed cultural identities" (p. 116; cf. Sarroub, 2005).

In her foreword to Dolby's (2001) ethnography of a Durban high school, McCarthy (2001) makes clear the educational significance for researchers and educators in the West of not only Dolby's ethnography and what it reveals about the dynamic relationship of race and culture in South Africa but also scholarship on globalization in general. McCarthy's commentary is worth quoting at length:

Put directly, contemporary curriculum thinkers and practitioners cannot any longer afford to look askance at critical developments associated with globalization now transforming social and cultural life outside and inside schools around the globe. These developments have enormous implications for pedagogical practice and the educational preparation of school youth. . . . The great task of teachers and educators as we enter the new millennium is to address these new patterns of racial reconfiguration, cultural rearticulation, hybridity, and multiplicity now invading educational institutions in the new era of globalization. Against the tide of these developments, curriculum thinkers, particularly in the United States, have tended to draw down a bright line of distinction between the established school curriculum and the teeming world of multiplicity, hybridity and plurality that now flourishes in the everyday lives of school youth beyond the school. (p. 3)

We are likewise convinced, and we hope our review will persuade readers, of how critical it is for schools and educational practice to be informed by a global youth studies, a scholarship that we also argue should itself be engaged with the challenging landscape of school and curricular reform as well as the desires and needs on the part of global youth for satisfying and sustaining work and careers, even as solutions to school and work reform seem out of reach.

CONCLUSION: EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS FOR GLOBAL YOUTH

In a compelling book on media in our global world, Silverstone (2007) theorizes the potential of media to be a moral public space, a "mediapolis" where we see and are seen, where our worlds are represented, and where we have both a right to "hospitality," and thereby to be welcomed and to speak, and an obligation to be hospitable, to listen, and to hear. Silverstone argues that global media, both mass media and personal media, now position us to engage with the "other" as we and the rest of the world experience the "mediated images of strangers" that "increasingly define what constitutes the world" (p. 4). Silverstone believes that, to an extent, this experience can reverse the "customary taken-for-granted nature of media representation, in which we in the West do the defining, and in which you are, and I am not, the other" (p. 3); this perhaps will be an outcome of the social networking exchange in Laxmi's school, introduced at the beginning of our review. Like Appiah (2005, 2006) and Benhabib (2002), Silverstone wrestles with seemingly divisive global and local diversity and plurality, as they are juxtaposed with the necessity of interdependence. "Does difference," he asks, "condemn humanity either to indifference or to a fundamental refusal of its value" (p. 13)? Or can we adopt "cosmopolitanism" as an ethic, whereby we "recognize not just the stranger as other, but the other in oneself" (p. 14)? He continues, "Cosmopolitanism implies and requires, therefore, both reflexivity and toleration. In political terms it demands justice and liberty. In social

terms, hospitality. And in media terms, it requires . . . an obligation to listen” (p. 14). We think of Randy’s meditation on Darfur.

Silverstone’s work resonates with several themes of this chapter. Most straightforwardly, it underlines the important place of media in processes of globalization, elaborating theoretically what the global youth we have introduced understand experientially: the positive and negative dimensions and potential of the role of media in connectivity and representation. Second, he reminds us once more of the interconnectedness of our world, despite its divisions, an interconnectedness, he insists, that is made possible by and experienced through media. Last, and most evocative in this context, he bravely asserts that media must be ethically constituted:

Insofar as they provide the symbolic connection and disconnection that we have to the other, the other who is the distant other, distant geographically, historically, sociologically, then the media are becoming the crucial environments in which a morality appropriate to the increasingly interrelated but still horrendously divided and conflictual world might be found, and indeed expected. (p. 8)

We similarly consider what might constitute ethical research and practice when our focus is equity and youth—youth at risk but youth, as we have seen, of vast promise—in a global world. One basic answer is that scholarship and activism around youth, risk, and equity must, *perforce*, be globally aware, positioning youth to learn, communicate, and participate and to do so across geographical, ideological, semiotic, cultural, and linguistic difference and boundaries.

The examples assembled below illustrate different possibilities for more equitable school and life experiences for youth such as Laxmi, José, and Randy, and a range of projects and types of involvement on the part of researchers and educators. The vicissitudes and challenges of globalization have forced some places—a school in Sweden, for example—to forge new educational pathways for their students. The potentialities of new technologies have opened up spaces for other programs—a teaching network in rural India, an after-school program in Louisiana, an interdisciplinary research program in Mumbai—to offer youth and their teachers new paths for academic and personal exploration and growth. We find that the five programs we highlight below, each of which Appadurai (2000) might term a “grassroots globalization effort,” attempt to address some of the negative accompaniments of globalization: displacement, poverty, lack of educational opportunity, and the trauma that sometimes accompanies immigration.

