

Chapter 8

Reform and Making Human Kinds: The Double Gestures of Inclusion and Exclusion in the Practice of Schooling

Thomas S. Popkewitz

Abstract The chapter considers the globalization and transnational through examining reform as embodying standards. My use of standards is not in the publically stated goals of policy. They are in the principles generated in the making of the objects of reflection and administration of children. These standards relate historically to the rules and standards about who the child is and should be and who is “different,” abjected, and thus excluded. The chapter begins with interviews of American urban teachers, with urban as a phrase used to talk about teachers of children of the poor, racialized, and ethnic groups that are marginalized in educational settings. This child is called “the child left behind” in American legislation designed to improve schools for a category in education that refers to children considered socially disadvantaged, marginalized, and associated with problems of low achievement in school. The chapter proceeds to historicize how differences and divisions are established to make “the urban” teacher and child as different in American social and education sciences at the turn of the twentieth century. It argues that the sciences of teaching and learning embody cultural theses about kinds of people. These cultural theses involve double gestures: the hope of schooling in making kinds of people whose modes of living embody collective moral values and with this hope of inclusion are simultaneous fears of the dangers and dangerous populations. The thinking about reform is a historical method to study what schools do, how reforms function, and educational research. My concern with the double gestures of reform is to explore the limits of contemporary frameworks that define the subject of school reform and its research programs.

T.S. Popkewitz (✉)
Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison,
225 N St Mills St, Madison, WI 53706-1707, USA
e-mail: thomas.popkewitz@wisc.edu

There is an oddity to this land of mine in talk about globalization and transnational education. One is the worry about the standardization occurring, for example, through international programs of student performance, such as OECD's PISA. The other is the regionalization of educational phenomena. In the historical and political narratives of the American school, it is seen as having no center and no standards. Visiting an elementary or secondary school in the country offers the lulling impression of differences—differences in architectural patterns, rules for teacher certification, organizational policy-making, and the curricula that travel along with unique dialects of speech associated with regional differences. This differentiated, rudderless, and noncentralized and non-state state of education is expressed in educational research, history, and public discussions.

I start with this oddity as a way to think about the standards of schooling, how to reconcile what is globalization and the transnational with what seem as idiosyncratic and the contextual immediacies of everyday life in schooling. The opposition of the global and the local are often talked about through theories about the school's institutions, legal qualities, and organizational features. If I take OECD's international assessment of student performance, PISA, statistics is used to establish categories of equivalence to compare nations. The comparative statistics is not merely descriptive. They embody a desired state of educational practices as standards from which to measure and judge differences. The criteria of school success and failure are made into global and universal categories for all national systems to judge the position of their educational system in the global landscape and then to organize models of change in order to function effectively in relation to that landscape. The representations of the differences in student performance are related to differences in contextual factors among nations, such as teacher qualities (recruitment practices, salaries, and school leadership) and the social and psychological characteristics of the student's family and community (the social, ethnic, and national group that the student belongs). The assumption is there are global criteria for success and that all nations can achieve if they adhere to same processes and intensities.

I want to think about globalization and its relation to the local through a different register in this article. If I take the assessment of student performance, it embodies a particular system of reasoning that makes possible thinking about an abstraction—the school achievement of students—as simultaneously a way to reflect and act in policy, research, and the daily life of schools. Further, it explores how particular kinds of abstractions about people and difference enter into everyday life that have implications to questions about social inclusion and exclusion.

My focus is on the systems of reason that order and classify children in American education. I explore how the principles and categories of schooling inscribe distinctions about what is desired as the normal—the lifelong learner—and the pathological, the child recognized as different yet divided from the normal and placed in the cultural spaces of the socially disadvantaged, and “the child left behind.” The left behind child is often called “the urban child,” a determinant category about a kind of child whose modes of living embodies fears of the dangers and dangerous populations to the envisioned future.

While the discussions of globalization and the urban child who is “left behind” in American schools would seem very far away from each other, they are not. Embodied in the theories about globalization and the urban child is a comparative style of reasoning. The comparative reasoning entails the production of abstractions about kinds of children (gifted, creative,) that function as universal, global characteristics of what the child should be. These qualities and characteristics appear as “the natural” child in policy, reform research and school programs. Urban education inscribes the comparativeness to inscribe normalcy and pathology, the kind of child abjected and placed in unlivable spaces. The social disadvantaged and urban child embodies differences and divisions from the desired kind of person. Programs to remediate the differences are measured and administrated in school programs.

