

## YOUTHFUL CONCERNS: MOVEMENT, BELONGING AND MODERNITY<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This commentary explores the links between language, modernity, and young people's movement – within nations and across borders. Given the scope and pace of globalization and transnational migration, this movement has created a good deal of local and national anxiety over how youth are negotiating their rights to belong – in schools, in cities, and in nation-states. The commentary addresses how youth must be understood as specifically modern subjects, in Foucault's sense of the term, including how they both utilize and trouble the binary categories associated with modernity, the ways that modern young subjects are constructed through discourses of sexuality, and the ways that young people are disciplined in specific social spaces. In addition to the possibility of hybridity and invention suggested by the juxtaposition of family and peer cultural traditions, the commentary asks how new youth styles also involve the disciplining of youthful bodies by institutions, family members, and peers.

**Keywords:** Youth; Language; Migration; Globalization; Identity; Modernity.

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this special issue is to explore the effects of movement on youth language, ranging from situations that include the migration of peoples across national borders to the global exchange of cultural and linguistic resources. This is no easy task, in particular because the nuanced study of youth language and culture often entails a “micro” approach, focusing in on conversational context. To complicate matters, linguists and anthropologists have rarely approached youth as fully formed social and political actors (Bucholtz 2002). In what follows, we seek to broaden the scholarly understanding of youth language and practice, building from the study of identity and the context of the peer group into a politics of youth culture. We begin by asking how and why the topics of youth, language, and globalization matter and what, taken together, they help us address.

In their insightful introduction, Bucholtz and Skapoulli direct our attention to how adult authority often serves as a foil for youthful concerns in these studies. In this commentary, we are equally interested in the ways that youth become a foil for adult concerns and how they take up these same concerns themselves. As Bucholtz and Skapoulli describe, youth often find themselves “at the front lines” of sweeping social,

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political, and cultural change. A question for further investigation, then, is how and why they got there in the first place. Several articles in this issue offer some possible clues. In his study of global hip hop, Alim notes that African-Arab youth are “demonized by the French state as the source of ‘civil unrest,’ ” an observation that is confirmed by Tetreault’s discussion of such youth. Along similar lines, Skapoulli describes the recent moral panic over female sexuality in Cyprus, directed primarily toward young women whose loss of virginity is associated with widespread social decay. These examples of moral panic are not restricted only to the recently arrived immigrant youth who do not always blend in with their peers. As these studies show, widespread public “concerns” over the linguistic and cultural practices of youth continue to target second- and even third-generation immigrants. Some of the questions that arise in this situation are the following: Why are these youth often unable to escape the stigmas associated with the country of origin of their extended families? What are the politics of “othering” that continue to produce racialized, ethnicized, gendered, and embodied difference among youth? While youth identities are often articulated through racial, ethnic, gendered, and linguistic categories, how are these categories themselves shaped by larger historical, political, and economic contexts?

In order to pay careful attention to how and why the cultural practices of youth come under increasing scrutiny, we must also situate and explain a shared focus on language. As sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists, we are obviously drawn to the creativity and skill youth display in situations of cross-cultural contact. And yet language matters precisely because we are not the only ones intrigued by the linguistic competencies of youth and the things they talk about. Within the context of increased migration, language (including one’s “mother tongue”) has become an efficient way to patrol national and institutional borders (Lee), to control the movement of people within public space (Tetreault), and to monitor belonging within specific communities (Alim, Chun, Skapoulli). While language can be embraced to draw people together, these articles suggest that language is increasingly employed to mark and reinforce salient sociopolitical differences, particularly as physical borders seem more porous and “leaky.” As classic anthropological studies of nationalism have long indicated (e.g., Anderson 1983; Handler 1988), language plays an extremely important role in nationalist politics and in the production and exercise of state power.

