Cultural History and Education
Critical Essays on Knowledge and Schooling

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Contents

Acknowledgments vii
Preface ix

Part 1  History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History of Schooling: An Introduction 3

1 History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History of Schooling
Thomas S. Popkewitz, Miguel A. Pereyra and Barry M. Franklin 3

Part 2  Rethinking the Discipline of History of Education 45

2 Texts, Images, and Memories: Writing “New” Histories of Education
António Nóvoa 45

3 “A New Cultural History of Education”
A Developmental Perspective on History of Education Research
Heinz-Ehmieh Tenorth 67

4 Politics and Culture in the Making of History
of Education in Brazil
Mirian Jorge Warde and Marta Maria Chagas de Carvalho 83

Part 3  Constructing a Cultural History 107

5 Genealogy of Education:
Some Models of Analysis
Julia Varela 107

6 History of Education and Cultural History:
Possibilities, Problems, Questions
Antonio Viñao 125
History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History of Schooling

Thomas S. Popkewitz, Miguel A. Pereyra, and Barry M. Franklin

History is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it.

—Pierre Nora, 1984

“What is knowledge” in a preliminary way is the social meaning of human-made symbols, such as words and figures, in its capacity as means of orientations. In contrast to most nonhuman creatures, humans have no inborn or instinctive means of orientation. When growing up, humans have to acquire through learning sets of social symbols with their meaning and thus parts of a social fund of knowledge from their elders. Access to wider knowledge, to better and more comprehensive means of orientation increases the power potential of human groups.

—Norbert Elias, 1984

History becomes “effective” to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself. “Effective” history deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature, and it does not permit itself to be transported by a voiceless obstinacy toward a millennial ending. It will uproot its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupt its pretended continuity. This is because knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting.

—Michel Foucault, 1977

Have we wrestled with the problem of the changes in the mediations of language, analysis, image and voice in the world around us and introduced problematics derived from that intellectual effort into our investigation of the past? . . . At this time the discipline of history needs new cognitive maps, new strategies of analysis, and new thought experiments.

—Mark Porter, 1997

This book emerges out of a long-term pursuit to understand the present of schooling as historical practices in producing ways to think, act, feel, and “see.” While it is easy and almost clichéd to say that the past is in the present and that we need a historical understanding of schooling, the placement of our “self” in time and space is a difficult and profound task. History is not the movement toward some form of reliable representation. Rather, historical thought is part
of the present. It is conveyed in the very structures of representation that provide the narratives that construct memories of the present. As Huysssen (1995:3) argues, “The past is not simply there in memory but it must be articulated to become memory. Memory is recherché rather than recuperation.”

History, in the sense that we use it in this chapter, is an understanding of the present and of collective memory as the weaving together of multiple historical configurations that establishes connections that make for the common sense. A history of the present thus makes possible “the suspension of history itself”; that is, it makes visible what is assumed through the narratives that join time, space, and the individual (Tessitore 1995: 33). For us, an understanding of the past in the present is an ironic undertaking to suspend history itself.

A cultural history as a history of the present considers reason as a field of cultural practices that order the ways that problems are defined, and possibilities and innovation sought. But this concern with knowledge and reason, what is sometimes narrowly called “the linguistic turn” in the social and historical sciences, is not only a concern with text and discourse but with the relation of knowledge and the social. Its methodological approaches aim at dissolving the boundaries between what has previously been viewed as distinct—discourse and reality, text and the world—divisions that are residues of modernity. Thus, while we use the term “cultural history,” our interest is in a history of the present that dissolves the textual, real, cultural/social distinctions.2

The history of the present, as Walter Benjamin (1955/1985) suggests, is where each generation encounters the past in a new way through a critical encounter in which the fragments of the past meet the present. This approach to historical studies is a counter to what Benjamin calls an empty history: the picturing of a universal, boundless human progress associated with ideas of an infinite perfectibility, an additive viewpoint whose illusions are of a seemingly continuous movement from the past to the present, and whose methods have no theoretical armature. To write history is to rethink the possibility of history as a reliable representation of the past and to engage in a critical conversation where previously, Benjamin argues, there was only a present emptied of history. The past is not the point that culminates in the present from which people “learn” about their domestication and that provides a temporal index for their future. Benjamin argues, as do we, that history is the critical engagement of the present, by making its production of collective memories available for scrutiny and revision.

This history of the present that we call “cultural history” also stands against an old and unfruitful tendency in the U.S. academy. That tendency rejected any idea that history is related to the situation of contemporary life. The argument was that if history is of the present time, then history does not exist. On the contrary, a self-understanding of the present, we believe, is a historical orientation that challenges the making of “the past into an aesthetic refuge for the pressing problems of the present” (Rüsen 1993: 182).3

History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History

This task of writing cultural histories is made easier by a wide range of English-language literature that has emerged in multiple disciplines over the past few decades (see, e.g., Bonnell and Hunt 1999; McDonald 1996; Jenkins 1997; Cooper and Stoler 1997; Schram and Neisser 1997; Neubauer 1999; Bentley 1999; and Wilson 1999). Cultural history is made possible through the important translations of the pioneering work of Michel Foucault and Norbert Elias, although neither used the term “cultural history” in his writing. Both thinkers, in distinct yet at times overlapping ways (see Smith 1999), focus on how systems of knowledge organize our being in the world through the construction of rules of reason, the ordering of the objects of reflection and the principles for action and participation. Traditions of the German conceptual historians have also been brought into the U.S. context to help shape some of these thoughts about the change of concepts over time and the social conditions that relate to those changes (see, e.g., Koselleck 1985; Hampsher-Monk, Tilmans, and van Vree 1998). Thus, a major task of this book is to examine a broad band of theoretical strategies and methodologies that move across the educational research of Europe, Latin America, and North America to form what we call a “cultural history.”

But while our initial interest is to explore a field of scholarship that is generally unacknowledged in U.S. educational history,4 the very epistemological and methodological frameworks of a cultural history that we speak about intersect with the intellectual trajectories associated with postmodernism in the United States (see, e.g., Rosenau 1992; Popkewitz 1997; Porter 1997, Bentley 1999). This book enables a consideration of postmodernism within the broader arena of the active reshaping of the humanities, the social sciences, and particularly the field of scientific history that has been taking place for at least the last three decades in both the English and non–English-speaking worlds. In this context, educational critics of postmodernism in the United States (and Spanish followers of the trends in American research) have too narrowly conceived the resulting scholarship by misrecognizing the historical and global connections and networks through which contemporary researchers of different political ideologies work.5 As the essays of this book suggest, what is called “postmodern” scholarship in the United States draws from a broad international context of scholarship, and is much more than the fruits of French scholarship brought to American shores.

This chapter initially considers all strands of current historical work as historicist, a general outlook of modernity that is concerned with understanding the past through dimensions of temporality. We then proceed to differentiate between various approaches to historicism. We first discuss social and intellectual history, focusing on the approach to the writing of history that is subservient to a philosophical structure of an a priori and (ironically) ahistorical subject that shapes and fashions the meanings and images of historical narratives. The following section draws attention to cultural history, which makes
knowledge a central concern of inquiry. We again differentiate between social and intellectual history and cultural history by revisiting the Spencian question that has dominated curriculum history ("What knowledge is of most worth?"). Our purpose in this discussion is not to summarize the individual contributions to this book but to engage the specific historical arguments made by the authors in a broader context of rethinking educational research.

Changing the Subject: Historicism, History, and Knowledge

We focus on how the general attitude of historicism is made concrete through social and intellectual histories that focus on social regulation and social control. This historicism, which we relate to "the hidden curriculum" tradition in U.S. research, has an ironic quality. It takes for granted the knowledge of the school and thus, we argue, inscribes an ahistorical subject through which the narratives of the past are structured in the present. That structure of historical narratives, even when seeking critique, embodies salvation stories that denude it of a critical stance.

We Are All Historicists, Or Are We?

This first section begins our journey to think broadly about a contested idea in historical studies, that of historicism. We can think of historicism as a product of the modern imagination that assumes that history will always be made new and in need of rewriting in each generation. Ancient and medieval cosmologies conceived a closed universe in which nothing new or unfamiliar was allowed to become real. But modern historicism reconfigured reality through a change in the concept of time that enabled discussions of difference and continual change.

The modern concept of reality is related to the rise of historicism, because it depends upon a changed notion of temporality opposed to that of the ancient and medieval world. The modern concept of time implies that events ... take place not only in history but through history, and temporality has become a component part of reality. ... [As such,] historicism, a product of modern imagination, assumes that history will always be made. As a result, the history of historicism is marked by perpetual claims to newness. (Thomas 1991: 32)

We can state here, early in our discussion, that all modern historical studies are historicist through the interest in temporality. Kracauer (1993a; 1993b), for example, insightfully argued in the first decades of the twentieth century that photography and historicism could be understood as having a certain parallelism (see Frisby 1986). For Kracauer, historicism was the photography of time.