The first section pursues the making of kinds of people in school and difference. I begin with interviews from an ethnography of US urban and rural teachers (Popkewitz 1998/2015). The teachers’ classifications are explored as inscribing divisions about the qualities and characteristics of the child. The second section considers historically on how pedagogical discourses shape and fashion differences through establishing particular representations and identities as global properties of individuals. The third section focuses on the planning of curriculum as generating cultural theses about who the child is and should live. In this section, I return to the discussion of the urban child to examine how particular cultural standards are instantiated in schooling to produce differences that exclude and abject. My examining of teachers in urban schools, then, is to understand the cultural nuances and distinctions that classify and differentiate children in schools but also the family and community (social groups) in which the child lives. While I focus on the US distinctions, different categories are produced in other countries, such as “periphery” children and families in Brazil and “the child left behind” of rural areas of China when their parents seek work in its urban centers.

The strategy of this chapter is to explore this comparative style of reason and its limits in efforts to change contemporary schooling. Issues of globalization and transnational education are viewed through these lenses; that is, how is it possible to think of the self and others through abstractions that universalize properties of kinds of people as global yet particular to everyday life in schooling. The argument challenges the existing frameworks that order research by focusing on the system of reason through which pedagogical abstractions universalize and globalize desired kinds of people, which at the same time produce differences and diversity. I call the method of investigation as “social epistemology,” examining the rules and standards of how “we” think, talk, and act as historically and socially produced (see, e.g., Popkewitz 2014). At a different layer, the argument is about change. The analysis is to poke holes in the causalities of the present in order to push its historical boundaries through opening its possibilities different from its contemporary frameworks.

The Practices of Everyday Life: Saying from “Urban” Teachers

A few years ago I went to a European Educational Research Association meeting in Berlin. The meeting’s theme was about urban education and the question of inequality. If I think of my native land, the signification of “urban” in the USA since the turn of the twentieth century was a concern with The Social Question. The Social Question gave focus to social science research and the newly minted welfare state reforms. Research and reforms were to change the conditions and styles of life associated with the poor, the immigrant, and working classes of the cities. “Urban” is a phrase that is used to talk about the focus of American government policies and research concerned with populations whose children are not succeeding adequately in schools. In contemporary policy and research, the “urban” child, family, and communities (social groups) are classified in legislation called “No Child Left Behind” to signal the state and professional commitment to provide equal education for all children.

I was surprised a bit at this conference about urban schools as the theme for the European conference. I remembered that only the wealthy lived in Stockholm, Paris, and Madrid. The poor and immigrants lived in the suburbs. I hesitated, then, in thinking about urban education as a geographical concept. The urban child and education are not geographical categories but a cultural category. The category assumes that the urban child talks, thinks, and acts differently from some unspoken norms about children who are not “urban.”

Urban, in the context of the USA, signifies historically the salvific theme of the nation to redress social wrongs through the processes of the school. The commitments to correct social wrongs are important and my interest in this chapter is not to challenge them. Rather my interest is to explore the concrete ways the commitments are enacted. In this instance of urban education and the urban child, they are abstractions about kinds of people. That abstraction is both a theory about “the nature” of the child and, simultaneously, a salvation theme about saving “the soul” of those children who are different, and if I use a religious metaphor, fallen out of grace. The fallen out of grace, however, is not tried to religion. “The soul” or the inner qualities, of the child and family, is to be changed as if not, they are in danger of being lost to the moral order.

“Urban” is a fabrication of a cultural thesis about a kind of person. Fabrication suggests different qualities as part of the same phenomenon. Urban is a *fiction*; that is, a category to talk about people in order to address some particular social or cultural issues. The urban child assembles different sets of principles about the “nature” of the child but also poverty, the failure of the city to serve certain populations, and the hope of schooling to correct the social wrongs associated with “urban” conditions. The fabrication of the urban child is also its manufacturing. Theories, stories, narratives, and programs are invented to change the urban child and for the child to think about boundaries of personal experience in everyday life.

To study urban as a fabrication is to treat the classification as a monument. This goes against the grain of contemporary research which focuses on the urban child as the origin of experience and as the object to effect change. To make sense of the monument, like a statue or building, it is important to understand how the monument is made historical, possible as a way to think, talk, and act. This making of the urban child is to understand its emergence as the culmination of a series of events that make it possible to think of urban as both embodying a social history that gives collective meaning in thinking about particular kinds of people. The stories, theories, and programs designed to help the urban, disadvantaged child come together in the school curriculum and its pedagogy to perform as the monument that gives the classification intelligibility. The cultural thesis generated is about who children are and should be and also who these “children” are not—the child who is not an urban child.

If I treat the “urban” child and education as a historical monument that embodies ways of thinking and acting, then its study is like going into an archive, seeing the urban child as an event to be understood. Like a historian, research is to understand the principles through which that event becomes possible to see, talk about, and act on when reforming schools. The intellectual task, then, is not to take the categories of “urban” children and teacher as the starting point about knowing if they learn or not, and why. The object of research is to explore historical its inscriptions of difference. To say this a little differently, “urban” is like looking at a historical monument.