As these articles show us, however, young people’s language does not matter only within national territories; it also constitutes an important aspect of contemporary globalization. The authors collected here describe how youthful actors craft new identities out of competing global ideologies (Skapoulli, Tetreault), draw on their increased access to cultural and linguistic styles (Alim), and flexibly shift national allegiances in conversational interactions (Chun, Lee). Together, these studies illustrate Anna Tsing’s observation that globalization “draws our enthusiasm because it helps us imagine interconnection, travel, and sudden transformation” (2000: 330). Tsing cautions against an entirely enthusiastic view of globalization, arguing that intersections between local communities and new global flows of products, ideas, media, and people are neither neat nor always worthy of celebration. Along these lines, we discuss how the notion of globalization calls out for an analysis of both well-established and new limits placed on the mobility of youth, redefining some of the well-worn binaries (such as “local–global” and “traditional–modern”) that are the hallmarks of modernity. Globalization’s emphasis on movement highlights not seamless integration, but young people’s ongoing struggle for political and social inclusion. Finally, in addition to the

possibility of hybridity and invention suggested by the juxtaposition of family and peer cultural traditions, we ask how these new styles also involve the categorization and disciplining of youthful bodies by institutions, family members, and peers.

## 2. Movement

A focus on movement allows us to interrogate the kinds of movement (both real and imagined) youth participate in, the consequences of their movement, and how language constitutes a critical part of both. Perhaps one of the most interesting findings of these studies is the fact that youth are so readily defined by the movement of their families. In several of the articles presented here, we find youth grappling with the effects of transnational migration, even though they themselves have not personally experienced it (Chun, Lee, Skapoulli, Tetreault). This past and present movement foregrounds the importance of space to linguistic interaction. Young people's movements through space bring them into radically different language environments: from France's North African former colonies to the suburbs of Paris (Tetreault); from "language minority" home environments into English Language Development classrooms (Lee); and from a racially and ethnically diverse community to the linguistically specialized "Korean table" in a high school cafeteria (Chun). These movements remind us that "interconnection, travel, and transformation" often entails segregation, exclusion, and loss of control to define oneself. In each of these spaces, young people's abilities to represent themselves are always circumscribed by global politics. Social and linguistic interactions – in the schoolyards of Nicosia or *La Cité*, at lunch tables in Texas and classrooms in California, and in the production and consumption of hip hop music worldwide – show that the intersections between the "local" and the "global" not only provide new opportunities for self-representation but also serve as sites of friction (Tsing 2005), conflict, and tension.

Consider the notion of a "Global Hip Hop Nation," which Alim introduces to discuss the ways in which youth draw on hip hop music and culture to perform their sense of belonging in this transnational youth subculture. Foregrounding the new identities and stylistic possibilities of hip hop, Alim quotes French hip hop artist Oxmo Puccino as he describes his first encounter with rap music in the mid-1980s. Looking at an album cover from The Fat Boys, Puccino nostalgically remarks, "You could imagine an entire way of life behind these pictures" (Spady et al. 2006: 591-593). Puccino's evocative quotation suggests the simultaneous statements of dispossession and disenfranchisement that youth make in their search for a new sense of self and community. Throughout his discussion, Alim stresses how the construction of a global hip hop community relies on these imagined connections, and he highlights youths' creative ability to carve out a sense of global distinctiveness through their stylistic production. At the same time, this process of youth agency is coupled with a negotiation of larger structures of power. As Alim has elsewhere discussed (2006), hip hop culture emerged from the poverty, unemployment, racism, and violence that characterized life in New York for youth of color in the 1970s (see also Rose 1994). While hip hop created a new musical, cultural, and linguistic style for youth – and a new sense of belonging – it also provided a profound critique of the ways in which postindustrial urban America has limited the resources, rights, and mobility of millions of African American male youth. This critique cannot be separated from the structural conditions

that produced it. Indeed, Jean and John Comaroff suggest we might look at hip hop as constitutive of a “counternation,” a term intended to foreground the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of marginalized youth (2000: 307-308).

The connections between the two are evident in Puccino’s quotation above. As he imagines the “entire way of life” behind the hip hop imagery he has just encountered, he is faced with both new possibilities and insurmountable limitations. His interest in that way of life, one clearly distinct from his own, conjures up a global desire that merits further interrogation. Within the study of global hip hop (and global youth studies more generally) this situation raises a series of questions. Why do youth want to be both global and local, and what kind of “glocal” (Robertson 1995) do they seek to be? How is their desire for global participation shaped by larger economic forces and specific national and political contexts that affect youth in particular ways? And how can we see their daily involvement in more locally grounded subcultures as an assertion of their rights to negotiate their status as global political actors?