History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History

On the whole, the advocates of historicist thinking believe that they can explain any phenomenon purely in terms of its genesis. That is, they believe at the very least that they can grasp historical reality by reconstructing the series of events in their temporal succession without any gaps. Photography presents a spatial continuum; historicism, the complete mirroring of a temporal sequence, simultaneously contains the meaning of all that occurred within that time. (Kracauer 1993a: 424–25)

This conception of temporality saturates the "new histories" of the first third of the twentieth century and those of the 1960s and 1970s (from Lamprechtian cultural history, adopted by the American progressive historians to the French historical school of the Annales and the different Marxist and Annales-oriented social histories). The focus on temporality is also embodied in the "new new histories" that emerge with postmodern thought.

Further, historicism, with its various trajectories, embodies the Enlightenment's commitment to reason in the search for progress. Knowledge, it is believed, is how we have contact with the world, the means by which we assume the security and stability of our place in it, as well as the guarantor in the pursuit of our commitments toward social betterment. This commitment is, at one level, one of the general legitimating "truths" of modernity and modern social and historical studies, including the cultural studies discussed in this book. But to talk about a legitimating truth of the Enlightenment, we will continually have to differentiate between the different trajectories taken in working through this modern commitment to social and historical inquiry.

In this way of thinking, all historical work shares the view that knowledge "constitutes" the reality that is studied (Olábarri 1995: 10). Friedrich Meineche, a founding figure of modern history, notes that historicism, as a way of looking (a Denkort) in an independent and scientific discipline, was a strategy to construct the "historization [sic] of all our knowledge and experience of the cultural world." As such, "[i]t is not intended to suggest that historical forces somehow condition the orientation of the knower, but rather that the knower imposes an historicizing mode on the explanations that constitute scientific knowledge and on the understandings that constitute the wise experience of historical reality" (Page 1995: 27).

If we use a broad concept of historicism, we are all historicists. But most of the time, historians are unaware of the challenge embodied in their reflections about how the knower imposes a historicizing mode on "data" and events. But to differentiate between the particular historicism of social and intellectual history and that of a cultural history, we will refer to the latter as a historicizing approach that entails a history of the present. As António Nóvoa argues in his chapter, the nineteenth-century invention of historicism linked the field of experience with the horizon of expectation through which progress was envisioned. Such a linking in history and social science made possible new ways of
governing through a chronological and linear sense of time. This notion of
time, Nóvoa continues, created new spaces to define our references, affiliations
and identities that have become extended and accelerated and are in need of
renegotiation.

To reaffirm that all modern history is historicist, we can turn to a form of
foundationalism that locates the knowledge of contemporary histories as epis-
temologically post-Kantian. The equilibrium conceived by Kant between the
mundus intelligibilis (the world approached in the empirical thought of Bacon
and Newton) and the mundus idealistic (knowledge produced by a priori ideas
drawn from Cartesian thought) is inscribed in the intellectual matrix of the
most influential modern schools. The matrix is found in the historical inquiry
of the contemporary Annales mentors, from Comte, Spencer, and Durkheim,
to François Simiand, Lucien Febvre, and Marc Bloch. The epistemological
basis of the overall modern historical inquiry leaves aside, as Foucault argued,
the distinctive Hegelian attachment of historicism that has a totalizing vision
of history related to an evolutionary and normative conception of progress.

Knowledge “Wars” to “Cultural” Wars

Once it is said that all modern history is historicist, we can trace changes from
the turn of the century to locate different trajectories that are not evolutionary
but do mark shifts in foci and strategies. Reacting against the hegemony of
political history, a scientific tradition of social history emerged in the second
half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth whose
institutionalization related to the formation of the modern nation-states and
the triumph of liberalism in Europe. Social history in these early intellectual
traditions was incorporated in universities as a modern system of science based
on research-oriented projects. Beginning in the 1960s, a diverse range of theo-
retical issues based on Saussurean structuralism, Marxist, psychoanalytical
and, later, anthropological and feminist knowledge was brought into the disci-
niple of history to challenge a second generation of social history. This social
history rejected political history by focusing on institutions and “mentalities.”
Central was the French historical school of the Annales.

One of the distinguishing features of that social history of the 1960s was the
bringing of historical inquiry nearer to the social sciences, to what was also
called “scientific history.” The “new” social history emphasized methodologi-
cal innovations in the development of a verifiable, quantifiable knowledge. His-
tory was to be guided by particular regulative models drawn from structural-Marxism, the ecological-demographic research program of the
French Annales school, and cliometric history, prominent in the United States
at that time (Stone 1981). An intense debate ensued about theory, the method-
ologies and the nature of historical knowledge, and its political implications.
This debate occurred as a discussion about the “procedures of the social

History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History

9

sciences,” that is, about the primacy of “quantitative documentation” from
one side, and from another about the movement of historical approaches that
looked at people “from the bottom” rather than from the perspectives of polit-
ical and social elites (see Porter 1997). This debate about science and who to
study arose in the social sciences as well as in the field of history.

The importance of these debates was that they helped to consolidate a his-
torical sociology that sought to find a path away from positivism. New jour-
nals and associations were created, such as the Journal of Social History in
1977, which focused on an interdisciplinary approach to historical studies and
were part of the institutionalization process. The debates about a historical
sociology coexisted with and were part of important structural changes man-
ifested in the U.S. civil rights movement, changes in the global economy, and
the worldwide students protests of the era (see Smith 1991, for a discussion of
these changes). In that context, the revisionist movement in the history of edu-
cation emerged and thrived through the beginning of the 1980s.

We can think of the debates of the 1970s and 1980s in which a “revisionist”
history was instituted in historical and educational historical discussions as the
theory or knowledge wars, as does Jay (1998). With a bit of playfulness, Jay
suggests these were “the years when Foucauldians, Habermasians, Althusser-
ians, Gadamerians, and the like engaged in mortal combat (or least a struggle
for top billing at the bulletin of the MLA)” (1998: 17). Today’s debates evolve
around cultural wars (see Burke 1994, 1997). These wars involve a constella-
tion of aesthetic, moral, class-based, and gender values in which culture is a
major vehicle for scrutinizing the unresolved problems of what some call “late
modernity” or “postmodernity.”11 Without losing sight of the Enlightenmen-
tial idea of progress, we might conclude that the postmodern historical inquiry
such as related to Foucault, Barthes, Derrida, Lyotard among others” is both
“a sophisticated mixture of modernity (an ideological struggle to liberate
oppressed men and women) and post modernity (rejections of master stories,
interest in the role of language, adoption of vision of the world as representa-
tion)” (Olábarri 1995: 20, italics ours).

A milestone for the shift in orientation of historical inquiry was the pub-
lication of Hayden White’s Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteen-
th-Century Europe (1973a). White, who calls himself both a Marxist and a
historical historian trained in medieval history, viewed his work as a
“rebellion against positivism.” He stressed the existing link between literature
and rhetoric—the poetic function conceived in a linguistic mode—in the
making of historical explanation. White argued that history had a double face
—a scientific one and an artistic one through its literary construction. In addi-
tion to literary theory, White drew on Jakobson’s structuralism for thinking
about discourse, and French poststructuralist thought before it was fashion-
able in U.S. intellectual circles. He thought that Foucault provided a new way
to think about the history of ideas that had profound implications for the writ-
ing of history that was an “antihistory.” White viewed Foucault’s work as antihistory in the sense that Foucault’s history went against the then mainstream practices of historicism through its insistence on going beyond language as resemblance, bringing in a certain brand of structuralism known at that time as poststructuralism. White’s *Metahistory* can be understood as a move into a postmodern theory to reshape historical inquiry to reflect on the project of historians (see Bonnell and Hunt 1999: 2; Eley 1992: 207; White 1999). It is not surprising that White’s *Metahistory* has never been reviewed by any journal associated with the field of history of education in the English-speaking world, indeed from 1979 to 1998 there were only sixteen articles published in the field of education that cite White’s work. We say that we are not surprised because U.S. educational historians (as well as much of its educational science community) tend to avoid reflection on the epistemology of science and the sociology of knowledge that characterize their field. There are only three American historians of education, for example, that we have identified as referring to White’s *Metahistory* in the *History of Education Quarterly*: Clarence H. Karier, Richard Angelo, and Sol Cohen. Cohen is a particularly interesting figure in the American academic field of history of education, one who has been challenging the orthodoxies of a social history while pursuing a cultural history (see Cohen 1999). Cohen’s interest is in a configuration of historical inquiry in education that would involve a “new radical revisionism . . . more self-reflective, provisional, and unafraid of philosophical introspection and not just conceived as a strategy for surpassing the marginal position of history of education in the professional programs of teacher education everywhere” (1999: 59). Through the appearance of his work in *Paedagogica Historica*, the oldest European journal of history of education, Cohen’s ideas have had more impact in Europe than in his home country.