I start with “urban” as a cultural thesis about the child that is made visible through the talk of American teachers about their lived experiences (Popkewitz 1998). The teachers were involved in a national program to bring recent non-teacher education graduates from elite American universities into some of the poorest and poorest served educational systems of the USA. The teachers were to provide instruction in curriculum areas where there was a lack of licensed teachers—such as in science, music, and foreign language instruction. What follows are transcripts from teachers talking about their urban classrooms.

Teacher #1: The morning lesson was a story about Mayan Indians and Pueblo Indians. The teacher hoped they take it a step future and realize that ... people should be treated for who they are inside and their character. I hope that some of them will apply it more broadly. (p. 65)

Teacher #2: The teacher views her work “to help society.” I wanted to hopefully make a change for the future. Now dealing with reality, I’m looking at it more as a responsibility—like I have a moral responsibility. Not just a responsibility to myself to teach these 33 kids, but a moral responsibility—just I feel it’s all on my hands. I try to be like almost a policemen for the whole school.” The discussion focuses on the lack of student capabilities because they are “not motivated,” and “not prepared” that leads teaching into a struggle for the soul of the child so he feels that he wants to behave in the right ways. (p. 50)

Teacher #3: Ultimately, the most important thing is to learn how to get along with other people. Think. I mean, I think that that’s what education can teach you, that’s what literature, especially literature, social science, all those things in the end, hopefully, you know, learning can lead to understanding and if you’re understanding someone, you know, I don’t think you’re going to be antagonistic or hateful. (p. 72)

Teacher #4: The students want explicit directions—the page number, the paragraph to read so they can know exactly where they can find it. (p. 75)

Teacher #5: You explain things. You speak clearly. You chose your vocabulary well. You work through [the curriculum] in a logical fashion. You are imaginative. You maintain eye contact. You demonstrate good model of what you are going to do. You give a rationale. (p. 93)

Before going on, I want to say that the teachers in the study were committed, motivated, intelligent, and well educated. They entered a field-based teacher program because they were concerned about education providing a more equitable and just society. The questions raised, then, are not about their commitments. The analysis is to think about the historically derived rules and standards of “reason” of schooling that give intelligibility to what is done as teachers. This concern with “reason” is about the historical distinctions and principles that exist before the teachers entered the school and flow through the conversations about what is done and who children are as “urban.”

If we approach the above quotes as historical ways of speaking and acting, an initial interpretation of the above quotes focuses on the abstractions that teachers use to talk about children and teaching.

- *The distinctions about the child embody principles to join individuality and sociality.* The learning of history, for example, is a study about moral conduct and about the psychology of the child who creates conflict through fighting. Embodied in the distinctions are notions of the community as a moral site of social belonging and collective “home.” The concern with moral conduct, using the quote about reading stories, turns the lesson into personal issues and the teacher as providing pastoral care for the children.
- *The narratives about the children embody cultural theses.* The talk about being “a good model,” “moral responsibility,” and “how to get along with other people” embodies double gestures: the normal and pathological. One gesture is about the child, home, and family that is harmonious and without conflict. It is about “the character” that children should have and the “capabilities” that would prepare children for “the society” in the future. The gesture of the hope that children have the moral dispositions and manners is coupled with another gesture of fear. The second gesture is about dangers, simultaneously engendered with hope, and about children who “lack” motivation and are “hateful” and “antagonistic.”
- *The school’s task is to correct social wrongs. It does that by changing people.* The teaching of Mayan and Pueblo Indian cultures entails stories directed to change the children’s “interior,” “character,” and “soul.” Schooling is to change children and their families to something that they are not now—non-stressful and friendly. The syntax and grammar of the talk embody teachers as having “the moral responsibility” to police the child and create a particular kind of person.
- *Social inequities are translated into psychological characteristics of the child.* To talk about the child who is “antagonistic or hateful” is to place the problem of the child who fails into the interior of the child as the site of failure and to rectify as change.

- *The “reasoning” of the teachers constitutes children’s learning as rules and standards of a particular way of ordering the objects of schooling.* The curriculum is analytically to project its contents and processes as gaining access to the realities of society and daily life. This realism is embodied in the breaking of “things”—school curriculum content—into smaller parts so that everything seems to fit into “a logical” and “explicit” order for children to learn. This ordering the things to learn (the curriculum) embodies a realism. That realism assumes that the objects (the knowledge children should know) in the curriculum have an essence and fixed quality. School subjects are things to learn that have a logical and sequential ordering and classification.
- *The different principles generated about children’s learning and successes/failures embody a particular kind of “urban” person that the school is to act on.* The teachers were providing an urban education. It is interesting to think that there is no category of teacher that stands in opposition to that of urban teacher. People are not called the “suburban” or the urbane teacher or child. There seems to be no need for another category. The use of urban education and urban teacher tacitly assumes that “everyone” knows who the non-urban teacher is and there is no need for a category to name.

