New Thinking in Comparative Education
Honouring Robert Cowen
Marianne A. Larsen (Ed.)

University of Western Ontario, Canada

This book is a cutting-edge collection of articles inspired by the writings of Robert Cowen about comparative education. Authors take up Cowen’s central concerns: re-theorising the field of comparative education, rethinking the interpretive concepts that are used by comparative education researchers, and the relationships between them. The authors take us beyond old ideas to provide some new and fresh thinking on and about educational phenomena and the field of comparative education. Writers engage in critical thinking about the intellectual agenda of comparative education, the role of theory in their work, the contexts that are shaping the field, and epistemic consequences of these broader changes for comparative education.

The volume contains voices from a variety of geographical regions, theoretical positions, newer and more well-established scholars in the field. The book also includes shorter reflections from individuals in the field who know Robert Cowen personally. More well-established themes in the field are discussed such as borrowing and transfer, as well as newer concepts and ideas from Cowen’s work including shape-shifting, and transitologies. *New Thinking in Comparative Education* will be of interest to those who are studying and doing research in the field of comparative and international education, both at the under-graduate and graduate levels of education.
New Thinking in Comparative Education: Honouring Robert Cowen
COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION:
A Diversity of Voices
Volume 8

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Scope

Comparative and International Education: A Diversity of Voices aims to provide a comprehensive range of titles, making available to readers work from across the comparative and international education research community. Authors will represent as broad a range of voices as possible, from geographic, cultural and ideological standpoints. The editors are making a conscious effort to disseminate the work of newer scholars as well as that of well-established writers. The series includes authored books and edited works focusing upon current issues and controversies in a field that is undergoing changes as profound as the geopolitical and economic forces that are reshaping our worlds. The series aims to provide books which present new work, in which the range of methodologies associated with comparative education and international education are both exemplified and opened up for debate. As the series develops, it is intended that new writers from settings and locations not frequently part of the English language discourse will find a place in the list
New Thinking in Comparative Education

Honouring Robert Cowen

Edited by

Marianne A. Larsen

University of Western Ontario, Canada
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Robert Cowen. I thank him for inspiring me to write it. He was my supervisor from 1998–2004 at the Institute of Education, University of London where I first completed my M.A. and then Ph.D. in Comparative Education. Throughout my graduate studies, Robert Cowen encouraged me to develop my own thinking and new ways of reading and seeing the world. I thank him for provoking all of us to “work out, generation by generation, a subtler and more important vision of our political and human and academic responsibilities” (Cowen, 2009d, p. 1290) as comparative education researchers. I am deeply honoured that he has supported this initiative and hope that he is proud of it.

Marianne Larsen, Editor

ROBERT COWEN
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I acknowledge all new thinkers in the field of comparative education – both those whose voices are present in this volume, and those who are not. Thank you to all of the authors who were able to submit their chapters, and thank you to those who tried, but were not able due to the very difficult professional and personal circumstances that you experienced over the past year or so. I acknowledge both the present and the absent voices in this volume and hope that it inspires further publications that push our thinking about the borders and boundaries of our field in new and exciting directions.

Finally, I thank my research assistant Kelly Crowley. She exemplifies in her own doctoral studies writing some of the very best in new thinking in comparative education amongst the next generation of comparative scholars. This book would not have been possible without her critical insights, feedback, and meticulous attention to detail.

Thank you all.

Marianne A. Larsen (editor)
PREFACE

Forty Years On

It is a distinct privilege, as well as a great personal pleasure, to be invited to contribute a small offering to a Festschrift honouring the distinguished contribution of Professor Robert Cowen to the development of his chosen field of intellectual inquiry: comparative education. I can think of no contemporary scholar in comparative education with a greater and more sustained commitment to understanding its origins, evolution and future development.