Social History, Educational Knowledge and Social Regulation: The “Hidden Curriculum” Traditions

One of the hallmarks of “revisionist” social histories and historical sociology was the concern with social regulation. A major focus was on the knowledge of schooling as performing regulatory functions of social control, such as with the “hidden curriculum” arguments. In this focus, knowledge is explored as “something” that articulates social interests and forces rather than as a productive practice in the construction of power itself—the latter being a central concern of a cultural history. As we will argue in subsequent sections, the shift from knowledge as an epiphenomenon in social regulation and control to knowledge as a field of cultural practices and cultural reproduction leads to different problematics for the study of schooling.

Regulation is certainly not an unfamiliar issue for educational historians. During the 1960s and 1970s, the so-called revisionist historians of education in the United States placed the issue of social regulation and control at the heart of their scholarly work. Challenging the scholarship of an earlier generation of educational historians who celebrated the public school as the agency of progress and democracy, the revisionists presented a decidedly different picture of the American educational enterprise. They saw the American public school as an agency of social control from its origins in the mid-nineteenth century through to the present day. The history of public schooling was viewed as one of regulation, imposition, and repression. It perpetuated the power and privilege of the nation’s upper and middle classes over and against those of ethnic and racial minorities, the working class, and the urban poor. As the revisionists tell the story, the historic role of America’s public schools is inextricably linked to a host of curricular and pedagogical practices that serve to differentiate the educational experience of the rich from the poor. The ultimate effect of this differentiation is to channel rich and poor children to different and unequal life destinies, the former to affluence and leadership and the latter to economic subordination (Greer 1972; Karier, Violas, and Spring 1973; Katz 1968, 1975; Spring 1973).

In the 1980s a growing number of educational historians began to challenge this account. As these scholars see it, it is too simplistic to assume that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the organizational and administrative practices of schools and the work and citizenship requirements of the larger society. Embracing the Gramscian concept of hegemony with its less coercive and more subtle understanding of the universal forces of regulation through which repression and domination occur, these educational historians have offered a more nuanced explanation of how schools regulate and control. As they see it, the socializing message of schooling has never been all that consistent. Like other societal institutions, American public schools have throughout their existence embraced contradictory and conflicting goals that have resulted in inconsistent and unclear outcomes. Drawing on conflict theories with a Hegelian dialectic of origin and evolution, these historians view schools as sites of contestation and conflict in which efforts at regulation are more implicit than explicit, rely more on suasion than coercion, and are as likely to be resisted as embraced (Kaestle 1976; Reese 1983; Warren 1987). It is, they argue, naive to assume that schools simply serve to reproduce the existing culture or to believe that minorities and the poor simply accept the efforts of the educational professions to mold them in the image dictated by the nation’s political and social elite.

It is at this point that we can focus on educational historians who write about the curriculum as part of the explanatory frameworks of social regulation. Knowledge serves as a framework to understand social interests that are brought into schooling to produce inequities and injustices. Such efforts include explicit social control interpretations that explore how processes of curriculum selection, organization, and delivery differentiate curriculum
content along class and racial lines and impose that content on children in ways that channel these different children to different and unequal occupational and citizenship roles (Franklin 1986). These efforts include explanatory frameworks to not only depict the regulative role of the curriculum in less deterministic ways and recognize the contradictory purposes of public schooling, but also to emphasize the conflict surrounding its workings and stress the uncertainty of its results (Labaree 1988).

The notion of regulation, however, inserts a particular conceptualization vis-à-vis power and salvation themes of an inevitable progress. Regulation is related to a repressive notion of power, such as how curriculum, for example, differentiates children in conformity with some a priori structures or ahistorical "unconsciousness" whose consequence is to produce advantage and disadvantage in society. Class has been the most prevalent concept, although more recently concepts of race and gender are incorporated either as privileged concepts or as parallel concepts that stand as foundational to explore unequal relations. To define change in a more elaborated way that is not seen as deterministic, concepts of voice and resistance have been introduced; concepts that are structural as they are positioned in relation to predefined forces or a foundation of dominance and repression.

**Empty History/ An "Abistorical" Historical Unconsciousness**

The social history of regulation in schooling embodies the particular subservient relation to philosophy in which an a priori structure, or an ahistorical "unconscious" is posited as fashioning and shaping the meanings and images of history. That "unconsciousness," again in its nonpsychoanalytic sense, has different structures. It travels on the surface of narratives as the "nature" of individuality through which life is given meaning, or as the "nature" of social life that organizes the structure of events and the "knowing of people." Knowledge is not, in and of itself, a practice but something that is used in social practices to affect some outcome. The common phrase "knowledge is power" captures this idea of knowledge as useful or available to be used to effect intent. The narrative of history gives an order to how people and individuals "use" concepts and ideas to effect purpose and intent in social action.

This subservient relation to philosophy is a particular unquestioned and unarticulated assumption of U.S. educational historians (and social and educational research as well, see, Popkewitz 1997). The locus of change is the inscription of the actor who enacts cultural interests and produces a collective authority in the plotting of time and change. In the prior studies of schooling, for example, the problem of regulation embodies a philosophical a priori subject. The central premise is that knowledge is an epiphenomenon to other forces, structures, or groups that exercise control over the ideas and organizational arrangements of schooling. This particular doctrine of historicism, across its variations, focuses on such things as the establishment of hegemony (a structural concept brought into education studies through readings of Gramsci).

The narrative strategy of history and the social sciences inheres to the subservient relation to a philosophical unconsciousness. Social and intellectual histories in the United States, for example, assume the a priori identification of stable actors to affirm the flow in the narrative of historical and sociological studies of schooling. The assumption is that the actor is the agent in history who makes that history. Studies of schooling, for example, view ideas as expressive of individual purpose (such as intellectual histories of John Dewey), view institutional development as a pluralist competition among social interests, and view particular ruling groups as actors who dominate and oppress others. If power is discussed, it is located in the actors who rule and who are ruled. Change is measured according to rational, chronological time in which actors configure a history that establishes, or challenges the privileged position of particular groups of actors. The telling of the change is a telling of the stories of the flow of events, the changes in the organizations, the operational systems of rules and relations between actors and actions, or the progression of connections or networks of actors. Change is the activity that differentiates social practices over time with the philosophical unconsciousness—the actor—given to that story.

The commitment to the a priori subject also becomes an ordering principle in the construction of methods. It becomes possible to make the archival text and the positive event the given context in which to chart and make visible the flows of actors. The archives and events become the naturalized space for the actor's actions.

In contemporary research, it is almost impossible to "think" and reason about the world, the self, and change without the ahistorical, philosophical unconscious. It is the doctrine of modernity in thinking about the Enlightenment itself. When the actor is seen as absent in social and historical investigations, that research is seen as antihumanistic and the world as deterministic and without the possibility of change.

The linking of the idea of Enlightenment to the a priori constructed actor of history is itself a recent invention. The introduction of the a priori actor was a radical departure as the locus of truth was moved from a divine subject and transferred to the human creative subject. Previous notions of a transcendent entity, of a world fixed by placement by birth, and of human beings as subjects of fate or Divine Will are supplanted by a move to the earthly city of human intervention in worldly fates. Taylor argues that:

Through a dialectical reversal, the creator God dies and is resurrected as the creative subject. As God created the world through the Logos, so man creates a "world" through conscious and unconscious projection. In different terms, the modern subject defines itself by its constructive activity. Like God, this sovereign
subject relates only to what it constructs and is, therefore, unaffected by anything other than itself. What seems to be a relationship to otherness—be that other God, nature, objects, or subjects—always turns out to be an aspect of mediate self-relation that is necessary for complete self-consciousness. The absolute knowledge made possible by the phenomenological reduction of difference to identity in subjectivity's full knowledge of itself realizes Western philosophy's dream of enjoying a total presence that is undisturbed by absence or lack. (Taylor 1986: 3)

But to engage in such a historicism can denude schooling of its historicity, producing what Benjamin called an empty history. The historicist tradition embodied in social and intellectual history inscribes a universalized knowledge in which the a priori subject can be emancipated. But this notion of emancipation is not emancipatory in a universal sense as its universalism of "human" and "inalienable" rights are products of particular historical formations and power relations (Mehta 1997).

The very foundation of the modern systems of knowledge embodied in the idea of historicism is a relic of social and cultural transformations. The early university institutionalization of the history of education took place in the German-speaking countries during the first third of the nineteenth century. History of education was a knowledge included, first, in the training of Gymnasium teachers, and later, elementary school teachers, in a frame of theological training for future teachers with the right consciousness for producing the next generation in the modern nation (see Oelkers 1999; Gonon 1999). Steedman (1998), for example, considers the construction of the historical archive as the construction of memory and hope. She gives attention to the archive as a particular way in which history came into being in the nineteenth century through the construction of an identity of the historian as both alone and at home. But this identity involved important shifts in the objects that historians constructed through their gaze. Whereas in the eighteenth century, "there was a gap between things and their meaning ... in the nineteenth century we see all sorts of historians strive for a representation in which there was no gap between the thing and its image; in which representation was the thing that 'actually happened'" (Steedman 1998: 73).