I realize that other interpretations of the teachers are possible. My engaging in this exercise, however, is to begin a process of thinking about the system of reason that makes possible what is said as more than merely the person speaking. It is to think about globalization as a style of reasoning that universalizes through particular abstractions about kinds of people. The teacher speaking is not only about the individual and autobiographic. The discourses circulating are historical derived to give intelligibility to what is seen and acted on as teaching.

The “Reason” of Curriculum and the Principles Governing Schooling

The study of “reason” that makes globalization possible as an object of reflection goes against the grain of much contemporary research. As said early, my concern is historical, how globalization and transnational is possible as a way of thinking and acting (see Popkewitz 2009). This question about the reason of schooling is generally considered as a natural property of the mind (psychology), the method by which humans can interrogate their “selves” and “nature,” or as the universal logic through which the truthfulness of statements is determined. Yet, when examined as social and historical phenomena, there is nothing natural about how people “reason” about the events and things of the world—such as “seeing” the child through conceptions of childhood, stages of growth and development, the ordering of teaching through the devices of psychologies, classrooms of “communities of learners,” and the valuing of children’s participation and collaboration. These objects of thought and action are, in a sense, monuments to and the effects of prior historical practices.

Fig. 8.1 Robert Fludd, (Robertus de Fluctibus). *Vision of the Triple Soul in the Body, of This World and the Other* (1619). Utställningen ingår I Programmet för Stockholm—Europas Kulturhuvudstad 1998. Lokal Programarrangör Folkuniversitetet



The “seeing” reason as a historical and cultural “fact” can be visually explored through a drawing and painting from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Figs. 8.1 and 8.2). If *Vision of the Triple Soul in the Body, of This World and the Other* (Fig. 8.1) is examined as a style of reasoning, it is a representation of the mind drawn by Robert Fludd (Robertus de Fluctibus) in 1619. Its classifications embody the logic of Saint Thomas Aquinas that affirms the relation of faith and reason. The order and rules are the same for all things of this world as God gives them. Time was universal, linked to the cosmologies of the Church and not chronological and human. The diagram shows the interplay and connection between the different psychological faculties and their relation to the perceptible world. Four realms are classified: the sensual, imaginable, intellectual, and sensible. Three pairs of the faculties of the mind perceive the realms: science and imagination, conscience and reflection, and memory and motive. The soul is described as being always present as the intersection between a pair of psychological faculties.

The rules of reason are in the processes of the mind that can attain and expose the truth of things. Truth is viewed as having validity, clarity, orderliness, and consistency for finding the final destiny in God’s heaven. Truth is made available through the Holy Scriptures, and the particular order of the mind is divided into precise parts. The logic is deductive and classificatory. There are no ideas of reason tied to emotional appeals, words as merely symbols of thought and conceptions of humanness, and human history as separate domains of knowledge and being. Fludd’s reasoning about the world did not have the distinctions or way of thinking



Fig. 8.2 Hieronymus Bosch “The Garden of Delights” (1490 and 1510) oil-on-wood triptych Museo del Prado. (1) God presenting Eve to Adam. (2) Hybrids human/animals. (3) Hellscape: torments of damnation

about human agency, problem solving, and organizing time to explain human growth and development that is present today. To say that humans know more or as much as God in public discussion would probably produce being burned at the stake as heretics!

Hieronymus Bosch’s “The Garden of Earthly Delights” (1490 and 1510) triptych (Fig. 8.2) allows entrance into the emergence of a new plateau of “thought” and reason. Bosch’s painting was done earlier than Fludd’s painting that was ordered through a classificatory logic and universal time; yet “The Garden of Earthly Delights” makes visible fissures that were present. Bosch’s painting embodies the universality of time through its movement from the Garden of Eden to Purgatory; yet the assembly of images that interrelated people, animals, and the physical world disrupts that universality. Bosch, in effect, was “seeing” as an individually invented strategy by changing the ways in which people, animals, and God could be represented. This “seeing” was not prescribed by previous given rules to order the world. In fact, contemporary commentaries entailed debates about whether it was appropriate to depict people as Bosch did. For some, the question was whether Bosch violated the rules given by God and thus violated the sacredness of the Church. Or was Bosch embodying the emergent humanist philosophy and individualism of the commercial classes, thus doing something that was original and exercising the creativity and inventiveness of humanness?

Why think about Fludd and Bosch in the context of school reform? They provide a historical entrance into the politics of “reason” as ordering what is seen, thought about, and acted on. The paintings embody modes of “reasoning” that stand as monuments to cultural conditions which made them possible to see, think and act

on. The “reason” that Bosch played with in his art caught the ire of some of his contemporaries, yet with its many transmogrifications has come to be accepted in the conduct of everyday life. The idea of the individual as having a “say” in what was known and what should be done has become captured in today’s discussion of empowerment, voice, and agency. The “individuality” and “authorship” that such notions presuppose, however, are not merely of the individual but historically shaped and fashioned cultural theses about kinds of people.