Tensta Gymnasium: Local and Global Schooling

We learned about the Tensta Gymnasium from Marcelo Suárez-Orozco and Carolyn Sattin (2007). This Stockholm school serves “children of displaced peoples from nearly every troubled spot on earth” (p. 14) and has worked to meet the needs of its students in innovative, but not impossible-to-duplicate ways. As Wikan (2007) notes, countries such as Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, whose languages are not spoken elsewhere yet which are increasingly multiethnic and multilingual, face huge and particular globalization-related challenges. Teachers and administrators at Tensta worked with their counterparts at their sister city, the Ross School in New York, to

overhaul their curriculum and entire ethos (see <http://www.ross.org/podium/default.aspx?t=36398>). Suárez-Orozco and Sattin (2007), and others (Crul, 2007; Süssmuth, 2007; Wikan, 2007), document the changes at Tensta over time; they suggest that it serves as a model for schools in global cities because it encompasses

increasing diversity; increasing complexity; premiums placed on collaboration and interdisciplinary work, taking multiple perspectives on problems, and moving across language and cultural boundaries; and the sophisticated use of state-of-the-art technologies to enhance student engagement. (p. 17)

Writing about the integration of immigrant youth, Crul (2007) reminds us that schools such as Tensta—with large immigrant populations and (at the start of this documentation) low test scores and falling enrollment—do not become model schools for large cities with more funds alone. “To turn the tide,” Crul writes, “a whole new concept of learning must be considered and carefully implemented” (p. 227). He argues that increased teacher–student contact and interaction time are central to the success of both the school and its students, as teachers are more easily able to make interventions and tailor programs to students’ needs when they have more time to spend with students on meaningful activities (in direct contrast to the working and learning conditions at José’s school).

Digital Study Hall: Local Teaching, Global Network

Kanta, a teacher in an informal rural learning center in a remote village in northern India, stood in the tiny alcove of her two-room house. A dozen or so adolescent girls sat crowded at her feet, having put aside their “chikan” embroidery, the vocational training their parents had sent them to receive, while a bevy of younger children peered in and pushed for a prime spot at the door. All awaited the start of the video lesson, a digital story called “The Lion and the Tiger,” which they listened to and then read in English with Kanta’s mediation, translating the unfamiliar words into Hindi and back again. This remarkable scene comes courtesy of Digital Study Hall (<http://dsh.cs.washington.edu/>), a teacher development project whose central hub is physically located in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, but whose spokes extend to other parts of the country and more recently the world. In this project, urban and rural teachers learn subject matter and pedagogy from digitized videos of good teaching. These videos are created in the classrooms of more experienced teachers, such as those who teach at Laxmi’s urban private school, and are mediated by local teachers on site, with all teachers—and sometimes students standing in for teachers—learning about practice (Sahni et al., 2008).

The use of inexpensive and readily available digital video technologies, combined with an expansive notion of teaching, texts, and literacy, linked to a network of like-minded teachers, trainers, and information and communications technology professionals, enables teachers such as Kanta, who have no formal training, to both learn and teach a group of children whom the world has forgotten. The migration of people and the movement of texts and images around the world are phenomena that some consider the quintessential feature of our digital and global age (Appadurai, 1996).

Teachers such as Kanta and the youth she instructs have historically been shut out of these movements, confined and constrained geographically, socially, and educationally. However, the Digital Study Hall project provides evidence that it is possible to reconfigure flows of information, tools, people, and texts, creating a band of geospatial opportunity within which the educational and social spaces of inhabitants of remote villages can be improved, allowing them hopeful access to some of the advantages of a digital information age.

In one sense, this is a very local project, culturally attuned and informed by local knowledge and customs, but it is situated in a global network that extends to the edges of India and beyond, in terms of its users, funders, and human resources, especially its volunteers, who come principally from the United States. In addition, the literacy pedagogy—whole language, child centered—is nonlocal, and the ideas presented to teachers by teachers expand local ideas about what it means to teach and learn. We see this work as an integration of global literacies and local needs in so-called non-integrated gap areas, especially rural villages. These children and their teachers desire educational advancement, and the project itself is a melding of new technologies and a global perspective with the needs and life plans of the local population.