In contemporary social and educational inquiry, the expression of contingencies ironically embodies a foundational faith in the virtue of knowledge to empower and liberate, popular political and academic phrases that leave little room for contingency. History is subservient to some prior universal that leaves little choice even when there are ideas about diversity, flexibility, and multiplicity of viewpoints that populate political and academic conversations. The school context becomes a constant, timeless physical space where the actions of the teacher and the student move in a continuous series of events. What everyone "knows" is transported along the surface that "tells" of the past and that moves from the past to the present as the marching "order" for the future-defining teaching as responsive, schools as relevant, and children as self-fulfilled. The common sense of knowledge provides the stable markers or monuments from which to think about normalcy, achievement, and competencies.

This historicism is not only characteristic of the historical profession but also of the social and psychological sciences that tell the stories of schooling and of the future good life for teachers, children, and society. The historicism is an erasure of how the objects of the school and the narratives of the child are constructed within particular historical patterns as the reason of the philosophical unconsciousness. The inscription of the completely self-conscious a priori actor, as Popkewitz's chapter on curriculum history argues, is related to the philosophy of consciousness whose modes of reflection occur at a conjuncture of the emergence of modern liberal thought, the modern state's concern with articulating the collective will, and mass schooling (see also Varela's chapter). This erasure is another irony of both the social and historical studies of schooling. There is a denial of the historicity of the historical knowledge and conditions of schooling.

Michel de Certeau's approach, summarized in a recent paper on the "new historiography," is meaningful here:

since historical texts can no longer be seen as transparent windows that allow full sight of the past "as it was," historians must substitute for the naïve mimeticist reading method fostered by such a view, one that is centered upon textual silences and blind spots, both of which are signals of the text's "unconscious." In such a reading method, textual signs do not refer unproblematically to something outside the text; they are rather concrete materializations of a number of mechanisms of production that made these texts possible (Pieters 2000: 36).

The ironic emptying of history-in-history is the challenge of this book. Our interest is in a historical imagination in the study of schooling that focuses on knowledge as a field of cultural practice and cultural production. It is to historicize what previously was subservient to a philosophical "unconsciousness," that is, the objects and events that stood as the monuments of schooling that projected its moral imperatives and salvation stories. This historicizing does not reject commitments but considers how commitments are interned and enclosed through the making of the objects of interpretation, reflection, and possibility (see, e.g., Hamilton 1989; also see chapters by Dussel, Chartier and Hébrard, Hamilton, and Popkewitz in this book).

Educational History, Memory, and Salvation Stories

The emptying of history has other implications that we can touch upon in this chapter. One is the insertion of particular doctrines of a historicism whose
narratives are not able to provide a critique of the conditions of knowledge in which it works. Related to this insertion of its contemporaneous frameworks is the production of salvation stories of the school told through the progressive narratives of the child and the teacher.

What is important in the above analyses is that a particular doctrine of the historicism is inserted as a set of principles drawn from the Enlightenment. A set of cultural rules about the organization of a linear and universal time was inserted as the ahistorical a priori of the narrative of schooling. Embodied was a particular "civilizing" impulse that sustained the cultural rules of "time" even as a critique was being mounted. The insertion of a linear time reproduced the very framework of its own contemporaneity that the critique was intended to challenge.

This issue of reproducing the very framework of contemporaneity is taken up in historical studies in Bender's (1992: 63) examination of the historicism of the eighteenth century Enlightenment.

[Until recent revisions of critical methods by feminism, new historicism, a cultural materialism, Anglo-American investigation of eighteenth-century literature proceeded largely within deep-rooted postulates "within a frame of reference" that fundamentally reproduced Enlightenment assumptions themselves and therefore yielded recapitulation rather than the knowledge produced by critical analysis.

Bender continues that if knowledge is to escape tautology and not to conserve its own systems of reference and contemporaneity, there is a need for a critical analysis that can challenge the postulates and assumptions that are found in political arenas. The content of knowledge cannot be taken as representing social and personal intent; rather there is a need to make the internal cognitive structure of knowledge an object of social inquiry and a productive element in the ongoing practices of social life (see also Armstrong 1994).

The view that the content of knowledge represents social and personal intent, Callewaert (1999) has argued, also makes research (and the researchers) the new prophets of modernity. It does so through inserting the project of research as "action" that makes past and present narratives as prescriptions for planning. This prescription, Callewaert continues, is a political strategy of intellectuals that needs to be questioned both epistemologically and ideologically. Such "action research" focuses on the relation of power in the projects of researchers who position their research (and themselves) as the overseers of the present and the future. When historical narratives inscribe the actors who produce change, they obscure the fact that the technologies of emancipatory projects involve tensions between colonialism and postcolonialism with respect to the governing of individuals (see, e.g., Mehta 1997; Young 1990; also

Spivak 1999). These narratives efface the historical relations among policy, policing and research that emerged in the nineteenth century.

The significance of epistemological rules that conserve their own system of reference lies in the production of memory/forgetting that we referred to earlier. Steedman has pointed out that "History, inside and outside the academy, is an important (though not the only) location of Memory" (1998: 66). History is a process of ideation, imagining, remembering, and also a place of dreams. Dussel in this volume argues, for example, that school uniforms fabricate a memory of the laws and codes of culture on the body of the child and the teacher. This occurs through the systems of moral and political classifications and categories that order school dress.

But this process of ideation, imagining, remembering, this place of dreams, has itself a particular configuration within schooling. This link is to the production of salvation stories that Meyer, Bolí, Thomas, and Ramirez (1997) argue organize the formation of national school systems. The modern school functions to reterritorialize the individual through stories that link the development of the child to that of the nation. The salvation stories of the curriculum produce a collective authority that places diverse peoples, languages, and prior customs into a seemingly seamless whole, that of the nation-state. The individual becomes the agent who enacts the collective purpose embodied as the nation-state.

Social histories, when critiquing the salvation stories of the school, have tended to focus on the school curriculum, what we previously considered as the "hidden curriculum" in which the histories of the nation link the development of the individual to the images and narratives of nationhood. The salvation stories, as told in teacher education, were not only about the curriculum but also about the teacher and the developing child. Warde and Marta Carvalho's chapter in this book argues, for example, that the Brazilian history of education provided a narrative for teachers about the civilizing processes associated with Christianity. This formation of a historical narrative is in the same vein as the one elaborated upon earlier that indoctrinated teachers in Europe starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, and is still practiced today with an updated rhetoric, related to developing a "professional ethics."

The salvation stories that connect the teacher, the child, and the nation are not only in the narratives about the child, the nation, and the citizen. What is also inscribed in the construction of salvation stories is a particular rationalized order of a chronological time, one that goes unnoticed according to the principles of action theories. Warde and Carvalho's chapter, for example, focuses on the Brazilian professionalization and rationalization of processes of teaching as incorporating a European "sacralization" of time that was linear, continuous, and universal. This particular conceptualization of time, Warde and Carvalho argue, was apparent not only in the celebration of the moral
imperatives of teaching but also in Brazilian critical analyses that in the 1970s

drew on Gramsci to alter the narratives of history and in current reforms to
govern and regulate relations between the state and the teacher. The inscrip-
tion of salvation stories in the epistemological conditions of knowledge rather
than in the subject matter or “content” of history becomes important when we
return to the discussion of social regulation and control in social histories of
the U.S. school. A Gramscian concept of hegemony is also inscribed in these
studies. Warde and Carvalho’s analysis suggests that we might look to how the
knowledge conditions of such histories can produce an erasure of critique
through a particular universalizing and “sacredalization” of time and space.

Here we return to the idea of an ahistorical consciousness that operates
along the surface of the salvation stories of the child, the teacher, and the nation
told in social history. Embedded in the salvation stories of the school, Meyer,
Boli, Thomas, and Ramirez (1997) argue, are action theories that inscribe the a
priori structure of an agent whose individuality is linked to the collective saga
of the nation as a particular rationalized and moralized ordering of time. The
memory produced through the systems of representation and differentiations
as history is also a forgetting. Caspard (1998), for example, argues that the his-
tory of the Western European school has been constructed as an image and vindi-
cation of itself, its ideals, and missions. What is at stake in this representation
of the school requires a critical examination of the collective memory as it con-
stitutes political, social, cultural, and economic practices in education.

One can think of a cultural history in light of these critiques. While histori-
cist in its general commitments, our focus on a cultural history aims to estab-
lish a critical enterprise through historicizing the systems of reference and the
framework of its contemporaneity. The questioning of the a priori subject in
historicism is not to forego the use of reason or action for social change, but to
make the common sense of historicism the problematic. It is also to construct
a historical method that does not resort to the a priori structure of the actor
that is explanatory and that writes about culture around the “spirit,” the
“mind,” and the “consciousness” of peoples, their civilizations (beliefs, arts,
morals, laws, customs), and their “philosophy of life.”

We can think of a critique of the a priori subject as itself a strategy of change.
This is expressed by Rose who argues that the task of inquiry is to disturb “that
which forms that groundwork of the present, to make once more strange and to
cause us to wonder how it came to appear so natural” (1999: 58; also Pop-
kewitz 1991). To show the contingency of the arrangements that we live by is to
show how thought has played a part in holding those arrangements together
and to contest the strategies that govern the human possibilities. But to critique
the a priori subject is also to consider how cultural and social dimensions
overlap with the political. As Nóvoa’s chapter emphasizes, this notion of the
political is continually brought into focus in questions about language, that
cannot be dissociated from issues in which power is engaged and contested.