The individual capacity to see “facts” as external to the self, but which passes through the consciousness of the subject to systemize, conceptualize, and administer the self in social relations. This condition of contemporary “reason that is taken as its doxa, was visible in the later Renaissance and given as the cosmopolitanism of the European and North American Enlightenments. Its quality of “the mind” ordered individuality and the social through abstractions that seem to have no historical location, cultural specificity, or geographical boundaries. Ideas of human agency, notions of genius, and inventiveness that begin to appear are abstractions that embodied this particular quality of reason. Abstractions about people and their relations as part of society and culture, for example, embodied a logic for interpreting events that are distant from one immediate environment and with everyday life; yet are brought back to think about the self and one’s home and collective belonging. The distancing practices of the abstraction about people made possible thinking about the global in the calculation and codification of everyday experiences. Truth is tied to modes of conceptualizing and analyzing that bring abstractions in the ordering and classifying who people are and should be.

While the changes occurs in nondeterministic ways, the governing of the relation of the global, the distant, and the immediate of everyday life was embodied in the emergence of modern science and what become the education sciences. The emergence of modern science that gains currency in the European enlightenments gave visibility to human history as separate from that of God and nature. If I look at the development of science from the 1600 to 1800s, for example, science entails new modes of thought in which the self engaged in processes of “paying attention” and observing humanity and nature to find the natural laws in each. By mid-1800, for example, scientific observation became a way of reflecting on objects that separated the observer from the object so that the observer is someone “who ‘no longer reasons; he registers’” (Daston and Lunbeck 2011, p. 4). The peculiar economy of attention cultivated by Enlightenment naturalists was pointillist, magnifying, and deliberately repetitive, focusing on the observer who pulverized the object into a mosaic of detail, focusing first on one, then another (Daston 2011, p. 99).

The enlightenment’s cosmopolitanism carries this way of ordering and classifying—its “reason”—in finding the moral life that is no longer located in God’s word (Popkewitz 2008). Cosmopolitanism embodied cultural theses about how individuals are and should live through the applications of “reason” and rationality to affect personal and collective life. Society and individual development were given temporal dimensions that could be calculated and ordered to affect the future. New sets of classifications and distinctions linked, for example, individuality with notions of “society”—a linking that is expressed in the very ideas of the citizen, the worker, the

parent, and cultural and moral processes ascribed in the development of childhood. With some dissent, human “reason” and science were to tame the uncertainty of change so that the future can be contemplated and people act in “the pursuit of happiness,” liberty, and freedom.

The school pedagogy of the nineteenth century can be understood as embodying this system of reason. It entails the introduction of the social sciences and psychology to connect abstractions about kinds of people with ordering the thought and acting of children’s everyday life. The pedagogy of the new school in Western Europe and North American was to create a cosmopolitan kind of person whose modes of living carried with it the norms, values, and principles of civic value associated with the abstractions about the citizen as embodying the moral idea of the nation (Popkewitz 2008). The work of Dewey, Hall, and Thorndike, among others in American Progressive Education, embodied enlightenment notions of the cosmopolitan citizen that the school was to make. Child studies (Hall), connectionism (Thorndike), and an anthropological psychology (Dewey) in the USA, for example, inscribed sciences of pedagogy and curriculum as ways of planning the processes of the mind to change children in the images and narratives about the adults of the future. The different psychologies of pedagogy embodied the idea of observation, discussed above, as natural in systemizing and conceptualizing distant objects and abstractions that were external to the self, but which could be brought into the human interior. This normalization in the interiorization of the self was taken as the rational, reasonable and cosmopolitan child.

The cosmopolitanism of the new school, however, was not only about secular life, reason, and rationality. It was about planning—planning to change the child who would embody the civic virtues and modes of living. The planning of “the self,” if I use American social and education sciences, connects secular and revelatory forms of knowledge. The pedagogy of the school to make the citizen embodied salvation themes. The citizen is a particular kind of person that is “bound” by reason that relates cosmopolitanism with the subject of the new republican government; but that kind of person is responsible for the future. The interior of self was configured in pedagogical practices through different notions of progress to link individuality and social belonging.