Hurricane Katrina Evacuees: Youth Writing Themselves Into Their Social Worlds

In this third example, we turn to work inspired by California-based UC Links researchers (e.g., Cole, 2006; O. Vasquez, 2003) and teachers in an after-school program for New Orleans youth displaced by Hurricane Katrina. This is one of a growing number of projects in which written and/or visual narratives serve as tools with which participants craft agentive selves (cf. Hull & Zacher, 2007). In the 2 years after the hurricane, UC Links set up an after-school program in one of the evacuee camps in Baton Rouge. The camp, “built” out of FEMA trailers, was home to an indeterminate number of children and youth who attended school and the after-school program sporadically. Local university students came to work with the youth, who attended to create digital stories about topics of their choosing. The goals of the project were twofold: “students used the virtual world of digital storytelling to negotiate their sense of displacement and to begin to re-define both their sense of place in a disordered world and their sense of themselves as emerging ‘experts’ in that world” (Avila, Underwood, & Woodbridge, 2008, p. 8; also see Avila, 2008).

We have included it here not only because of the use of digital technologies with youth who would not otherwise have access to them but also because the digital movie products, many visible online at <http://www.storyagainstsilence.org>, “enabled these students to write themselves back into their own lives and social worlds” (Avila et al., 2008, p. 9). Although Hurricane Katrina was a climatic event, the effects it produced in the United States are similar to the effects of some processes of globalization (i.e., civil war, immigration) on youth in the United States and in many other countries (see Taylor & Yamasaki, 2006). In this sense, a project that works with children in need, and offers ways for them to express themselves, acquire new skills, and perhaps recontextualize themselves in new futures, is a useful one indeed.

PUKAR: Documentation as Intervention and Research

In Mumbai, Arjun Appadurai, Carol A. Breckenridge, and their colleagues have created PUKAR, which both means “to call” in Hindi and is an acronym for “Partners in Urban Knowledge Action and Research” (see <http://www.pukar.org.in>). The overarching goal of PUKAR is “to bring together youth and globalization in a forum for cross-disciplinary debate oriented to extend beyond the upper middle-classes of the city” (Appadurai, 2006b, p. 173). Those who donate time to PUKAR—it is an extremely grassroots project, with no government funding, no NGO connections, and no university ties—do so with the desire to bring “the capacity to research within the reach of ordinary citizens, especially college-age youth” (p. 175). Lately, concerned with the accessibility and utility of research as well as the ways that knowledge is both “more valuable and more ephemeral” (p. 168) in a globalized world (also see Appadurai, 2001, 2006a), PUKAR has attempted to bring the “right to research,” which is generally seen as the purview of more highly educated academics and professionals, to city youth.

One of the goals of PUKAR is an insistence that research in “the arts, humanities, film media should not be separate from research on the economy, infrastructure, and planning” (Appadurai, 2006b, p. 174). This ethos is combined with efforts to develop the ability to see how the city and its future are “embedded in global processes” (ibid.) in Mumbai citizens. According to the PUKAR website, a related goal is “to democratize research and broaden access to knowledge among disenfranchised or weakly institutionalized groups and to create a space from which their non-traditional and non-expert knowledge can contribute to local, national and global debates about their own futures” (<http://www.pukar.org.in/aboutus.htm>). The projects of these “barefoot researchers” (A. Appadurai, personal communication, September 2008) are based on research methods taught by Rahul Srivastava that Appadurai (2006b) characterizes as “documentation as intervention” (p. 174). Ten to fifteen “junior fellows” and up to 300 Mumbai youth are trained each year in these methods through the Youth Fellowship program (<http://www.pukar.org.in/fellowship.htm>). Thus, PUKAR directly addresses a growing knowledge gap—what Appadurai terms the “gap between the globalization of knowledge and the knowledge of globalization” (p. 175)—through active, experimental local partnerships that, according to PUKAR’s own reports, afford Mumbai youth a more agentic sense of their relationship to their global city.

Brown Paper Studio

Run by a group of student volunteers from a local university and begun by a Fulbright scholar from the United States (Judyie Al-Bilali; see Al-Bilali, 2006), a group of youth meet weekly in a voluntary after-school program that contributes to the “arts and culture” component of the new South African curriculum. The school’s endorsement of the Brown Paper Studio, as it is called, is partly informed by the fact that schools such as this, Glendale High, in Mitchell’s Plain, a township created by the apartheid policy of forced removals in the 1970s, have no teaching capacity or

infrastructure to implement the arts and culture aspect of the new outcomes-based curriculum. The aim of Brown Paper Studio, whose name comes from the practice of having brown paper sheets on the walls for participants to write on, is to use cultural engagement and creativity to promote cross-cultural engagement and understanding among youth who are severely at risk.