History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History

Changing Ways of Thinking:
From Modernist to Postmodernist Historical Inquiry

The historicizing that we speak about as a cultural history is different from the
ideas of regulation and control common to most social histories. These social
histories of control, as Popkewitz notes in his chapter on curriculum history,
embody a sovereign notion of power as something that someone holds. There
are actors whose sovereignty enables them to act in their own interests and
develop a collective authority. The historical study of regulation and social
control that we spoke about earlier expresses this sovereignty notion of power.
Social histories plot the processes of domination and repression that structure
events. But as the chapters in this book attest, power and historical narratives
can be ordered differently, namely without a search for the origins of sover-
eignty and without the ahistorical a priori subject inscribed in actor-centered
social histories. Regulation and governance can be thought about historically
as the imposition of order through knowledge. Through this sense of knowl-
edge as regulation and governance we can approach a cultural history of
schools without an epistemology of a constantly unfolding progression and a
subservient relation to philosophy.

Knowledge as a Regulating and Governing Practice:
The Decentered Subject

One point of departure is to think of regulating and governing as a productive
rather than a repressive force. Central to this consideration of regulation is
Foucault’s focus on the productive qualities of the rules and standards of
reason. Knowledge, he argues, regulates and governs through the principles in
which options are made available, problems defined, and solutions considered
as acceptable and effective. Social history focuses on regulation through theo-
ries of action (and actors) that effect reason; however, knowledge can also be
understood as “making” the world and individuality by interning and enclos-
ing possibilities.

Foucault’s ideas about power as a productive element related to knowledge
are central to a number of multiple chapters in this book. Inés Dussel argues
that school dress, often today seen as either inconsequential or uncritically
placed in debates about individualism, is in fact part of the moral economy and
the production of identity and difference. Moving from semiotics studies of
dress to its performative functions, she examines the move from Christian ped-
agogy in the seventeenth century to new technologies of the eighteenth and
nineteenth centuries that inscribed the laws and codes of culture related to the
bourgeois revolution and changes in the military discipline onto children’s
bodies and school populations. With the uniformizing of children’s clothing
came a dedifferentiation—the simultaneous individualization of children and
the universalization of their relations. Nóvoa argues for a broader idea of Foucault's disciplinary power, stressing the important role of vision and images in "telling the truth." He argues that we need to investigate the role of knowledge not only as a strategy of surveillance (as proposed in Foucault's famous discussion of Bentham's panopticon) but also as one of the spectacle, with the two regimes of power coinciding through the consumption of images.

The focus on knowledge as productive power involves the epistemological decentering of the subject. Decentering of the subject considers the historical production of principles as fabrifications, in the double sense of fictions and of the making of agents in historical narratives. This approach considers the construction of the child as having a childhood and the discursive practices through which parents become a calculable object of scrutiny and reflection (Popkewitz and Brennan 1998). This strategy to focus on knowledge and reason is not to rid ourselves of the subject itself, but to dislodge the ordering practices that enclose the boundaries established for thought as action.

Foucault elaborates an understanding of Kant and his quest for the meaning of Aufklärung or the Enlightenment that can be read as a commitment to change through the decentering of the subject. Foucault affirms his criticism of the present through an examination of "the historical workshops" (ateliers historiques), a truly meticulous historical construction of the genesis of social practices and discourses that create multiple forms of subjectivity (see Foucault 1984). Historicity for Foucault meant a rejection of a historicism that looks for origins: "What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissensus of other things. It is disparity" (1977: 142). Foucault's energetic refusal of historicist knowledge produced by academic historians was not a rebuff to history itself "and not even to the historical erudition" but to the primacy of its contents and uses, to its practices.

... one cannot fail to be struck by the impossibility of our culture of raising the problem of history of its own thought. It's why I have tried to make, obviously in a rather particular style, the history not of thought in general but of all that "contains thought" in a culture, of all in which there is thought... (1998: 267)

If history possesses a privilege, ... it would play the role of an internal ethology of our culture and our rationality. (1998: 293)

Foucault felt the pressing need to revise the traditional liberal paradigm of historical inquiry by building alternative conceptions of making history through challenging the constraints of this discipline by way of seeking relationships with other forms of knowledge production and discipline ascriptions.

Decentering as a notion, however, is not unique to cultural histories but is found also in Marx, and carried forward in the writings of Durkheim and Weber. It is given particular methodological distinctions in the work not only of Foucault, but postmodern feminism, among others. Julia Varela's chapter positions cultural history in a long tradition of critical thinking in the social sciences. She suggests that the decentering of models of consciousness was argued by Marx in challenging the idea of a constantly unfolding and progressive history.

While the decentering of the subject produces a particular methodological focus on knowledge, the intent is not to inscribe the cultural in opposition to the social, with its variations of text versus reality, theory versus practice. Antônio Nóvoa and Heinz-Elmar Tenorth point to the overlapping of the social and the cultural through a turning from the "linguistic turn" to the "pictorial turn." They seek to understand how language and "culture" give intentionality through the logic that they inscribe for subjects to act and transform their worlds. The focus on the images of the school, Nóvoa argues, positions the spectator who enters a game of images, illusions, suspicions, and contested narratives that complement but cannot be reduced to texts. Tenorth, by comparison, compares earlier cultural studies in Germany that focused on the life histories of everyday people with current studies that link history to literary criticism, media studies, and anthropology, such as Clifford Gertz's discussion of "thick descriptions." He illustrates this shift methodologically through a discussion of how the representations of school photographs can illuminate pedagogical meaning, forms, and structures.

The use of photographs in the writing of history is itself an old occupation of historians, as we argued earlier. But Nóvoa and Tenorth place the study of images in a set of theoretical configurations of the grammar of schooling that have different and innovative possibilities. In this respect, we believe that the use of photography is as Michel Foucault (1982) said in commenting on Duane Michals' calligraphy on photographs as creating new ways of seeing: "a knowledgable form of reconciling the instantaneousity of photography with the continuity of times for telling a story" (Foucault 1994: 250).

This overlapping of the cultural and social through a decentering strategy is also explored in the chapter by Anne-Marie Chartier and Jean Hébrard. They first distinguish between the history of science concerned with the ways in which scientific knowledge is created and developed, the history of education concerned with the political aspects of the development of school systems, and a cultural history concerned with the history of interactions between spoken and written cultures and the acquisition of "mental tools," (a concept from the French historical school of the Annales). In their essay, a number of their different research projects are brought together in a discussion of reading and writing as historical inventions that played an important role in the diffusion of intellectual tools and underlay cultural transformations related to the church, the bourgeoisie, and the new state during the ancien régime and after the French Revolution. They argue that even in the Treaty of Trente the school was considered as an institution whose purpose was the passing on of the science of salvation through ensuring that all Christians were literate. The teaching of
writing was an innovation related to civilizing people's customs and minds. But the idea of reading was not constant, as its focus shifted from the catechism (memory writing), to tool writing (the reckoning of tradesmen and shopkeepers), to its modern aims as moralizing narratives and "reading for the sake of reading." Chartier and Hébrard's historical discussion of literacy problematizes commonsense assumptions about reading and writing, and thus dissolve the distinction between the social and the cultural.

**Genealogy and Cultural History**

One important strategy in cultural histories is genealogical, an approach offered by Nietzsche and re-visioned in the work of Foucault. In one fashion, genealogy is a way to consider how systems of reason change over time as cultural practice. Central is how problems of social and individual life become constituted as they do, and change so as to effect the conditions in which we live. Thus, a genealogical approach provides a way to locate change in the systems of knowledge that organize the "self" through the effects of power.

Genealogy is not, as it sometimes seems to be, a new method of doing history with its own rules and principles; it is rather an effort to take history itself very seriously and to find it where it has least been expected to be. Genealogy takes as its objects precisely those institutions and practices which, like morality, are usually thought to be totally exempt from change and development. It tries to show the way in which they too undergo changes as a result of historical developments. And it also tries to show how such changes escape our notice and how it is often in the interest of these practices to mask their specific origins and character. As a result of this, genealogy has direct practical consequences because, by demonstrating the contingent character of the institutions that traditional historical exhibits as unchanging, it creates the possibility of altering them. (Nehamas 1985: 112, cit. by Payne 1997: 28)

Historical practice as defined by genealogy is not only an interpretative analysis, and a critical hermeneutic of the complexities of historical processes as engendered in social sources. It is also a practice of analytical work that Foucault conceived as a product of "patience and a knowledge of details and depending on a vast accumulation of source material" (1977: 140).