I have known “Bob” Cowen for over thirty years, admire him greatly as a colleague, and treasure him as a friend. For these three decades, on and across two continents, he and I have engaged in a series of lively and fruitful exchanges on the nature, significance, methodology and utility of comparative education in better understanding and responding to the challenges and complexities of educational change. Not surprisingly, our initially similar but later diverging career trajectories led us to adopt different perspectives and points of view on these and related subjects. But these differences only served to strengthen and deepen my respect for his encyclopaedic knowledge of comparative education and the ready and generous wit with which he shared his knowledge and expertise.

At the drop of a hat, it seems, Bob has the enviable facility to launch into wide-ranging, comparative analyses of say the relative contributions of London-based comparative educators Joseph Lauwerys and Brian Holmes with colleagues in the USA such as George Bereday, Harold Noah and Max Eckstein. Moreover, these sustained scholarly analyses, linked as they usually are to broader streams of contemporary intellectual thought, more often than not are laced with amusing anecdotes and probing insights delivered in a self-deprecating style that engages both the attention and affection of his audience.

Happily Canadians have benefited from Professor Cowen’s erudition and sparkling sense of humour on a number of occasions. His wise and comprehensive contribution to a Graduate Summer Institute at Brandon University, Manitoba, stands out in memory. But perhaps the most memorable incident occurred on an occasion when Bob was to address an audience of leading educational administrators at the Banff Summer Institute. There, en route to his speaking venue, he was accosted by a large and overly friendly elk with seemingly amorous but aggressive intentions. Fortunately, Bob escaped unharmed but this close encounter was turned to good use as he opened his address by comparing the behaviour of the elk to that of Prime Minister Thatcher’s approach to British Universities!

Today Bob is enjoying the fruits of his outstanding career in so-called retirement. That he remains active is no surprise and he is much in demand as a guest teacher and speaker at universities around the world.
PREFACE

My most recent contact with him was in his role as President as the Comparative Education Society in Europe during its biennial conference in Denmark. Here he was in his element: providing leadership to the field that he loves, surrounded by his talented graduate students (past and present), and receiving the admiration and respect of colleagues throughout Europe and beyond.

I can think of no better tribute than this Festchrift which, like the scholar it honours, is devoted to “New Thinking in Comparative Education”.

*John R. Mallea Ph.D., President Emeritus
Brandon University, Manitoba, Canada*
1. NEW THINKING IN COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

Editorial Introduction

Certain people take us to untraveled worlds. They provoke us to ponder. Their ideas and images make our heads spin with possibility. They entice in us fresh flights of thought (Kenway and Fahey, 2008, p. ix).

This book is about new thinking in comparative education. It is inspired by the research, writing and teaching of Robert Cowen. Leading intellectuals, according to Kenway and Fahey (2008), are those who “from a recognized basis of knowledge and authority, and with evident commitment and proficiency, demonstrate high standards of reflection, analysis and argument, and publicly and fearlessly address major issues facing humanity” (p. ix). As a leading intellectual in the field of comparative education, Cowen provokes us to think harder about our research and the field within which we are positioned. The ideas he addresses and questions he asks aim both to inspire and unsettle our taken for granted assumptions. For many years now, Cowen has been posing questions about the field of comparative education, where it has been, and where it might find itself in the future (2000b, 2003a, 2009d). And he has not been reluctant to point out what he thinks the field needs (and does not need) to move our thinking forward in new ways.

Above all, Cowen suggests that comparative education researchers engage in new and fresh thinking about what we study (our units of analysis); the interpretive concepts, frameworks and theories that we deploy in our work; the influences and contexts that shape the work we do as comparativists, and the epistemic consequences of these broader changes for our field. Many years ago he was struck by a comment by Basil Bernstein: “comparative education has a low-level theoretical problematic” (Cowen, 2010). This problem has stuck with him and he has recently proposed that we engage in “the important task of creating a comparative education with a complex intellectual problematique” (Cowen, 2009d p. 1278). The authors in New Thinking in Comparative Education aim to do just that. Specifically, this book serves a dual function. First, it aims to bring together a set of authors who respond to some of the questions and concerns that Cowen has raised over the course of his career in comparative education. Second, it is a way of honouring Robert Cowen as one of the foremost intellectuals in the field of comparative education today. In this respect, this book is a way of demonstrating to him the many ways that
LARSEN

he has roused our research imaginations, and provoked us to ponder and wonder
about our work as comparativists in the twenty-first century.