The salvation themes embodied in political theories of the citizen inscribed principles of moral order. The citizen was to live the virtuous life through empirical means that would reveal moral imperatives (McKnight 2003; Tröhler 2011; Tröhler et al. 2011). Progressivism, for example, was given direction by Protestant (Calvinist) reformism whose salvation themes were translated into the categorizations and classifications of “adolescence,” “youth,” “urban” family, and workers—terms that become visible in the social, psychological, and education sciences. If I take a prominent American Progressive teacher educator, there is optimism in the future as the teacher “with an unbounded faith in possibilities; and ready to abandon the useless and to adopt the useful” (Parker 1899/1902, p. 754). The righteousness of the teacher embodied an ecumenical feeling and code of moral conduct that is to enable individual and collective action. Dewey’s prophetic vision of democracy, as well, linked the ethics of a generalized Christianity (Calvinism) to the progressive

revelation of truth (Dewey 1892/1967–1990). The “Christian Democracy,” as Dewey called it in his early writing, emphasizes the rationality of science, the qualities of the democratic citizen, and a generalized Protestant notion of salvation (see, e.g., Childs 1956; also Westbrook 1991). The narration about the teacher was to combat ignorance and to secure and safeguard the threats of the future.

The reason of schooling, then, is not something naturally there to effect greater effectiveness and, if I use the contemporary language of OECD’s international assessments, to measure the scientific knowledge and skills for future participation in society. The reason of schooling can be viewed as a monument to a culture about kinds of people and difference. The pedagogical discourses historically embodied a particular system of reason that linked the self and distant, global abstractions about individuality and social life. The universalizing of particular ways of “seeing” kinds of populations in the performance indicators in the international assessments of PISA, for example, are abstraction about a desired, universal kind of person that research is to actualize. The ordering and classification of kinds of people move back into everyday life, its universalized principles as “actors” in processes of change. The international assessments are thought of as policy instruments that provide rules and standards to enact changes in school systems, teacher education, and the everyday life of classroom. The paradox is the universalizing creates divisions and exclusions in designing the possibilities of change.

The politics of schooling lies here. The politics is the inscription of rules and standards of reason that shapes and fashions borders to differentiate who child is, should be, and who does not “fit” its principles of reflection and action. With this focus on reason as the political of schooling, school reform and the urban child can be revisited.

Reforms of Comparative Systems of Reason: Making Divisions and Differences

With this idea of “reason” as historically produced and governing (what Foucault called “governmentality” and Latour “governing-at-a-distance”), I want to return to the question of urban education and the urban child. “Urban” can be considered as what I earlier referred as a historical monument: an abstraction about kinds of people, a cultural thesis that functions as an object of reflection and action. In contemporary American and some European contexts, the “urban” child and “urban” education are cultural images and narratives of the modes of living of kinds of people who are the objects of school reforms. That object is to rectify social wrongs.

But the issue of concern in this chapter is not the social and political commitments of reforms and research. It is, rather, the purposes and intent inscribed through the principles that order and classify the practices of schooling. The notion of “urban,” as I argued earlier, is not a geographical category referring to the city. “Urban” embodies cultural theses about particular kinds of populations that are

different and divided from other children who are instantiated as urbane and not classified as urban. The cultural distinctions are evident at the turn of the twentieth century. The reform movements gave attention to social programs and sciences to study the conditions of poverty and the moral disorder associated with new urban life. That research focused on the poor, immigrants, and racial groups. The reforms and sciences embodied double gestures. There was the redemptive hope of modernity of producing the cosmopolitan citizen. But with the hope were fears of the urban populations that threatened that cosmopolitan future.

The social reforms and sciences grappled with these hopes and fears in what was called “The Social Question.” Cross-Atlantic reform movements of American Progressivism, the British Fabian Society, the German Evangelical Social Congress, the French Musée Social, and the Settlement House movements embodied the cosmopolitan hope and fears of the moral disorder of urban life. The focus on changing the social conditions of the city concurrently gave attention to changing the urban trilogy: child, family, and community. When examining the sciences that emerged, the site of change was personal experiences in order to regulate the moral principles that order the subject’s actions. The domestic sciences, for example, took up the problems of upbringing and child development in the home. The family, the child, the worker, and the teacher were made into autonomous subjects of research and as sites of identities whose characteristics can be classified, ordered and act on through the rules and standards of reason. Research was to identify the causes of alcoholism, family disintegration, delinquency among youth, and prostitution. The research would enable pathways for changing people.

The University of Chicago’s community sociology, intersecting with the Settlement House Movements, Progressive pedagogical theories (such as that of Dewey), and the domestic sciences, was to change urban conditions by producing particular kinds of people.¹ The community sociology, driven by Calvinist reformism and enlightenment notions of cosmopolitanism (re)visioned the Puritan notion of “the city on the hill.” The nation embodied the corporate mission to produce the transcendental, spiritual age (see, e.g., McKnight 2003). The community sociology translated German social theory that embodied Lutheran assumptions of pastoral modes of living into a Calvinist (Congregationalist) reforms. The sociologies and social psychologies were cultural theses about how people live and should live as particular human kinds. The concept of “primary groups” of Charles Horton Cooley (1909), one of the founding members of the American Sociological Society (later the American Sociological Association) and the symbolic interactionism of George Herbert Mead (1934) gave expression to human agency that linked interactions and communication patterns to principles of collective belonging. Cooley’s concept of “the looking-glass self” instantiated a particular kind of person formed through interpersonal interactions and the perceptions of others. The primary group was to regulate individuality through the relation of primary group values (*love, honesty, ambition, loyalty, kindness, hope*) with social and institutional values given expression in notions of community associated with American Progressivism and Calvinist

¹This is discussed in Popkewitz (2011).

reformism. The role of primary groups (family, children's play and childrearing, and so on) was viewed as crucial for the development of the inner sense of the self and the formation of morals, sentiments, and ideals. George Herbert Mead placed the mind and self as formed in social processes of communication and community.