But while providing some orientation to the problem of history and the present, genealogy has moved in different ways through different theoretical and methodological connections. Varela, who studied with Foucault, introduces the idea of genealogy as a method with which to consider the interrelation of material and symbolic processes that cuts across the formation of knowledge and which brings to light their social functions in their institutional development. Drawing on the work of Foucault and of Norbert Elias, Varela brings us to consider how and why the structure of the social fabric changes at the same time as the individual. To return to our earlier discussion about the inscription of the philosophy of consciousness and theories of action in social and intellectual history, Varela explores how this became a historical fact. She argues that the formation of individual personalities, individual subjects, and the idea of society as composed of isolated individuals became necessary at the precise historical moment when the legitimacy of power was being based on the idea of a general "will."

Antonio Viñao and Ingólfur Ásgeir Jóhannesson's chapters also develop a genealogical method but by integrating Bourdieu's ideas of a social field. Viñao's chapter, for example, draws on Bourdieu's (see, e.g. 1984) notions of intellectual field and *habitus* to consider social dimensions that relate to intellectual dimensions. Viñao's historical project is to consider the academic professorate through an examination of the texts of school courses, the selection processes for academics, the inspectors and inspector systems, and the distribution of time and work in school. It is a study of the history of the cultural and academic elite through its methods of training, means of selection and admittance into the group, as related to varying modes of power. Both collective and individual. He rejects ideas of individual agents determining thought and action and methodological individualism that sees belief systems as the sum of discrete and explicit positions that can be traced to a single original source. Instead, Viñao examines the sociology of the institutionalization of teaching and the anthropology of ordinary life to understand schools as a broad landscape from which multiple trajectories emerge to form the Spanish teacher and the educational academic disciplines.

Ingólfur Ásgeir Jóhannesson also develops a genealogical method, one that seeks to integrate Bourdieu's idea of a social field and Foucault's interest in the cultural practices of knowledge. His study historicizes the post-World War II educational reforms in Iceland, providing a way to rethink the patterns of governing, a theme that we return to later.

While David Hamilton does not explicitly use the concept of genealogy; his analysis examines the interrelation of the knowledge of schooling as a cultural practice that changes over time as it overlaps with social and institutional practices. Specifically, Hamilton examines the amalgamation of ideas, institutions, and technologies through which the notions of educational method and order "make" for the genesis of the modern school. He studies the transformation of the school from a more nomadic space to that of a bounded territory space having a variety of uses and functions that are productive, symbolic, and disciplinary. The institutionalization and systematization of schooling in the seventeenth century occur in relation to the development of the ideas of method and discipline that relate to a number of cross currents of the Renaissance and Reformation—Calvin's notion of double grace, the constructions of building as schools and the use of desk and file lockers—that overlap with the broad
intellectual highway connecting a Christian heritage of church orders, school orders and political orders. The "territory" that Hamilton discusses is not a geographic place but a discursive space that folds together multiple different practices and processes.

Hamilton argues that the school, as the title of his essay suggests, "comes from nowhere," in that it is not borne out of a continuity from something previously existing nor from a singular historical trajectory or origin, but rather exists in a dialogue between the present and the past. Schooling, like a Russian doll, is largely constituted by a layered series of inner spaces hidden from the outside. Hamilton's manner of historicizing the school goes against the grain through a discomfiting and self-conscious challenge to the working assumption of ancestry that stands as the monument of schooling. To approach school as not having an ancestry is, Hamilton argues, liberating as it releases the investigation of modern schooling from directed, linear, one-thing-at-a-time theorizing.

We can think of the historical practice produced by genealogical work as implying an interventionist concept of history, the one that Foucault named "effective history," itself a kind of knowledge (see also Dean 1994). It is a knowledge "made for cutting" rather than promoting continuity with evolutionist approaches to change. Genealogy is work with the aim of producing "knowledge as perspective," of understanding and explaining the present, a knowledge that it is itself openly judgmental and value-laden but not in the positivist sense of "bias" that once dominated sociology and the history of social science.

Regulation, Governing, and the State

We can further develop the idea of a cultural history by focusing on distinctions of regulation and governing in the notion of the state. The idea of the state has been introduced in social histories in order to rethink the functionalist histories of curriculum differentiation that dominated the field in the 1960s and 1970s. Functionalism sought to explain how numerous specialized courses of study and conceptual notions, for example, vocationalism, in the first decades of the century, channeled students into occupational and citizenship roles based on their background and ability (Callahan 1962; Krug 1969). Although contested, the differentiated curriculum made the schools an instrument of social control to preserve the political and economic power of the upper and upper-middle classes at the expense of the working classes, particularly the urban poor and racial and ethnic minorities (Hogan 1983; Carnoy and Levin 1985; also see discussions of contradictory demands on differentiation in schools in Angus, Mirel, and Vinovskis 1988; Tyack 1974; Kliebard 1995; Labaree 1988).

These explanations tended to make the regulation of schooling a problem of social control. The explanations focus on the origins of regulation as the result of economic social pressures or institutional developments. The search for origins itself bound inquiry to an a priori structure that fashions and shapes the meanings and images of history. What was thought missing from all these accounts was a consideration of the governing mechanism through which curriculum differentiation was embraced.

One solution to this problem is to be found in the recent interest of sociologists in theories of the state. Rooted in the classic sociology of Max Weber and the more recent work of such scholars as Theda Skocpol, this explanatory framework focuses on state bureaucracies and their managers as key players in political and social reform (Weber 1946, 1968; Skocpol 1985). In a state-centered interpretation, the state or the agencies and individuals in the public sphere who hold obligatory authority over others are autonomous actors functioning at their own behest to enact reform, often independently of other groups and classes, to attain the administrative capacity they require to address pressing problems. The state, in other words, can possess its own goals and take its own initiatives to attain those ends. Although its programs and policies often support the long term interests of dominant social classes, the state is not simply a vehicle through which these classes pursue their particular interests (Skocpol 1992; Finegold and Skocpol 1995; for a productive appraisal of the issue of the state after the cultural turn, which challenges previous approaches, see Steinmetz 1999).

A central premise of this social history is that a major characteristic of twentieth century American political reform has been state building. Within this theoretical context, the regulative initiatives of schools are thought of as a part of state building. One can understand, for example, the establishment of special education programs as an effort by early twentieth century urban school administrators to create the administrative capacity to deal with a number of pressing problems (Franklin 1994). Special classes and schools offered urban school administrators a way to maintain their historic commitment to the common universal ideal of school accessibility in the face of early twentieth century enrollment growth and diversity that also introduced "troublesome" children to teach. Likewise, the establishment of special education provided the administrators with a professional ideology that celebrated their technical expertise and consequently their standing as part of a distinct professional specialty within the schools.

The idea of the institutional development of professional administrative practices and state legal-administrative practices are also dimensions to cultural history, as argued in the chapters of Viñó, Ingólfur Ásgeir Jóhannesson, and Hamilton, although each chapter emphasizes different theoretical orientations to the relation.

But the emphasis in these chapters is on moving the social and cultural into closer proximity with each other so as to dissolve the distinctions themselves.
In his state-centered history of special education, Franklin (1994) notes that school administrators did not simply create special education programs de novo. Such programs appeared as the reasonable, appropriate, and natural solution to the problem of enrollment growth and diversity as a result of changes in ways in which Western intellectuals talked about deviance. In fact, according to Franklin, a fundamental shift in our discourse about deviance that was underway since the mid-eighteenth century and involved a medicalization of the concept of deviance represented a prerequisite condition for schools to be able to assume responsibility for the kind of children who would be accommodated through special education (Franklin 1994). What, in other words, is missing from explanations of regulation derived from theories of the state is a consideration of how knowledge is a field of practices that intervene as a part of social life. It is this topic that stands at the center of our understanding of cultural history.

From this we can return to the state without redepolying the distinctions between the text and practice, the social and the cultural, and the opposition of government to the private or the personal. We can give attention to the state, as did Foucault (1979), through giving attention to the assemblage of practices that aims at the governing of capacity for action (Popkewitz 1996, 2000b). Taking our cues from postmodern theory about discourse and “reason” as governing practices, we can think of a cultural history as directing attention to the networks, exchanges, and relations among a range of public, private, and voluntary organizations through which regulative and governing practices are produced.

This focus on the assemblage of practice as forming the principles of governing is central to Katharina Heyning’s discussion of teacher education reforms. Employing what she calls an archaeological approach, she examines the formal minutes from departmental meetings at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Rather than see the seemingly bureaucratic grammar of these documents as without meaning, she focuses on how they embody multiple other texts. Her historicizing is a method that considers how to read the present texts and others not present as a relational field. She explores how certain historical discourses are mobilized in the documents to construct a system of supervision and surveillance, and, at the same time, a productive practice through generating principles of action in the narratives and images of the teachers.