In this introduction I first provide some background about Robert Cowen and
the contributions he has made to the field of comparative education. I then turn to
some of Cowen’s ideas about the interpretive concepts we have and could continue
to use in our comparative work. Drawing upon Cowen’s insights, I examine what
new thinking about space, time and movement might look like in comparative
education. I review the chapters in this book and conclude with some thoughts
about Cowen’s appeal for us to ‘read the world’ through our comparative work.

ROBERT COWEN: MOBILITIES AND POSSIBILITIES

Robert Cowen is Emeritus Professor of Education at the Institute of Education,
University of London. He is currently a Senior Visiting Research Fellow of the
University of Oxford and member of the Editorial Board of the journal Comparative
Education. Formerly, he was a Reader in Comparative Education in the University
of London, Institute of Education and President of the Comparative Education
Society in Europe (CESE). At various times, he has been a Professor or Visiting
Professor at universities in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, and
the United States. He has been invited to provide plenary or keynote lectures in
countries across Asia, Australasia, Europe, North and South America.

Cowen’s story is one of movement, mobilities and possibilities over space and
time. From his early childhood experiences in England during the war, being evacuated
from his home to a village near Durham, to his academic and personal voyages,
his life and thinking have been characterized by travel and transition. Cowen’s
work, the conceptual frameworks he deploys, and the questions he raises have been
influenced by these formative experiences, along with his interdisciplinary
background in a range of the social sciences, including economics, sociology,
and history, and his experiences teaching and researching around the world.
His first formal introduction to comparative education occurred in the 1960s at
Trinity College Dublin where he read Nicolas Hans’ classic text on Comparative
Education. When he was teaching in inner-city London schools, he enrolled at the
Institute of Education to study for an Academic Diploma in Education, choosing
sociology and comparative education as optional subjects, which he has referred to
as the “end of the beginning” (Cowen, 2010, p. 4). Once he completed his Academic
Diploma, Cowen began his MA at the Institute, and as he states, “became hooked
on the life of the mind” (Cowen, 2010, p. 4).

Cowen has been living the scholarly ‘life of the mind’ since then. Some of his
teachers such as Joseph Lauwerys, Brian Holmes, and Edmund King became role
models for him. Others, including those who have written personal reflections within
this book, further influenced his thinking about the world at large and comparative
education more specifically. Teaching has been central to the development of his
ideas about comparative education. He is an exemplary educator and supervisor,
deeply committed to nurturing and supporting the next generation of comparative education scholars. I know this from personal experience. In addition to his work as a doctoral supervisor in re-vitalizing the field of comparative education, he has been active as a committee member in various comparative education societies (e.g. CESE and the WCCES) and helping to found others (e.g. the Brazilian Comparative Education Society).

Cowen has published dozens of journal articles, chapters in books, encyclopaedia entries, books and book reviews in various languages on and about the field of comparative education. The bibliography at the end of this volume attests to his writing output and the breadth and depth of his scholarship. There is hardly an educational unit of analysis, group or geographical region that his work has not addressed. His work spans many historical periods as well, from the pre-modern to the post-modern. He has edited a number of books including the *World Yearbook of Education*, and most recently (with Andreas Kazamias) the two volume *International Handbook of Comparative Education*. The handbook is unique in providing a major statement on the condition of the field through its inclusion of a vast array of authors, cutting edge topics and themes. It contains some of the most perceptive and penetrating writing by Robert Cowen, evidence that he has been thinking hard about comparative education, the topics and themes historically embraced by comparativists, and new directions that we are (and could be) taking in the future.