In her own work with politically conscious hip hop fans from Brazil’s racialized and impoverished periphery, Roth-Gordon (2008) has found that poor black male youth draw on a wide range of symbolic connections to the U.S. ghetto: from New York baseball hats and basketball jerseys that make jarring statements of geographic and sports loyalty in soccer-obsessed Brazil to black ski caps that provide unnecessary warmth in tropical Rio de Janeiro. These articles of clothing are designed to invoke that “entire way of life” associated with the legendary home of hip hop music and to demonstrate one’s first-world connections through participation in global hip hop culture. And yet, they also serve to compete locally with the Gap, Disney, and other U.S. branded souvenir t-shirts purchased by the elite and middle-class Brazilian youth who can afford to vacation in New York and Florida. Clothing becomes the site of a global “turf war” – played out on the bodies of Brazilian youth – as different social classes make competing claims to U.S. power and prestige. It is important to situate these semiotic struggles within a larger context, however, as the clothes that travel (or those that are counterfeited in Brazil to replicate U.S. imports) remind us that images freely cross borders that marginalized youth themselves cannot.

This example illustrates the ways that globalization enhances not just interconnection and inclusion but also hierarchy and exclusion, reinforcing old divides even as it creates new ones. If the youth of Brazil’s periphery have always lacked the resources and lifestyle of elite and middle-class youth, direct access to North American culture and the United States itself now shapes the desire for new resources and lifestyles. Marginalized Brazilian youth now rank themselves not only in relation to their wealthier neighbors within Brazil but also on a newly accessible global scale. The hypervisibility of this global subculture encourages youth to play out first-world/third-world distinctions on global, national, and local levels, increasing their perception of their own disenfranchisement and exclusion even as the quality of their daily living conditions surpasses that of previous generations (Perlman 2004; Sansone 2003).

Indeed, the theme of restricted movement and new desires runs through these articles, presenting us with a wide range of ethnographic examples of how youth grapple with the fact that globalization and transnational migration have made them more aware of their own limitations: to move, to belong, to define themselves, and to shape the range of their daily practices. The study of youth swept up in global “flows” must therefore include the ways that youth are confronted not only with additional possibilities of what and who they can become but also with an increasingly visible and

knowable world of possessions, places, and positions denied. As youth seek to carve out a space for themselves globally, diasporically, nationally, and locally, their search for “global distinctiveness” (Alim) speaks powerfully of their awareness (both conscious and unconscious) of the global hierarchies that structure the terms of their belonging.

### 3. Belonging

Given the perceived scope and pace of globalization and transnational migration, it is perhaps unsurprising that this movement has created a good deal of local and national anxiety over the question of belonging. The articles in this issue draw our attention, in particular, to how youth are engaged in the negotiation of their rights to belong – to schools, to cities, and to the nation-state. As these authors suggest, ethnographic attention to the daily linguistic practices of youth – from mocking to naming to rapping – offers unique opportunities to watch youth grapple with the terms of their inclusion. The range of papers in this collection show how race, gender, and religion all structure the ways in which youth can participate in physical spaces (from the *cité* to the “Korean table”) and larger collectivities (such as “nations” – both real and imagined). It is perhaps worthwhile to clarify what we mean by the term *belonging* and how it relates to both the imagined realms of global youth culture and the specific local and (trans)national contexts in which young people are embedded. As we understand it, belonging includes not only one’s ability to “fit in” to a peer group (cf. Forman 2005) but also an understanding of youth as political actors, invested in negotiating their status within national and global hierarchies.

Lee’s investigation into the racial categorization practices of junior high school youth is illustrative in this regard. Although the researchers in her study are looking for racial labels, youth often respond to these queries with their place of birth, asking, “Can I just say I’m born here?” (in Lee’s Example 6), and differentiating themselves from their family background, as when one girl says, “My family came from a lot of places so I’m not really sure but. ... I was born here” (in Lee’s Example 8). This “slip” from racial category to place of birth reveals not only the larger context of national immigration debates but also local institutional practices that place U.S.-born, English-speaking students in English Language Development classes based on the language spoken in the home (see also Mendoza-Denton 2008). Rather than suggesting that students are confused or not yet properly socialized into the language of racial categories, this study redirects our attention to youth’s familiarity with, and involvement in, the negotiation of racial meaning in the United States, where language shoulders a new sociopolitical burden.

