

ROUTLEDGE RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

# Literacy, Play and Globalization

Converging Imaginaries in Children's Critical  
and Cultural Performances

Carmen Liliana Medina  
and Karen E. Wohlwend



# LITERACY, PLAY AND GLOBALIZATION: CONVERGING IMAGINARIES IN CHILDREN'S CRITICAL AND CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

Carmen Liliana Medina & Karen E. Wohlwend ©2014

Foreword: Vivian Maria Vasquez

## **PART I: LITERACY RESEARCH WITHIN MULTISITED IMAGINARIES AND CONVERGING WORLDS**

### **Chapter 1: Global Networks, Cultural Production, and Literacy Practices**

Converging Research Spaces through Collaborations: Mapping Complex Imagined  
Worlds, Cultural Practices, and Emerging Identities  
Converging Worlds, Transcultural and Transnational Literacy Practices

### **Chapter 2: Understanding Multisited Imaginaries in Literacy Research**

Defining Collective and Multisited Imaginaries  
Ethnographies of Globalization  
    Local/Global Networks as “Sites” for Cultural Production  
    Studying Culture in Relation to a “Third”  
    Places, Practices, and Participation  
Nexus of Practice: Connected and Expected Cultural Practices  
    Scripting: The Imagination as Social Practice in Play and Dramatic Experiences  
    Embodiment and Improvisation in Playful and Performative Pedagogies  
Performance  
    Deliberately Enacting Identities  
    Ruptures and Emergence  
Summary

## **PART II: MAPPING MULTISITED IMAGINARIES IN LITERACY RESEARCH**

### **Chapter 3: Mapping Global Markets in Local Communities: Studying Cultural Production in Relation to a “Third”**

Telenovelas as Circulating Global Networks  
Disney as Circulating Global Networks

### **Chapter 4: Cultural Production of Telenovelas Dramatic Worlds**

*Carmen Liliana Medina with María del Rocío Costa*  
Las Bellas Van al Diablo (Students' Devised Telenovela, First Draft)  
Scripting Gender Performances in Converging Spaces between Literature and Media:  
    Coordinating and Negotiating Multiple Nexus of Practice  
Scripting Global Imaginaries and Local Social Conditions in Nexus of Practice:  
    Performing Woman in Struggle  
Ruptures in Global/Local Convergences: Mediating Curriculum Design between Local  
and Global Literacy Imaginaries

## **Chapter 5: Cultural Production of Disney Princess Play Worlds**

*Karen E. Wohlwend*

Cultural Production in Classroom Play Worlds

Negotiating Practices for Participation

Embodying Media Identity Texts and Improvising to Expand the Nexus of Family

Scripting and Rescripting Media Narratives

    Rescripting the Disney Princess Family

        Expanding the “Good Family” in Disney Princess Media

    Scripting Mulan

## **Chapter 6: Convergences and Slippages in Children’s Improvisations and Teachers’ Pedagogical Imaginaries**

    Convergences and Clashes among Popular Cultures and Teacher Knowledge Imaginaries

    Slippages among Teachers’ Nostalgic Childhood Imaginaries and Children’s Contemporary Media Knowledge

## **PART III: CONVERGENCES IN COLLECTIVE CULTURAL IMAGINARIES**

### **Chapter 7: Participation, Scripting, and Embodiment in Children’s Collective Imaginaries**

    Places, Practices, and Participation

    Scripting identity texts: The Role of the Imagination as a Social Practice

    Improvisation, Embodiment: Composing Historical and Imagined Bodies

### **Chapter 8: Globalization, Imagination, and the Possibilities of Agency**

    Imagination as a Mediator of Globalization

    Agency within and between Micro Tactics and Circulating Macro Global Networks

    Convergence as a Catalyst for the Emergence of New Locals

### **Chapter 9: Literacy, Play, and Globalization in Teacher Education**

    Critical Scriptings in Teacher Education

    Playshops as Possibilities for Teacher Inquiry

## **References**

## **Appendices**

    Appendix A: Transcript

    Appendix B: Reprint: Wohlwend, K. E., & Medina, C. L. (2012). Media as nexus of practice: Remaking identities in What Not to Wear. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 33(4), 545-560. doi: 10.1080/01596306.2012.692961

## **Chapter Abstracts**

### **Chapter 1**

#### **Global Networks, Cultural Production, and Literacy Practices**

Chapter 1 describes the rationale for the book and the collaborative process among authors who are arguing for the reframing of literacy and multiliteracy pedagogies to consider the complex dynamics and consequences of engaging with/in global networks in situated communities. This chapter elaborates on the idea that children's social imaginations in contemporary times are embedded in fluid but also disjointed and fragmented cultural practices with multimodal textual resources that are not static or tethered to one particular place yet carry attached histories and ideologies that become traces of multiple localities. Therefore, reading, writing, and cultural production happen at the intersection of participation in complex converging imaginaries that cannot be ignored when visualizing literacy pedagogies that matter to/for children.