The pastoral image of community was a strategy of changing urban populations to counteract the urban dangers and dangerous populations. The reforms were to undo the moral disorder associated with urban life through redesigning face-to-face relations of the family, child, and community (*Gemeinschaft*). Sanctity was given to communities as a strategy of forming collective belonging through the intimate and communicative processes of face-to-face interactions. Concepts about primary interactions and interpersonal/symbolic interactionism were to compensate for the abstract and anonymous conditions and qualities of industrial and urban "society" (*Gesellschaft*).

The sciences of the urban child embodied double gestures. G. Stanley Hall, a founder of American child studies at the turn of the twentieth century, argued that psychology was to replace moral philosophy and theology as the method of producing a moral society and principles for ordering the life of the citizen. The adolescence of G. Stanley Hall was a fiction to think about the social issues of new populations coming to the school in the cities. These children were different from the previous elite populations.

G. Stanley Hall's psychology of adolescence expressed the simultaneous hope of Progressivism's cosmopolitan values with fears. Adolescence is an abstraction about a kind of person. Psychology was to develop "reason, true morality, religion, sympathy, love, and aesthetic enjoyment" in the adolescent child (Hall 1904/1928, p. xiii). As part of the hope, Hall spoke of the "danger of loss" in "our urbanized hothouse" that "tends to ripen everything before its time" where "[t]here is not only arrest, but perversion, at every stage, and hoodlumism, juvenile crime, and secret vice seem not only increasing, but develop in earlier years in every civilized land" (Hall 1904/1928, p. xiv). The scientific psychology, Hall argued, would identify patterns of intervention in the child's growth, development and morality of the urban child as the existing modes of life were seen as "no longer sufficient if left alone." He argued further that "The momentum of heredity often seems insufficient to enable the child to achieve this great revolution and come to complete maturity, so that every step is strewn with wreckage of body, mind, and morals" (Hall 1904/1928, p. xiv). The title of Hall's book expressed the double gestures of inclusion and exclusion: *Adolescence: Its psychology and its relation to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion, and education*.

The urban child in today's reform is not the same as Hall's adolescent. Contemporary researchers and policy makers classify the "urban" subject to find out how to expiate "urban youth" from their unlivable spaces. Adolescence and other categories about learners and at-risk children are brought into school to give attention to the physical and moral life of "the human soul." The categories of kind of human are made as a mixture of social forces and psychological constraints—whether lacking of motivation, esteem, and/or efficacy—mobilized to identify what

is lacking and seeking to change the modes of living that produce limits on the urban child.

The making of kinds of people as double gestures is bound historically to the particular style of reasoning that appears as part of the enlightenment and its cosmopolitanism. At one layer is the possibility of human history as separate from that of God's and nature. Looking at the past to understand the present gave human time a new position in organizing people. One was the insertion of a regular, irreversible time in which social ideas of development and growth could be initiated as a source of human intervention and the possibility of agency.

Second was a comparative mode of reason. Human history allowed for differentiations and divisions between "advanced" modern European civilization and the past. The late seventeenth century *Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns*, for example, symbolized a more general debate about whether Europe was the most advanced civilization, one that superseded others of the past and in its contemporary world. The universality given to "reason" and rationality was the force of progress that acknowledged hospitality to "others." That acknowledgement to the "other," however, was continually placed in a globalizing or universalizing set of values that produced hierarchies in relation to the "self." Those outside the universal values of reason and the civilized were placed in a continuum of value.

The normalcy generated principles of pathology within its constructions of kinds of people. The kinds of people were not seen as capable of the "reason" of agency were abjected, cast out into unlivable spaces of backward, savage, and barbaric.² Colonialization, for example, was reasoned as governing those who lacked the capacities, habits, and abilities to reason.

The emergence of a comparative style of reason enabled the ordering and classifying of taxonomies of differences in nature but also in human characteristics. The idea of temporal change was formulated in thinking about the interior of the self, such as earlier embodied in Hall's adolescence and scientific concepts about learning. Eugenics was a science to differentiate, divide, and exclude.