In the current political context of “colorblindness,” intentionally segregating students according to race or ethnicity is both publicly objectionable and illegal (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Gallagher 2003). Yet language, as a supposedly neutral and colorblind skill, is now employed to measure everything from academic potential to personality and patriotic loyalty (Lippi-Green 1997; Hill 1999, 2008). Indeed, the wave of English-Only legislation currently sweeping the nation targets language as a critical component of U.S. citizenship and as a way to maintain borders and “defend” the nation – and it is specifically the language of youth that is a target for these moral panics. The crisis that has migrated from state to state over the past ten years restricting bilingual education in particular reveals a national anxiety over the language spoken by the

children of immigrants, targeting a disenfranchised group that makes a bold claim to national belonging through their mere presence in public schools.

Dominant linguistic ideologies suggest that “real American youth” must speak fluent English (preferably monolingually) to claim full citizenship status, but this renewed interest in one’s mother tongue does not trump institutional vigilance over place of birth. While foreign-born immigrants are routinely denied access to a wide range of rights and resources based on level of citizenship status, the importance of place of birth now even applies to U.S. citizens whose parents are foreign-born. As just one example, the Arizona legislature has taken to debating how much money should be dedicated to the English language instruction of students who are presumed to be either illegal immigrants or the children of illegal immigrants (Fischer 2008). The increased vulnerability of youth is worth noting here: Denying adults rights and resources based on the location of their parents’ birth would present a far more egregious violation of citizenship rights. Thus, students who answer questions about their race with the location of their birth rightly remind us of the real-world implications of national immigration debates on racial identification practices and subject formation.

Rights to national belonging – especially for youthful citizens – must therefore be negotiated in national and institutional contexts where race, language, and citizenship status are commonly conflated, and students are often “symbolically deported” (Perea 1998). Their assignment to ELD classrooms illustrates how speaking fluent English becomes a necessary but insufficient performance of a student’s rights to fully participate in the school, as the language of the home ultimately overrides racial identification, citizenship status, or linguistic competency. The common practice of using *Mexican* as a racial category (placed in opposition to *white*) adds to the “confusion.” Yet the reluctance of students in Lee’s study to give one-word answers to these complicated questions suggests not only an ability to shape their own identities but also an acknowledgment of the ways social, racial, and linguistic hierarchies rely on these intentional misunderstandings. Students’ emphasis on place of birth, distancing themselves from their families, illustrates a strategic response to a situation of institutionalized racism that frequently denies full citizenship to U.S.-born *latinos*. There is a tension, then, between schools’ efforts, on the one hand, to celebrate “diversity” and “identity” and to help students find pride in their heritages, while, on the other hand, young people face significant legal, educational, and moral barriers precisely because of their perceived difference from the purported mainstream.

The theme of how youth grapple with the citizenship status and linguistic abilities of their extended families runs through several other articles in this special issue (Chun, Tetreault) and suggests a constraint that specifically impacts youth’s sense of academic, urban, and national belonging. The opposite is also true, as immigrant parents often gain confidence through their childrens’ birthright to “act to claim their rights as entitled political subjects in the United States” (Coll 2004: 189). Immigration debates and linguistic ideologies of belonging are often recursively played out within families and within peer groups. Through an analysis of mock Asian immigrant speech used amongst friends, Chun’s study reveals the equally slippery slope of citizenship status for Asian American youth. As in Lee’s study, the everyday interactions of youth reveal a nation preoccupied with the linguistic disciplining of its citizens. In the excerpt of her data entitled “Pass ketchup please,” Chun notes how second-generation Asian American youth engage in the monitoring and mocking of their own “unconscious slips” into immigrant-style speech. As these youth discuss their brief forays into “broken English”

(see also Tan 1995), they do more than just notice the linguistic differences that separate them from their first-generation immigrant friends and parents. They also participate in the social and linguistic construction of the “Korean table” itself, a physical space and social identity that exists not only within a high school cafeteria but simultaneously within the transnational context of a U.S. military base that has brought Korean military brides (and mothers) to a small Texas town. Life at Diversity High cannot be separated from this larger context, as these youth are likely painfully aware of how the social and political implications of sounding like an immigrant reverberate beyond the benches of the Korean table and the walls of their high school.