In the *International Handbook* and elsewhere, Cowen has written about the key topics and themes that have united the field of comparative education over time and place. The term ‘education system’ has been embraced by comparativists as a core unit idea to study a wide range of topics such as curriculum, pedagogy, planning and administration, educational financing, school leadership, life-long learning, higher education, teacher education, teachers’ work, identity and professional development, achievement outcomes, and standardized testing. Studying such (aspects of) educational systems has led us to identifying similarities and differences, repeating and building on the work of our early ancestors such as Jullien who aimed to deduce true principles and rules in order to transform education into an “almost positive science” (Fraser, 1964).

Comparing education systems, however, as Cowen (2009f) warns us, is limited and he likens it to the collection of train numbers: interesting only if you are already hooked on the hobby. Why do we continue to engage in this type of comparative education? What then are the alternatives? Cowen provides some answers to these questions and suggests that we rethink our units of analysis and the interpretive concepts that we use. He writes: “The question is only partly, what were the earlier thematic of the unit ideas? A crucial question is also what are they becoming?” (Cowen, 2009d, p. 1286). In other words, we need to rethink and broaden our units of analysis, consider the relationships between them and the rationale for why we choose or choose not to study particular topics and themes. Specifically, drawing on Cowen’s work, I review three main areas that deserve our attention: time, space, and movement/mobility.
Cowen (2002b) suggests that we re-theorize a ‘variety of times’ in our comparative work. I would like to suggest that a careful reading of Cowen’s ideas about time in comparative education can be divided into three conceptual categories: time-past, time-present and time-future. There are two questions that we can ask with respect to time-past and comparative education. The first is this: “What can we learn about education from comparative education studies that took place in the past?” In other words, what is there to learn from studying the work of early Chinese comparativists such as Wang Chengxu, Li Bingde, and Zhu Jiusi (Hayhoe, 2006), or the nineteenth century travelling educational reformers such as Horace Mann, Kay-Shuttleworth and Egerton Ryerson?

Second, time-past also provokes us to consider what we can learn from adopting an historical perspective in our contemporary comparative work. As I have written elsewhere (Larsen 2009), from Sadler onwards, there has been no shortage of historical research within the field of comparative education. What first comes to mind is the work of individuals such as Kandel, Hans, Mallison, Schneider and Ulich who self-consciously drew upon historical approaches to understand educational phenomena. Dozens of other historical accounts have been published since then, drawing upon a variety of approaches and theoretical frameworks. Together these (time-past) historical studies have enriched our field in considerable ways, enabling us to better understand educational systems, both past and present. Although time, for most of these comparative historians, was contextualized, it was not problematized and that remains a challenge for comparative education researchers today engaging in new thinking about time-past.

Next I suggest that we think about ‘time-present’ and turn to Cowen’s idea of transitologies to exemplify a new way of thinking about ‘time-present’ in our comparative work. Transitologies, according to Cowen (2002b), consist of the processes within a period of about ten years or so, of the more or less simultaneous collapse and reconstruction of political visions of the future; the state apparatuses (police, army, bureaucracies, political institutions); socio and economic stratification system(s); and the deliberate reform and restructuring of the educational system so that it can be used as part of the reconstruction (p. 422). In attending to the dramatic collapse and reconstruction of societies and educational systems, the related changing nature of international political relations and its impact on educational practices and processes, transitologies are about “time present”. They provide us with a time-present lens through which to understand the impact of extreme change (over time within a common space) on education. Thus comparative studies of contemporary transitologies such as events in Eastern Europe pre-and post-1989; South Africa before and after Apartheid; and the Cultural Revolution in China provide us with new ways of thinking about time-present that has been fractured and ruptured in sudden and immediate ways.

Finally, what about time-future? We actually have much experience within our field in time-future. The melioristic focus in our field on providing policy
prescriptions through comparative research has had a strong, reformist orientation to the future. Cowen (2002b) notes the linearity of this research, as the “specification, typically by an international or regional agency, of one universal solution to educational problems which is to be used in all social contexts” (p. 419).