Popkewitz’s chapter on the reading of Vygotsky and Dewey in contemporary educational reforms also provides a way to rethink the concept of the state as the art of governing. Popkewitz’s concern is the historical configurations of the past and the present constructed by the texts that make what is possible and plausible to “reason” about education. He argues that there is no “real” reading of the ideas, no one “true” meaning of Dewey’s notion of “community” or Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development.” Rather, the task is to understand how these texts were part of an intertextual and institutional con-

History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History
Historicizing as the Interweaving of the Past and Present

We can bring the previous discussion about a cultural history together by focusing on a question that has dominated the U.S. field of curriculum theory and curriculum history. That question has been called the Spencerian question: "What knowledge is of most worth?" This question has appeared in different forms in American historical and educational research in reference to the debates, the dilemmas, and the directions taken by schools. We will argue for a reordering of that question as well as engage one of the most important challenges to a cultural history, that posed in the work of the German-American historian Georg G. Iggers.

Rethinking the Spencerian Question: Toward a Cultural History

The Spencerian question assumes a certain philosophical, ahistorical a priori. That prior assumption is that a foundational knowledge can be identified, at least in principle, that can lead to the essential purpose or normative function of the school. With the right method or ideology, the knowledge of most worth can be identified (even if that absolute is only an ideal that is not thought realized in practice). Further, the Spencerian question inserts theories of action that inscribe the agent who is to bring progress through that absolute knowledge. In this sense, we can think of the Spencerian question as a performative reiteration of an absolute ideal that stands as an unmitigated good to measure the progress and the progressiveness of schooling. Knowledge becomes an object that is used to effect purpose rather than one that forms purpose and intent.

The Spencerian question can be considered, in contrast, as a monument to how people are to tell the “truth” about society, themselves, and their routes of salvation. It is not to ask what knowledge is of most worth, but how that worth is produced as a cultural field of practices. What counts for knowledge at any given moment is embodied in the conflicts over who can speak, and according to what criteria of truth. The discourses through which principles of action are generated are interrogated to consider how they are given affectivity and authorization.

Our historicizing is redirected to reason rather than to accept the categories of thought as stable entities. It provides a way to examine the particular expressions that link reason to the problem-solving rationalities of science and, as discussed earlier, the actor who is identified as the agent of change. In this sense, our attention is directed to the systems of reason (images, narratives, and discourses) through which the objects of schooling are classified and ordered over time, providing a way to think about change.

Thus, the modern curriculum becomes caught in its doubleness. It is an expression of the Enlightenment toward the child as a participant in the construction of the world. But it is also a linking of nineteenth-century science, morality, and political notions of progress to the individual through the acquisition of knowledge. Modern curriculum is a governing practice concerned with the administration of the child through forms of knowledge that would order the sensibilities and feelings of the individual. Once we view knowledge in this manner, it is not a hidden aspect of the curriculum but part of its surface appearance that goes unnoticed.

For our purposes here, then, curriculum is a practice of regulation and governance through the reason generated for organizing action (and actors) and establishing purposes (structurally or individually). Knowledge provides the principles through which options are made available, problems defined, and solutions considered as acceptable and effective. Knowledge is a practice that fabricates worlds and individuality (with fabrication having its dual meaning of fiction and making) and thus can be understood as material, turning Marx’s interest in labor into one of knowledge itself.

Culture and the Social

One of the most frequent criticisms of the historicism that we speak of (and more generally criticism related to postmodernism) is that such scholarship does not “see” culture within social processes. This question was given attention by the German-American historian Georg G. Iggers. In his last work, Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge, Iggers uses a historicist framework to critique the work of authors associated with the reshaping of historical inquiry, such as Clifford Geertz, Hayden White, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Dominic La Capra, among others. Iggers views the linguistic turn as a set of semiotic or linguistic approaches that do not “see the culture within the framework of social processes and methodologically results in an irrationalism [since] the interpretation of symbols cannot be tested empirically.” In his interpretation of Foucault’s dictum that “reality does not exist, that only language exists,” linguistic theory and the philosophy of language, he says, lend themselves “better to literary criticism than to historical writing” (1997: 125, 132).

The postmodern challenge that appears in the subtitle of his book is not for him a challenge for historical inquiry, although he recognizes the necessity to “take the postmodernist critique of historiography very seriously” and his “position is probably somewhere between the postmodernist position and a more conservative one” (see Domanska 1998: 100). Iggers is interested in a reconstructionist/constructionist historiography (the writing of history) that gives emphasis to the centrality of the meaning and the interpretation, but with the empirical, archival evidence related to understanding of the continuity and development over the process of the times, forces, and circumstances, as he says, “historically understood.” For Iggers, to observe that “history does not use scientific vocabulary, does not mean that it cannot deal with the historical past,”
but “the interpretation of meaning” must be “an attempt to get back at reality” (1997: 105, italics ours).

Various ideas produced in the debates about the “linguistic turn” are acknowledged in several chapters of the present volume such as those by Nôvoa and Viñao. It seems clear that there is an oversimplification of so-called postmodern thought in Iggers’ critique. (See Iggers 1999, for a most recent and by some means sympathetic outlook of postmodernism or historiography.) Understanding postmodernism through its focus on literary theory, as expressed often in poststructural analysis, does not make sense as we have continually argued by focusing on the relation of a variety of different trajectories related both to postmodern theory and cultural history. Instead we can turn to Derrida’s textualism, which locates literature at the center but reads both science and philosophy as forms of literary genres. Here we find another orientation, as that created by Foucault, that takes as a key category the networks of knowledge/power. In this case, the social body is conceived and constructed as a heterogeneous whole (scientific theories and systems of reason, philosophical conceptions and multiple rationalities, laws and regulations, governmental and actor strategies).

It is this configuring of knowledge as part of an amalgamation of social structures, processes, and practices that makes hisorical studies more than merely talking about textual or semiotic considerations. Postmodern thought (which is not just literary or text analysis but also critical ethnography in what Popkewitz calls a social epistemology in his contributions to this book) involved a radical break with the major assumptions of modernist historicism. It made this break by introducing a deconstructing reading of the use of language in “history’s content as well as the concepts and categories deployed to order and explain historical evidence through our linguistic power of figuration” (Munslow 1997: 181). Further, while this argument seems to speak of knowledge as socially embedded, we also need to be careful in using the term “socially constructed” which in many cases represents an unreflective rhetoric, as Latour (1999) has pointed out with respect to the sciences (also see Hacking 1999).

A leading cultural historian, Roger Chartier, has perceived this challenge of historical knowledge in the following way.

One cannot—or can no longer—accept an epistemology of the correspondence or duplication between the historical discourse and the events or realities that are its objects, as if the discourse were mere cartography, a faithful copy of the past. Historians today are fully aware of the gap that exists between the past and its representation, between the vanished realities and the discursive form that aims at representing and understanding them. Narrow is the way, therefore, for anyone who refuses to reduce history to an untrammelled literary activity open to chance and worthy only of curiosity, yet also refuses to define its scientific character based on the one model of knowledge concerning the physical world. (1996: 27)

What Do We Mean by Cultural History?

Our bringing together a number of European, Latin American, and U.S. researchers who are interested in the history of the school is a strategy to encourage thought about the study of education that extends beyond the field of history. While we noted earlier a relation between a cultural history and a field of U.S. cultural and political research that is sometimes called postmodernism, we do not intend to collapse the diverse intellectual trajectories in this book under that rubric. Just the opposite. Our purpose is to underscore that this conversation overlaps with German, French, Latin American, and British traditions that existed prior to the recent “naming” of postmodernism in the United States. Further, the questions raised about knowledge and power have continued to play a part in current debates about history, social science and the humanities. Cultural history is, in many respects, a configuration in historical inquiry after the late eighties that transverses not only the academic community of historians but also the social sciences (see Evans [1999] for a characterization of historical inquiry at the present as a multicultural domain; Burke [1994] for the varieties of cultural history in today’s historiography; and Hunt [1989], Kelley [1996], and Burke [1997, chapter 1], for a history of cultural history and its traditions and varieties). It is part of a more complex process produced inside the life of the academic community of social sciences where fragmentation, recombination, and hybridization of disciplinary fields have intersected during the past few decades, creating and legitimizing “new” fields and specializations (see Dogan and Dahle 1990; Gibbons et al. 1994).
At the same time, in recognizing the reconfigurations presently occurring, we have sought to keep our distance from the imposition of narrative as a mere fiction through a number of different intellectual strategies. We continually focus on the need to dissolve the relation of the social and culture, the text and reality, and to view knowledge as a productive aspect of power. We are also aware of the values of a “poetics of knowledge” ("the set of literary procedures by which a discourse escapes literature, gives itself the status of science, and signifies this status" [Rancière 1994: 8]). Instead of the traditional historicist view of the “rational” transparency of language in historical representations, we have thought of narrative as "an arena in which meaning takes form, in which individuals connect to the public and social world, and in which change therefore becomes possible" (Bonnell and Hunt 1999: 17). In this sense, we also reject the new historical inquiry (and certain cultural studies and postcolonial thought) that seeks to revive a self-explanatory narration in which the new stories of the nation and people reinstitutes the traditional pattern of making history, with its adherence to logical time, fixed space, and universal salvation narratives such as those of nationhood (for critiques of these tendencies, see, e.g., Cooper and Stoler 1997; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Spivak 1999; Adler and Hermann 1999).