As Chun’s study reveals, citizenship is never merely a political category, and its status is daily negotiated, long after one’s birth – or “rebirth” through naturalization. Indeed, sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists might profitably draw from our analytic toolbox to understand citizenship as a large community of practice, in which members claim belonging through shared knowledge and practices and core members and “wannabes” rely on each other for their self-definition (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992). Linguistically, Asian American youth negotiate what it means to sound like an American citizen through their use of mock Asian immigrant speech. But they also play with the cultural knowledge associated with American citizenship, as first-generation Asian American students are schooled in civics and citizenship lessons (discussing who can pass U.S. treaties, in Example 1’s “Test preparation”) and first-generation Asian American mothers must be taught how to use tampons (“Body calm,” in Example 4). The language used to represent (or to accommodate to) the speech of immigrants is thus iconic (Irvine & Gal 2000): Speakers who lack the definite articles that would give their speech native-like fluency also lack the knowledge needed to blend into American society. In these examples, the cultural, political, and linguistic incompetence of more recent immigrants works together to confirm their naturalized (and more fragile) citizenship status (see also Skapoulli, where Eastern European girls flaunt sexual knowledge that may impress their friends but makes them unfit Cypriot citizens).

The Asian Americans in Chun’s study thus hint at the present (and past) sociopolitical ramifications for first-generation immigrants and even later-generation immigrants lacking the proper cultural and linguistic capital. Their vulnerability calls to mind the vivid description of life on the border provided in Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1987) *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Anzaldúa notes that although her family has lived in the U.S. Southwest for generations, its citizenship status is fragile at best and negotiated through daily performances that are both implicitly and explicitly taught. For example, although her family had long warned the children never to run in the presence of *la migra* (‘immigration officials’), there was the day that her young cousin panicked – and ran. Already embodying the racialized figure of the illegal alien, his actions confirmed what was already presupposed, and the boy was deported, although he had barely stepped foot outside of his country of birth. Looking and playing the part of an illegal immigrant constructed his citizenship status sufficiently in the eyes of the state. This example illustrates how the analysis of linguistic and ethnographic data collected by linguistic anthropologists can contribute to the understanding of citizenship as (linguistic) performance, as an inherently tenuous relationship between people, resources, and rights that must be daily negotiated, particularly for those made racially visible.

Like Anzaldúa, Norma Mendoza-Denton (2008) opens her book *Homegirls: Language and Cultural Practice among Latina Youth Gangs* with an equally riveting

scene in which *la migra* searches for youthful bodies to find and deport – this time a take-off on the game of hide-and-seek called “*migra-tag*,” played by *latina* girls during school recess. At the sound of the bell, they are all “deported,” back to the California classrooms that voter-initiated propositions have turned into the latest place to impose citizen–alien distinctions. Youth culture is often recursive, as youth play out the larger sociopolitical questions of difference and belonging they are subjected to. Rather than suggesting that youth are mere adults in training (for a critique of this view, see Bucholtz 2002), however, the studies collected here force us to grapple with the specific performances of citizenship and national belonging staged by youth and the ways youth often participate in their own disciplining.

#### 4. Regimes of modernity

The image of the young person straddling racial and territorial borders raises the difficult question of how we can begin to understand the kinds of power relations in which youth are embedded. The previous sections show, for example, that youth language cannot be divorced from forms of state power that determine who is – and is not – an appropriate citizen in the nation-state and that global cultural flows are always mediated by systems of empowerment and disenfranchisement. Belonging and identity are therefore never purely a matter of individual choice but instead take place within complex political and ideological systems that structure youths’ daily practices, including their language. These forms of power and the specificities of young people’s lives remind us that we are observing a particularly modern moment. This collection thus offers fascinating ethnographic insight into how young people today are being formed and constructing themselves as modern subjects.