He goes on to point out the problem with linearity: it has oversimplified contextual time, typically ignoring the cultural, biographical, economic and other contexts in which education systems are embedded. The assumptions behind much of this time-future research has been the role of education in the future reform and reconstruction of society. I would suggest that there is another, alternative way to think about ‘time-future’ in our comparative work. We need more envisioning of possible educational futures, as well as possible futures of our field. Indeed, we might start by turning to the work of those within the new field of futurology (strategic foresight or futures studies) to envision possible, probable and preferable futures. The challenge is how to engage openly and critically in futures thinking without falling into the modernist trap of predicting linear, universal policy solutions to educational problems.

Post-modern theorists have provided alternatives to modernist conceptions of time as linear and evolutionary. Time can be rethought as asynchronous, and in terms of how it flows and moves, unevenly. Time, according to Braudel of the Annales school is thought to go “at a thousand different paces, swift and slow, which bear almost no relation to the day-to-day rhythm of a chronicle or of a traditional history” (Quoted in Popkewitz, 1999, p. 29). Foucault’s work also draws our attention to breaks, discontinuities and ruptures in time. He proposes that we consider each moment in time within its own specificity, and without attempting to connect it in a linear, developmental pattern (Foucault, 2000b). In emphasising the specificity of each moment in time and place, historical events can be described as contingent, meaning that the emergence of any particular event was not necessary, but only one possible result of a whole series of complex relations between other events. Thinking causally privileges determinism where the existence of certain factors, in and of themselves, leads directly to or determines certain outcomes. With this type of thinking, which has characterized much melioristic comparative research, comes the correlative focus on predictability and inevitability. As Cowen (2002b) writes: “linear solutions and linear concepts of time – time as a more or less straight arrow – are all that is on offer as a basis for action” for comparative educationists (p. 421). It’s time then to move beyond these narrow conceptions of time in our comparative research and envision new ways of theorizing about time-past; time-present and time-future.

NEW THINKING ON SPACE

The specification of space has been a central concern in comparative education, defining and legitimizing what we do within our field. Traditionally, comparativists have focused their attention on the nation-state as a unit of analysis. In many ways,
the processes associated with globalization force us to reconceptualize relations between time and space. Globalization theorists refer to the compression of space/time and simultaneous homogenization of cultural, socio-economic and political forms, as well as deterritorialization, diversity and dispersion (Held and McGrew, 1999; Waters 2000). Giddens refers to the global society as one of infinite space in which no one is outside, since pre-existing traditions cannot escape having contact with ‘the other’ and with alternative ways of life (See Beech, 2009).

Such transformations, on local and global levels, provoke us to consider wider and more complex concepts of space for our research. Some comparativists question whether or not we should even undertake comparative analyses at all in this global village (Jarvis, 2000). Others, like Cowen (1996d) see the opportunities that globalization provides for us to rethink our interpretive concepts:

Reading the global is crucial. The global economy, it has been suggested, is a powerful stimulant of educational change. Currently, indeed, it is moot how far and how long the traditional ability of the nation-state to define its own educational policies will continue…However, conceptualizations of the ingredients of globalization are currently being reviewed and comparative educationists need to contribute their own analyses, working, if necessary, from post-modernity theorization but particularly from a historical perspective (pp. 166–7).

Globalization has accentuated the importance of place and location. Many post-modern writers have responded to these changes and draw on spatial concepts such as discursive space, locality, regionality, spaces of dispersion, spatial narrativity, institutional geographies, social landscapes and mapping in their work. This transformation of the study of space and spatiality across many disciplines has led some authors to call this the ‘spatial turn’ in the humanities and social sciences (Warf and Arias, 2008).

Globalization, post-modernism, and the ‘spatial turn’ in the social sciences challenges us further to develop new ways of theorizing about space, place and location in our own comparative work. Within our field, Paulston’s social cartography work stands out as an example of this new interest in space and spatiality in comparative education. Other comparativists have writing about discursive space (e.g. Beech, 2009) and space as a domain of cultural practice (Sobe and Fisher, 2009).