To summarize to this point, focusing on the making of kinds of people is a strategy to historicize the subjects of educational reforms and reform-oriented research. It is also to consider the materiality of "the reason" of schooling and undo the distinctions between texts and context along with practical knowledge from that of theory. The knowledge about the family, the child, and the teacher are not merely "ideas" about people but enter into and are part of order, classifying, and acting. The categories of kinds of people assume a materiality! What contemporary adult doesn't believe that growing up entails "being" an adolescent, belonging to a community, and ensuring equity through programs designed for urban children?

²I discuss this in Popkewitz (2008).

What Seems Practical and Useful as Impractical

My purpose in this chapter is to explore the style of reasoning that makes possible globalization and transnational as abstractions that loop into everyday life, ordering thinking and reflection. In particular, my concern is how such reasoning embodies comparative systems that distinguish, differentiate and divide. My approach focused on the standards of schooling as not the overt criteria given about what people know. The standards are embodied in the qualities, characteristics, and capacities about kinds of people. I used the American abstraction about “urban child” and urban education to think about how difference is inscribed and intelligibility given to “the child left behind” as different.

To consider this paradox of what seems universal and global with the particular and historically specific, I focused on schools as making kinds of people. The making of kinds of people is inscribed in research concerned with changing social conditions through, for example, planning to find more effective schools and teaching, planning to erase the achievement gap, planning by finding the valued-added knowledge of teaching, and planning to correct social wrongs. The planning of people circulates in the particular topoi of today about practical and useful knowledge. It is talked about in teacher education research as the practical knowledge that teachers need to be professional. And it is in narratives in international assessments as the practical knowledge that children will need in the future to participate in society.

At this point I would like to return to the quotes taken from the ethnography and read them through the historical discussion. My purpose is now only to point to how what seems biographical or descriptive are cultural inscriptions and effects of power that entails double gestures. The principles make kinds of people embody double gestures: in learning about differences, the prior discussion of the lesson on Mayan cultures embodied divisions and differences. The very category of “urban” to differentiate education embodies double gestures. There is the hope of that recognition of difference enabling inclusion. Yet, the recognition of difference establishes difference. Inscribed in the hope of inclusion are fears of dangerous qualities and characteristics of the child that are threatening the actualization of that hope. Hope and fear are embedded in each other, circulating in the comparative style of thought generated in the everyday life of schooling.

The psychologies of learning, as well, are not merely about standards of skills and cognition. The categories of the mind and dispositions are assembled and connected to particular historical principles in the governing of conduct. As Hall suggested at the turn of the century, scientific psychologies are to remove the “wreckage of body, mind, and morals.” Contemporary psychologies of learning and childhood are to make the interior of the urban child. That interior is defined as what is lacking as expressed in the discourses of the classroom discussed earlier: *motivation, moral development, and accepting of others (and not being hateful)*.

I realize that this ironic conclusion about pedagogical sciences and curriculum studies will probably produce a lot of head shaking among those nursed on the sciences of planning and idea of practical and useful knowledge. Much of the research

related to standards strives to find practical and useful knowledge. Yet there is a chimera to this belief in practical knowledge generated in contemporary educational research. The sciences of planning actualize the alchemistic philosopher's stone of 400 years earlier. The alchemist's science and contemporary sciences of planning people serve as the elixir of life that is to find the right mixtures for immortality. That immortality is transmogrified into the particular contemporary doxa drawn from particular enlightenment salvation themes about reason, rationality, and progress through the "proper" use of science.

When historicizing the reason of schooling and its making of people, that practical knowledge is instead impractical in relation to its social commitments. It embodies a comparative mode of reasoning that excludes in its impulse to include. It is impractical as it denies the very historicity and complexities of the school. To draw on November et al. (2010), standards assume the fixing of Galilean objects through such notions of modeling in a Euclidian space. The notion of Galilean objects entails displacements that do not imply any transformation as they move as immutable objects that keep their properties as they go. The research, November et al. argue, becomes a spurious reference that has no practical counterpart: "It leads you nowhere except in the equally spurious question of its 'resemblance' with the original model—that is created by the representation itself" (November et al. 2010, p. 9).

This leads me to my final point: the principles generated to create standards are the political of schooling. This concern with "reason" as the political is expressed in the ideas of Rancière that focus on "the partition of the sensible," Foucault's "governmentality," and Deleuze's attention to power as a practice set in social relations. Deleuze argues, for example, that power cannot be explained within institutions, as they are not sources, essences, and mechanism "since they presuppose its relations and are content to 'fix' them, as part of a function that is not productive but reproductive. There is no State, only state control, and the same holds for all other cases" (Deleuze and Guattari 1991/1994, p. 75). The problem of research, then, is to consider the "strategies that transmit or distribute particular features through which forms of knowledge are possible and becoming the integrating factors or agents of stratification that make up institutions: "not just the state but also the family, religion, production, the marketplace, Art itself, Morality, and so on" (p. 75).

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