The concept of modernity as a specific kind of social and political form (or “episteme”) stems from the insights of Michel Foucault. This body of work leads us to ask how we can use our understanding of young people to conduct “a history of the present” (Foucault 1973; Roth 1981). In other words, how does our ethnographic and linguistic data on youth practice inform larger questions about the social lives of youth in today’s world? What relationships among youth, and between young people and their interlocutors, shape the present moment (see Barry et al. 1996; Rose & Miller 1992)? In this section, we address how youth must be understood as specifically modern subjects, in Foucault’s sense of the term, including how they both utilize and trouble the binary categories associated with modernity, the ways that modern young subjects are constructed through discourses of sexuality, and the ways that young people are disciplined in specific social spaces.

In their book *Foucault and Political Reason*, editors Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose (1996) suggest that a first step in writing a “history of the present” is to investigate how social scientists base their analyses on the binary categories that are assumed to accurately describe the modern world. They argue that a set of oppositions – between, for example, the “center” and the “periphery,” “black” and “white,” “traditional” and “modern” – structure both our everyday ways of thinking about difference and the ways that social scientists form their analyses of the social world. In other words, the process of identifying and locating social practices and social actors in binary categories constitutes a hallmark of modernity. At the same time, everyday common sense and scholarly analyses assume that the modern world is also



teleological: that people and societies inexorably move from the “traditional” to the “modern,” from the “local” to the “global,” from the “rural” to the “urban.” Based on Foucault’s work, Barry, Osborne, and Rose urge us to explore ways that social science analyses can instead challenge these received categories and the implied movement of the social world along a teleological path out of tradition and into modernity.

More recent scholarship, including the articles in this issue, pursues a more nuanced approach to the social world than simple binary divisions. Tetreault looks at the ways that young people in the Paris suburbs are both North African and French, traditional and modern, and suggests that these categories are not mutually exclusive. Skapoulli shows how current ideas of femininity in Cyprus are influenced simultaneously by the patriarchal church, by global media from the West, and by recent migration from Eastern Europe. Chun shows how young students in the United States struggle to fit themselves into “either/or” ethnic categories such as Korean or Filipino, while their practices belie such easy binaries. Yet for a “history of the present,” the question remains how we can move beyond expanding our binary categories to include third (or fourth or fifth) terms and instead rethink how, as scholars, we approach the study of the modern world through categorizations. As just one example, by examining how young people themselves orient to a teleology from the “traditional” to the “modern,” these articles challenge us to think about how we can conceptualize young people’s linguistic practices in ways other than as a movement – albeit a contested and messy one – from older and more local ways of being to global and more “modern” ones.

Tetreault’s, Lee’s, and Chun’s papers all grapple with this issue, as the young people they study strive to work out how being “American” or “French” implies becoming more “modern” than their “traditional” parents and grandparents. They struggle with the tension to both evince this modernity and to build an identity around “the traditional.” These studies convincingly argue that the categories of “modern” and “traditional” are not mutually exclusive but instead are constantly co-constitutive. A “history of the present,” however, urges us to go even farther, to question this binary division and its assumptions of progress and improvement from traditional ways of life to modern ones.

In another example, Skapoulli’s study shows how young Cypriot women both resist and buy into the “patriarchy’s” narrow concept of ideal femininity. This situation raises a number of important questions: How do gendered and sexualized interactions between young Cypriot women and their Eastern European immigrant classmates trouble the analytic distinction between “traditional” and “modern”? How did the reified concept of “the patriarchy” arise in Cyprus as a counterpoint to a different, presumably more modern sexuality? How do intersections between the Church, the state (which regulates immigration), and individual families construct new kinds of social norms around sexuality? And why is female sexuality the ground on which new kinds of Cypriot nationalism and national identities are being formed (cf. Mosse 1985)? Skapoulli’s study of how young women talk about sex and sexuality opens up these fascinating questions, and her focus on the micropractices of language presents an exciting new method for understanding the actual processes by which these young women are becoming modern subjects – of the Cypriot nation and of the modern global world.