However, following Cowen (2002d, 2009h) and a number of other comparativists (e.g. Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal, 2003; Sobe and Fischer, 2009), we still need more flexible and expansive notions of space and spatiality in our research. We need to broaden our conceptions of space beyond that of the nation-state, which has traditionally occupied much of our attention. New spaces as units of analysis could include regional spaces (e.g. comparisons of the urban, suburban and rural) or supra-national regions or rims (e.g. the Mediterranean). Comparative work in this area could also simultaneously engage in cross, inter and intra-regional studies. We could also envision comparative educational studies of diasporic spaces.
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(e.g. comparing Kurdish refugee students’ experiences in Denmark and Canada), and virtual spaces (e.g. the productive potential of learning outcomes in Second Life). We can think of spatial comparisons of regional organizations, virtual and transnational (online) pedagogic spaces, new cultural groupings and epistemic communities. Moreover, drawing on post-modern theorizing about discursive space, we could engage in new thinking on how identities are constructed over space and time. Such spatialized conceptions force us to consider new questions such as how are educated identities constructed across different times and spaces; and what are the rules of reasoning through which identities are constructed (Popkewitz, 1999).

Finally, I suggest that we need new thinking about the spatial dimension where comparative education takes place. Much comparative education has taken place within higher education. However, in some countries comparative education has taken place outside of universities in specialized research institutes that are autonomous from universities. There are also countries where universities have played a minor role in the development of comparative education, but the field is thriving. In France, for instance, while there has been only a weak presence of comparative studies in universities, a large number of official organizations have concentrated on comparative studies or see their overseas presence as an important aspect of their comparative work. Furthermore, in many countries comparative research has been carried out by individuals associated with national and international non-governmental organizations outside of the university. As Cowen (1990e) notes, in some situations universities have not been “the prime movers in creating and sustaining comparative education infrastructures” (p. 329).

Indeed, as Cowen (2009d) points out, “we have ‘comparative educations’ because what we call comparative education, in its growth, in its shape-shifting, is itself part of international, political, economic, cultural and educational relations” (p. 1289). And while the university has provided the space within which much comparative education work has taken place, there is no reason to believe that the spatial positioning of where we do our work has not (or should) not change. Also, it is worth exploring the implications of where comparative education takes place for our writing and research. This takes us to the question of movement the final theme I would like to address in this introduction.

NEW THINKING ON MOBILITIES

Thus far I have suggested that we need some new thinking in and about time and space in comparative education. However, it is the relationship between the two that provides the most exciting opportunities for our field. Engaging with concepts such as mobilities, transfer, translation and transformation provokes us to reconsider the relationship between space and time, and the “between” area in space-time. We need new thinking that looks beyond a purely physical notion of space and chronological definition of time as autonomous entities. Rather, we need to think of space-time as virtual entities, “with space defined through global interconnections
and flux of communication, and time separating itself from the clock” (Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal, 2003, p. 431).

The themes of borrowing and transfer have been at the very heart of comparative education research since its nineteenth century origins with some arguing that educational transfer is possible and desirable (e.g. Jullien, Mann, Shuttleworth), and others that it is (generally) neither desirable nor possible (e.g. Hans, Sadler, Ushinsky). Others, such as Neo-Marxist (dependency theory) critics of modernization theory have pointed out that the spread of Western educational reforms is an example of Western cultural imperialism. Nonetheless, without falling into the dichotomous trap of deciding whether or not transfer is good or bad, we need to shift our thinking to consider what happens during transfer in terms of the translation and transformation of educational phenomenon in its new place.

In his work, Cowen has demonstrated his critical insights about the processes of international transfer, translation and transformation of educational practices and systems as they move from one space to another. Cowen (2009c, 2009f) refers to the notion of “shape-shifting” which occurs through the transfer of people, ideas, institutions and educational processes from one context to the next. He is interested in what happens as ideas and practices move or flow across boundaries and then how they undergo change or transformation in their new setting(s) (Cowen, 2006a; 2009h). The phrase “as it moves, it morphs”, he writes, succinctly sums up a serious theoretical problematique for comparativists and provides a more complex way for us to understand the processes of transfer and borrowing (Cowen 2009c).