### **Chapter 2**

#### **Understanding Multisited Imaginaries in Literacy Research**

The authors lay out a theoretical and methodological model to approach the question: As social science researchers and more specifically as literacy researchers, how do we define and document the production of knowledge across cultural boundaries and interpret the power dynamics that affect—or at least are made visible in—people's everyday lives in local communities (including classrooms)? Three key bodies of work are presented to approach this question: (1) anthropology of globalization and the notion of imaginaries, (2) webs of cultural practices that bind communities together, and (3) cultural performance that understands identity as performative enactments that rupture existing social relationships and allow new ways of being to emerge.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Mapping Global Markets in Local Communities: Studying Cultural Production in Relation to a "Third"**

In situating their work within the trajectory of works in anthropology of globalization the researchers had to open up their inquiry to new aspects, such as a redefinition of "sites." They present the process of bridging students' ideas in the classroom as the point of departure for the "field" work to allow for paths and directions to emerge, taking a stance that recognizes and embraces that the local is a point of reference to engage with multiple global worlds and imaginaries. This chapter provides an analysis of dominant media flows and networks in two communities: one in Puerto Rico with a focus on the Latino media genre of telenovelas and one in Iowa with a focus on the Disney Princess film franchise.

## **Chapter 4**

### Cultural Production of Telenovelas' Dramatic Worlds

*Carmen Liliana Medina with María del Rocío Costa*

Medina and Costa present their collaborative work with a classroom teacher and a group of third graders in an urban public school in Puerto Rico. Through a critical inquiry approach, the students chose to study the Latino media genre of telenovelas. The overall aspects of the experience included an analysis of the content and structure of telenovelas, reading literature resembling or disrupting the structure of telenovelas, producing and performing telenovelas, and a critical analysis of the social discourses brought in the students' telenovelas production. An analysis of children's playful and dramatic engagement with telenovelas in the classroom shows how it is possible to understand the complex co-construction of collective and multisited imaginaries that resituate children's literacy work as cultural production working within and against the dominant ideologies of a global media phenomena such as telenovelas.

## **Chapter 5**

### Cultural Production of Disney Princess Play Worlds

*Karen E. Wohlwend*

In this chapter, Wohlwend focuses on cultural production in the Disney Princess play of one group of girls and boys in a kindergarten in a public school in Iowa. She describes the play dynamics of a group of children who were avid media fans and had transnational connections to China, Russia, and the Philippines. These children made up a Disney Princess affinity group in which they reenacted familiar film scripts and expectations for each princess character, quoting memorized dialogue or singing songs from the films as they talked in character while playing with dolls or using princess accessories. The analysis demonstrates how in media-based affinity groups like this one, children's transmedia performances cemented their friendships, social practices, cultural knowledges, and peer culture, making rich sites for studying cultural production in overlapping imaginaries.

## **Chapter 6**

### Convergences and Slippages in Children's Improvisations and Teachers' Pedagogical Imaginaries

In this chapter, the authors demonstrate how teachers in Puerto Rico and Iowa negotiated tensions around integrating popular media, literacy, and filmmaking in their classrooms. Looking across studies in both contexts enables analysis of the clashes and possibilities that emerged as teachers, researchers, and students negotiated their understandings of multiple nexus of practices and cultural imaginaries. Examination of teachers' curricular decision-making shows how engaging out-of-school imaginaries creates ruptures that open up opportunities for other potential conversations and experiences in the classroom between students and teachers.

## **Chapter 7**

### Participation, Scripting, and Embodiment in Children's Collective Imaginaries

Looking across both classroom sites in Puerto Rico and Iowa, the authors unpack the notion of converging collective imaginaries to conceptualize what is produced at the intersections of three kinds of cultural inquiry: ethnographies of globalization, nexus of practice, and performance. They situate these three bodies of knowledge as overlapping to create an expansive view of classroom literacies in relation to (1) children's multiple sites of engagement (imagined worlds and communities); (2) the connected and expected cultural practices negotiated across sites (nexus of practice); and (3) the identity enactments, improvisations, and ruptures (performances) that emerge as converging imaginaries in children's multiliteracies work. Each of these intersections is examined to understand what can be seen through its particular lens on children's cultural production. Three key ideas emerge in this analysis to consider as significant: multiple sites of cultural engagement; scripting as the work of imagination as a social practice; and the critical possibilities produced through the emergent and improvisational nature of play and drama.

## **Chapter 8**

### Globalization, Imagination, and the Possibilities of Agency

In this chapter, the authors identify three interdependent components in children's critical cultural production within performance practices: imagination, convergence, and collaboration. Working across these three aspects, they lay out and make an argument for an approach to classroom literacy work as cultural production for two purposes: (1) as a means to resituate engagement and learning in ways that align with children's encounters with literacy in their everyday lives and (2) as a way to reposition classrooms as part of these practices. This reconceptualizes classrooms as key places to produce new localities for learning instead of classrooms as isolated or separate entities where knowledge is predetermined.

## **Chapter 9**

### Literacy, Play and Globalization in Teacher Education: Critical Scriptings and Playshops

In this chapter, both authors explore how their work in literacy education with practitioners has been transformed by the ideas presented in this book, particularly as they relate to new approaches to literacy teacher education and the ways teacher research and professional development can be accomplished by working with in-service teachers in their classrooms. They share a set of experiences to help readers rethink literacy teacher education in relation to globalized networks and discourses by recognizing the ways we are all implicated and actively participating in relocalizing, remaking, and reconstructing meanings around these relationships.