Skapoulli’s data also presents an excellent example of how and why sexuality is at the center of modern subjectivity: In Foucault’s conception, understanding sexuality

is also a key to understanding power. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1978) explains that in the modern era, individuals discover who they are through their sexuality and sexual practices; we are modern subjects, he claims, in attempting to reject the “sexual repression” of the “patriarchy” and through our search to become subjects free from sexual repression. Yet Foucault proposes that the negative model of power embedded in this concept, the top-down power of sexual repression that is resisted by individuals who struggle for sexual liberation, can be countered by a different conception of power. In his framework, power is positive, constructing subjects through discourses that include “patriarchy,” “liberation,” and “modernity.” In this kind of approach the concept of “resistance” itself becomes a topic for consideration. Instead of thinking about power as a top-down force to which individuals either succumb or resist, Foucault (1977) proposed a notion of “capillary power,” the idea that all interactions, all institutions, and all social processes are imbued with power. Rather than a negative force that individuals engage with and (potentially) resist in order to build identities, Foucault sees power as a positive force, in the sense that it produces subjects. Modern institutions, notably schools, hospitals, the military, and factories, engage what he calls *disciplinary technologies* that consist of the surveillance of bodies in space. Disciplined bodies, including quiet students who line up and raise their hands, factory workers who carry out tedious and repetitive tasks, and hospital patients whose bodies are examined and probed, become who they are (good or bad students, docile workers, sick or healthy patients) through the microdisciplines that structure everyday life. “Identity,” in this sense, is not a choice that individuals make, but rather a set of categories that are available within particular social and institutional contexts.

From this perspective, youth are produced as subjects through the disciplinary technologies of schools in particular. Young people become “subjects” under the gaze of teachers, parents, and administrators (and researchers) who regulate what is and what is not “normative” behavior. Foucault asks us to consider where young people are allowed to move, what kinds of space they move around in, and the kinds of surveillance that structure their daily practices. By disciplining their bodies (where they stand, what they wear, what they read and write, how they interact with each other), schools do not merely open up spaces for students to “discover” their identities, but instead set the very conditions for what they are allowed to be. Skapoulli demonstrates this point in her discussion of the school’s practices of regulating girls’ bodies, from reporting a girl to her mother for holding hands with her boyfriend to sending another girl home for wearing sexy underwear. Schools thus shape how young people around the world become “normal” people in their respective societies.

The other articles collected here provide multiple empirical examples of how this occurs. In addition to Skapoulli’s detailed accounts of how schools monitor appropriate dress and behavior, particularly of immigrant students, Tetreault notes parenthetically that French schools teach classes in civility, a central example used by Foucault to describe disciplinary regimes. As these authors point out, students recognize the power of surveillance: One of Tetreault’s study participants changes schools to escape the surveillance of her peers and their families, stating that her neighbor’s surveillance of her body, actions, dress, and speech is too restrictive and that she chose to move to a space where other kinds of behavior are normative. Lee and Chun’s articles also acknowledge the disciplining power of space: Students are well aware of where they can and cannot go, who they can and cannot sit with, to which classrooms they are

assigned. Chun's paper raises additional questions on the connection between space and discipline: Who is "allowed" to sit at "the Korean table" at lunch? Who monitors cafeteria behavior? Who disciplines students who sit in the "wrong" seats? This study also points to the importance of the space within a school and the spatial location of the school itself. As discussed above, we might ask how a location next to a military base might structure young people's education. Beyond producing an ethnically and racially diverse student population, how does the school's location near a military base in Texas also reflect and generate power differentials among the different groups of people present in the community (see Enloe 1990)?

In his later work, Foucault expanded beyond the concept of discipline to explore the ways that modern states and autonomous (identity-bearing) individuals are co-constituted. To understand modern power, he says, we must "take into account the points where the technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself. And conversely, [we must] take into account the points where the techniques of the self are integrated into structures of coercion and domination" (1993: 203-204). Foucault called this *governmentality* or the study of "the conduct of conduct," an inquiry into how modern subjects discipline themselves and their peers, including:

all endeavours to shape, guide, direct the conduct of others, whether these be the crew of a ship, the members of a household, the employees of a boss, the children of a family or the inhabitants of a territory. And it also embraces the ways in which one might be urged and educated to bridle one's own passions, to control one's own instincts, to govern oneself. (Rose 1999a: 3)

For Foucault (1991), *governmentality* means the internalization of larger social norms, where individual behavior is strongly linked to state power – not as repressive and tyrannical, but as a power that attempts to "improve the body politic." The articles in this issue give multiple examples of how young people are learning "the conduct of conduct," or how to govern themselves. As discussed above, the conduct of second- and third-immigration students in Chun's, Lee's, and Tetreault's papers are always structured at least partly by the state's definition of "legal" and "illegal" immigrants. Students themselves work through these definitions, governing themselves as "native" or "nonnative" speakers, and using tabooed linguistic forms to create social relations.