Many of these youth are from Mitchell's Plain, a township originally designated for "colored" or "mixed race" South Africans; because of political changes since 1995, refugees and Xhosa speakers have also moved in. Other attendees in search of ways to improve their English are from nearby historically designated Black townships. However, all of them are, like Laxmi, José, and Randy, young people variously "at risk." In fact, the Mitchell's Plain area is notorious in Cape Town for its high levels of poverty, alcoholism, gangsterism, and crime. Cape Town is also the South African city with the highest levels of violence perpetrated both against and by youth (Ward, Flisher, Zissis, Muller, & Lombard, 2001).

One recent product of the studio was a youth-authored play, titled *Only a Name*. In writing this particular play, youth participants chose to explore tensions between groups perceived as "other" long before the "outbreak" of xenophobia across the country (Flockemann, 2008). Indeed, the "others" referred to in the play were their own South African classmates, foregrounding the divisions between South African Black communities within the same classroom. The play developed through workshops and was often the subject of heated debates in which the youth were able to both perform and experience an approximation of Appiah's (2006) cosmopolitanism. The youths' involvement was via a rehearsal, rather than an enactment, of what Benhabib (2002) describes as a "deliberative democracy" sensitive to political and cultural differences, allowing these differences to be voiced, contested, and negotiated. The self-stylization involved in these performative enactments was not an end in itself; rather, it became the method through which the young people could enter into conversations with others and experiment with issues encountered in broader civic society, intimate relationships at home, their classroom, and the streets of Mitchell's Plain, all spheres in which they can still be defined as at risk.

Equitable Solutions and Futures?

A conundrum of this review is that it juxtaposes evidence of the creativity, agency, and bursting potential of youth growing up in a global world with the undeniable, severe, and intolerable material constraints associated with poverty and other inequalities as well as the dangers associated with ideological differences. So at one and the same time, our challenge is to acknowledge the ways that youth are indeed at risk in a global world and to refuse to allow reductive notions of risk to limit our visions of ability, curriculum, schooling, and life trajectories. We believe the above examples of research, program development, and teaching, often intertwined, accomplish these double aims. In the search for educational experiences, programs, institutions, and practices that will make a difference in the lived experiences and life chances of global youth at risk, we acknowledge, with Luke (2008), that educational efforts alone are

generally insufficient, needing to be joined to sociologically aware theorizing (e.g., Albright & Luke, 2007; Bourdieu, 1977), broader economic reform, and more comprehensive interventions (e.g., Tough, 2008). Yet within the realm of education, it is nonetheless crucial to consider what educational approaches, pedagogies, programs, and theories can best constitute equitable and powerful contexts for learning and identity formation in a global world and—like the efforts illustrated in the last section—do our best to help create them. Such work will do more than glamorize the creativity of youth who are so at risk that their agency alone cannot clear a path to successful school and work trajectories. It will also see past futures that can only be bleak, in which young people do not measure up, their worlds are hopelessly constrained, and they are viewed as merely at risk.

NOTES

¹The names of people and places are pseudonyms.

²Sachs (2006) reminds us that poverty varies in its extremity; for example, most who are considered poor in the United States, although certainly disadvantaged here, do not suffer the same deprivation or face such severe struggles as do people who are poor in parts of Africa. The same is true, of course, when we consider youth labeled “at risk.” There is a danger in asserting an equivalency between youth “at risk” here and elsewhere, as one of the reviewers of this article helpfully noted. Indeed, Laxmi’s material circumstances are both better and worse than those of youth in different settings and societies. Creating a heightened awareness of this lack of equivalency is, in fact, one of the goals for our article, but at the same time we see benefits in examining the commonalities that connect youth who are growing up in a global world.

³We regularly refer in this article to the “West” and “Western,” as do many of the researchers whose work we review. We acknowledge that, although we do not herein unpack and complicate these terms, there is a great need to do so in our own work as in much contemporary scholarship. For an example of how these terms can be helpfully interrogated in relation to language and literacy scholarship, see Bhattacharya (2008).

⁴As even its supporters acknowledge, the notion of cosmopolitanism is problematic in a number of ways, including its association with elitist and mainly Western traditions. For discussions of cosmopolitanism, see Beck (2006), Held (1995, 2003), Luke and Carrington (2002), and Silverstone (2006).

⁵For descriptions of localized critical literacy efforts in South Africa, including attempts to both foster and document multimodal literacies, see Stein (2000), Stein and Newfield (2002), and Stein and Slonimsky (2006).

⁶There is not a one-to-one mapping of the eight analytic categories to the sections that follow because some categories, such as identity formation, thread throughout.

⁷It remains to be seen whether what we have called an aesthetic turn reflects a change in the actual phenomena among the populations studied or a shift in the focus of the researchers themselves in terms of what piques an ethnographic imagination. We thank Allan Luke for this insight.

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