Others within the field of policy studies have written about the processes associated with the re-contextualization of policies in local settings, how they are received and interpreted differently on the ground, and the role of individual agency (e.g. Ball, 1998). Within comparative education there has been some excellent work on the processes associated with how policies become culturally translated in the new contexts (e.g. Beech, 2006; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000, Popkewitz et al 2008). However, there is still room for further new thinking on the processes of transfer and translation. Rather than think of policy transfer as a one-way, linear process, it is worth considering the circular or reciprocal nature of transfer. Educational reforms move back and forth between and amongst different nations/regions. Colonial settings, for example, have been used as laboratories (test-sites) of the modernization of educational reform. We can also consider recent work on the circulation of John Dewey’s educational ideas and practices throughout many parts of the world. For example, Sobe (2009) in his study of the circulation of Dewey’s educational ideas through Yugoslavia in the 1920s and 1930s refers to “criss-crossings” in educational transfer – the reciprocal, reversible, and multiple vectors of movement and exchange. He writes that “it is probably more often the case that educational exchanges and borrowings/circulations take place within dense webs of relationships. The multiplicity and complexity of the networks along which people and ideas travel do not always lend themselves to bilateral, diachronic transfer analyses” (p. 5).
Finally, we can turn to Cowen work on the ‘osmotic problem’ (the relations between what is outside of the educational system and what is inside) and the ‘double-osmotic problem’ (the social embeddedness of educational ideas, principles, policies and practices in one place and their insertion into another social location). He asks us to consider how we can understand the ‘terms of translation’: that is, the ways in which the ‘external’ (societies) transmutes into the ‘internal’ (structures of educational institutions or curriculum modalities), and has sketched out the concept of educational ‘rosettas’ to explore the codings of social power in educational forms (Cowen, 2009d, 2009h).

NEW THINKING: SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

_**New Thinking in Comparative Education**_ is offered as a tribute to Robert Cowen. In his work, Cowen (2002b, 2003a) describes the Lot Syndrome whereby if you look back, you turn into a pillar of salt. He warns us that if we build our field on old ideas, we will freeze (or turn into that pillar of salt). Provoked by Cowen’s questions and concerns, the authors take us beyond old ideas to provide some new, fresh thinking on and about educational phenomena and the field of comparative education. Authors were asked to take up Cowen’s central concerns: re-theorising the field of comparative education, rethinking the interpretive concepts that we use in our work and the relationships between them. Specifically, the contributors to this book engage with some of the following questions that Cowen has posed:

- What is the intellectual agenda of comparative education?
- Where is the theory in our work?
- How can we re-define and rethink the interpretive concepts for our field and the relationships between them (e.g. space, time, the State, educational system, identity, transfer)? What are the implications/consequences of what we choose (and not choose) to study?
- What are some of the external influences/contexts that are shaping our field and what are the epistemic consequences of these broader changes for our field?

Authors were chosen for their existing work and thinking about these key questions. As editor, I aimed to include female and male voices, voices from a variety of geographical regions, theoretical positions, newer and more well-established scholars in the field. _New Thinking in Comparative Education_ also includes reflections from individuals in the field of comparative education who know Robert Cowen personally. They were asked to reflect upon Cowen’s contributions to the field. These reflections provide the personal touch to this volume, as they are written by individuals who know Cowen personally and whose work has been influenced by his writing.

Thomas Popkewitz’s chapter ‘Comparative Studies and Unthinking Comparative “Thought”: The Paradox of “Reason” and Its Abjections’ draws upon a broad historical and post-positivist approach to explore comparative studies through an examination of systems of reason. His focus on systems of reason (as opposed to some fixed notion of truth) allows for an exploration of historically generated _epistemes_ about what is thought, known, and acted upon in different times/spaces.
His chapter takes us through changing notions of comparison in ancient Greece, the Medieval Church, through the Enlightenment and up to the present time with a particular focus on cosmopolitan reason. He draws upon Cowen’s work on the episteme of comparative education and the historical ways of thinking about how pedagogical ideas and practices flow, fill and shape the space through which the objects of schooling are seen and acted upon.