Foucault's work on governmentality suggests that a central aspect of "the modern" is a growing link between power and knowledge. Expertise is a form of power in today's world: People who have knowledge of what is and what is not "normal" increasingly have power to dictate the conduct of others. Examples of how this works include studies of psychologists who determine what is emotionally "normal" and "healthy" (Rose 1996, 1999b) and government-organized social work programs to increase self-esteem (Cruikshank 1999). These studies show that knowledge of what is "normal" transforms the ways that people, and especially youth, learn how to conduct themselves in a range of situations. An approach based in governmentality (Foucault 1991) thus urges us to consider in greater depth the power relations behind these practices and the ways that youth practices conform not only to ideologies and individual choices but also to larger structural forces linked to state power.

The authors collected here have access to a rich source of linguistic data that illustrates the concept of governmentality. The students in the school Chun studied

make tremendous efforts to define and then act appropriately “Korean,” “Filipino,” and “American.” One student, Maria, establishes herself as an “expert” in what makes a “real Filipino” through her refusal to reciprocate her friend Damon’s Tagalog greetings, a practice designed to discipline his linguistic behavior and dismiss his symbolic claims to a shared ethnic identity. Within the same study, “Miss Thang” stakes her claim as an expert on American female modernity, instructing her more “traditional” mother in how to use Tampax, a product closely identified with modernity among American girls (Brumberg 1997). The girls in Skapoulli’s study direct their own and each other’s conduct through expertise about condoms and sexual activities, reestablishing the definition of “normal femininity” in the process. The young people Tetreault describes govern themselves and each other through name calling. The youth in Alim’s study of global hip hop negotiate their “distinctiveness,” explicitly evaluating individual rappers’ efforts to juggle claims to local authenticity (“keeping it real”) with participation in global modernity. Each of these interactions is imbued with social power, as particular youth establish themselves as “experts” and use this expertise to differentiate themselves from their peers and their parents. These articles thus offer exciting ethnographic insight into the topic of modernity and the kinds of analytics that can be brought to bear to understand modern subjects and power in the contemporary world.

## 5. Conclusion

To take youth seriously as they move across borders and engage in highly politicized interactions across the globe, we must first acknowledge that they are situated within a larger sociopolitical and historical context of globalization, migration, citizenship, and modernity. The close study of young people’s daily language use in a range of ethnographic settings can expand our understanding of the concerns of young people around the globe: what it means to be aware of and engage with multiple overlapping and competing communities; the ways that familial connections, teachers, and other adults mediate levels of belonging; and the multiple borders (territorial, racial, gendered, generational, and linguistic) that structure terms of participation, daily practices, and understandings of the self. As the authors in this collection illustrate, all of these self–other divides are integral to the process of identity construction. And yet these papers also suggest how our analyses of youth practice can situate the construction of identity as part of a larger politics of youth and youth language.

This presents us with a new understanding of youth studies that includes not only an investigation into the creativity and flexibility of style and identity but also attention to the very powerful global processes that impact youth, including but not limited to the politics of control over and fear of young people, the monitoring of bodies moving through and across space, and their increasing vulnerability in the changing global economy. The articles presented here enable us to better understand some of the politics with which young people are concerned and in which they find themselves implicated: how globalization both enables and limits opportunities in the new economy (Alim); how youthful sexuality has become part of the normative structure of modern society (Skapoulli); and how youth are disciplined within the physical and social spaces of contemporary cities and institutions (Chun, Lee, Tetreault). The profound impact of migration, transnationalism, and globalization on youth and their language thus demands that we take the historical, political, and economic transitions of young people

as seriously as the linguistic and interactional practices of identity work enabled by such processes.

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