In this discussion, we have sought to highlight the following points of a cultural history:

The concern with knowledge is a central object of study. This approach considers language as more than giving information or getting information, but also as disciplining, ordering, and dividing a field of cultural practices. As the essays in this book suggest, making knowledge a central focus of study involves considering different trajectories of integrating social and political theory, different views of historiography, and different ways of thinking about culture in the study of human affairs.

A cultural history is a history of the present. But cultural history is not presentist; it does not position history in a programmatic moral role to identify the absolute, transcendental values for society and inscribe them in schooling. The history of the present aims to grasp the conditions concerning what is possible to say as "true," and to consider the present configuration and organization of knowledge through excavating the shifting formations of knowledge over time.

Cultural history entails systematic and continuous interdisciplinary interaction. Throughout this essay, we have tied the study of history to anthropology, sociology, literary studies, and philosophy, among others. As a result, the normal disciplinary boundaries dissolve.

A notion of change is built on the politics of knowledge. To elucidate the impositions of knowledge is a strategy that makes visible the principles that intern and enclose consciousness, thus opening up different possibilities and alternatives.

Notes
1. In the writing of this chapter, we benefited from the comments and critiques of Mary Bauman, Inés Dussel, Lisa Hennon, Ruth Gustafson, Dar Weyenberg, and the Wednesday Group at the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
2. There is an ironic quality in using the term culture to deconstruct its opposition,
in that this the social, in that this may reinscribe the distinctions. Our hope is for this not to happen; "cultural" is viewed here as a convenient term to think about the configurations and connections of collectively mediated aspects of the world and knowledge, in its broadest sense. For a discussion of the relation of cultural and social history, see Frijhoff (1998).

3. "Configurable comprehension" is a metaphor coined by the late Louis O. Mink, a constructivist who helped provide for the "linguistic turn" in the historical inquiry with his philosophy of history (see Mink 1987: 56-57).

4. We do find some British and American educational historians who explore the implications of a cultural history (Cohen 1999), but most of the intellectual scholarship is being done outside the formal disciplinary field of educational history in the curriculum field (see Popkewitz and Brennan 1998; Baker 2000).

5. There is also a tendency for the educational critics to have read only secondary sources and to take the rhetorical announcements as the substantive intellectual arguments being brought forward. For a general discussion, see Popkewitz and Brennan (1998); on comparative education, Popkewitz (2000a).

6. The meaning of historicism is contested, with some arguing a broad view of its temporality, as here, and others a more restricted view (see Szacki 1979, chapter 11; and Schnädelbach 1984, for comprehensive analysis of the variety of historicisms following the German pattern; see the forum published by History and Theory 34(3), 1995, on "The Meaning of Historicism and Its Relevance for Contemporary Theory," Wittkau 1994; and Oexle and Rüsen 1996; Pieters, 2000 for the most recent debates) For our purposes, we will talk about the social historians as providing a particular form to historicism that is explained later in the section.

7. Thomas's discussion follows the German historian of ideas Hans Blumenberg (1983).

8. The Rankean Geisteswissenschaften, consolidated by a cognitive alliance between historicism and positivism, successfully institutionalized and professionalized the modern system of science. In the present, the crisis of the liberal and scientific paradigm of history that formed in the cognitive alliance has more clearly distinctive features than it did a century ago.

9. One can also trace such a celebratory history in Latin America through Warde and Carvalho's chapter on Brazil.

10. This was called "the new social history" as a way of differentiating the social historical traditions that developed in the early part of the twentieth century, what the British historian George Maclay Trevelyan called "history with the politics left out" (see Simon 1983, for a review of its impact in history of education).

11. Others have used such terms as "advance liberalism," and "the second crisis of modernity." We use late modernity and postmodernity not to take sides here, but only to signal that significant changes are occurring that require new interpretive approaches.

12. See History and Theory 37(2), 1998, for a complete monograph on this work and its twenty-five years of influence.

13. White was the first American historian to provide a positive and lengthy review of Michel Foucault's work in the field of history (1973b; also 1978), the same year of Metahistory's appearance (also see Domanska 1998). In his systematic treatment of Foucault as a "historian," White described Foucault as being in "praise of historicism" through his demonstration of "relentlessness of historicity." White thought that "[u]nlike the conventional historian, who is concerned to clarify and thereby to reformalize" his readers with the artifacts of past cultures and epochs, Foucault seeks to "deformalize" the phenomena of man, society, and culture which has been rendered all too transparent by a century of study, interpretation, and conceptual over-determination. For White, Foucault's writing also represented a "[h]eady stuff, to be sure. And it is quite understandable that Foucault has been the object of attack of almost everyone who has not been simply puzzled by him." (White 1973: 50, 44) (See Brier 1998; also Burke 1992; O'Farrell 1989; Goldstein 1993; Noireil 1994; and Vázquez García 1997, for contested questions of Foucault as historian).

14. If we examine the broader impact of Metahistory we find that from 1987 to the end of 1999 the Web of Science (from the Institute for Scientific Information) registers 602 different articles that cite it.

15. While there seems to be more spaces for theoretical history or for assuming the role played by theoretical constructs in the structuring of historical narrative, that idea of theory tends to harken back to a notion of a middle ground theory, an idea rooted in the traditional Mertonian sociology of knowledge (see, e.g., Kaestle 1992: 202; or Kaestle 1999 for a more recent methodological landscape of history of education based on modernist approaches, but which any reference to postmodern social historical inquiry). What is ignored in educational historians' discussions is the long-term debates about the interplay of theory narrativity and method in history, such as in the work of Topolski (1987, 1991, 1999). If in the professional field of history during the past few decades we find more space for theoretical history or for assuming the role played by theoretical constructs in the structural making of historical narrative, we are not referring to the use of direct theoretical arguments, or to an exercise of testing hypothetical hypotheses; in fact, it is amazing how lacking in the academic history of education of this kind of reflection and literature. The German academic community has paid more attention to these issues, although little theory of science has been applied to educational historiography. See von Prondczynsky (1999) for a recent account and approach (although his reading and reservations of postmodern historiography are too restricted).

16. Angelo is currently not involved in the field of educational history. Kari was the first American educational historian to acknowledge White's Metahistory, which he did in his 1978 Presidential Address to the History of Education Society, strategically called "The Quest for Orderly Change: Some Reflection." In this paper, he asked his colleagues to look for the "meta-structure of history," as White did, to provide a "new and illuminating perspective into our understanding of the world of knowledge from the deep of the living present" (Kari 1978: 160; italics ours).

17. See the monograph on "History of Education in the Postmodern Era" (vol 32(2): 1996) edited by Cohen in conjunction with the journal's editor, Marc Depaepe.

18. We can differentiate the two here. Historical sociology is often related to discipline of sociology where secondary as well as primary sources are used. It is not a fixed rule but one used if only to demarcate disciplinary boundaries.

19. In the case of the United States, see Chambless (1979) for an account of the nineteenth century and Depaepe (1983), Hiner (1990), and Lagemann (2000, ch. 3 and 6) for the twentieth century
21. Spivak is instructive here: "Postcolonial studies, unwittingly commemorating a lost object, can become an alibi unless it is placed within a general frame, Colonial Discourse studies, when they concentrate only on the presentation of the colonized or the matter of the colonies, can sometimes serve the production of current neocolonial knowledge by placing colonialism/imperialism securely in the past, and/or by suggesting a continuous line from the past to our present" (1999: 1).

22. Igers seems not to have read Foucault’s discussion of the systems of thought. Igers (1997) refers to secondary sources. However, Igers does not reject Foucault in the overdetermined way a number of historians do. A prime example of that sort of response to Foucault is the one expressed by the distinguished analytical philosopher of history Arthur C. Dalton in the recent, superb survey of contemporary historiography by Ewa Domanska, who interviewed some of the world’s leading theorists and philosophers of history. For Dalton, Foucault “is one of the scariest human beings I know, and one of the most dangerous” (see Domanska 1998: 182). Foucault is the second most mentioned figure by the interviewees, noted by Alan Megill in the introduction to Domanska’s book (the first mentioned is Hayden White with 232 mentions, followed by Foucault with 80, Richard Rorty with 46, and Jacques Derrida with 36).

23. This use of the term “postmodern” as an evil to be fought against modernism is a rather frequent rhetorical device (see, e.g., Masemann and Welch 1997).

24. See Eley (1992) for a complete review of the “linguistic turn,” and also Cohen (1999, chapter 3) from a perspective from the field of educational history.

25. One counter-argument is also that it is not possible to escape from the “text” because there is nothing outside of it (see Callinicos 1989, for a criticism).

26. Gabrielle Spiegel (1990) coined the phrase “semiotic challenge” to argue that the historical inquiry produced in the most recent epoch is unthinkable without this linguistic turn.

27. Watten (1996:221) suggests that this is at the heart of the modernist substance of historical inquiry, that is to say narrativity (“historical thought [traditionally] located, intellectually considered, near the suppression of the nonnarrated”) is reconfigured as next to the nonnarrative and nonrepresentational content through (re)textualization.


References


History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History


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