In their chapter, ‘Globalization and the Rescaling of Education Politics and Policy: Implications for Comparative Education’, Robert Lingard and Shaun Rawolle argue that the rescaling of education politics and policy requires a re-imagining of the focus and study of comparative education. Comparative education, as we have seen above, has long been concerned with policy borrowing and transfer. This chapter presents new thinking in this area, arguing that globalization has resulted in a new ‘social morphology’ through processes of ‘planetization’ and ‘transnationalism’. These shifts, as Lingard and Rawolle demonstrate, have implications for the concepts and interpretive frameworks we use as comparativists. Their work complements Cowen’s, which has also been concerned with the significance of transnational transfers, flows and mobilities. They take up his appeal to ‘read the global’ and associated flows and ‘distanciation’ of time and space in this post- and transnational context.

Jeremy Rappleye also addresses issues of transfer in his chapter. Transfer, according to Rappleye, is the one unit idea that we can be certain as comparativists to call our own. In his chapter, he asks how educational transfer has changed over time, why has interest in transfer exploded in recent years, and how is educational transfer different in an era of globalization? Rappleye examines the different ways that transfer has been taken up in the field and suggests that we reconsider transfer in relation to other unit ideas such as space and time. He makes a strong case to explain why an understanding of transfer needs to move beyond traditional epistemes. Rappleye draws on Cowen’s concept of transitologies, asserting that transitologies can become our compass, assisting us to find our bearings in relationship to time and space. Rappleye concludes that the transitologies framework allows us to better understand how our field has changed and continues to change.

The next three chapters by Maria Manzon, Sonia Mehta and Stephen Carney respond to Cowen’s suggestion for further research on the different forms of comparative education, shape-shifting in the field, comparative histories of the field, and fresh thinking about the current intellectual shape of the field. In her chapter ‘Shape-shifting of Comparative Education’, Manzon reviews transformations in comparative education as it has been transferred and transported across international boundaries over different historical periods. She explores the factors that have shaped academic comparative education, and reasons why comparative education shape-shifts from one national space to another.

Sonia Mehta’s chapter is similarly interested in the changing nature of the field of comparative education. In her chapter, she engages with Cowen’s concepts of mobilities and shape-shifting in order to analyze discourses of studentship within the field of comparative education. Mehta reviews the shifting epistemic shape of the field
of comparative education, and then presents findings from a study she conducted with comparative education students about their positions relative to how they were taught to ‘read the global’ through the field. Like Manzon, this chapter engages with the theoretical investigations of shape-shifting to ask not only what morphs as it moves, but also why does it move and where is it possible to move (Cowen, 2009b).

The next chapter is Stephen Carney’s ‘Reading the Global: Comparative Education at the End of an Era’, in which he suggests that comparative education is in danger of fading into irrelevance as its episteme fails to comprehend the new global kosmos in which it is embedded. Carney argues that our modern, Enlightenment inspired approach to comparative education has held us back from understanding the world we exist in today. Carney draws on Cowen’s work to locate and manoeuvre within the prevailing episteme of comparative education in order to leave it far behind. Carney problematizes the field’s traditional emphasis on the nation-state and, following Cowen’s suggestion for new approaches to comparative education, sketches out the contours of what he calls an ‘eduscape’. Like Cowen, Carney asks difficult questions, such as “does our set of disciplinary practices have anything worth saying in the new millennium”, forcing us to think harder about the field and our place within it.

Noah Sobe and Melissa Fischer engage in new thinking about the spatial dimensions within which schools and education politics operate in their chapter. In their discussion of mobilities, migrants and minorities in education, they show the ways that education policy produces governable spaces such as the classroom, school and community. Their case studies demonstrate the ways that the spatial organization of schooling produces or limits participation in other social spaces. In doing so, they address and problematize themes that Cowen has argued are important for comparativists to consider: space, flows, and mobilities.

In her chapter, Masako Shibata examines Japan’s quest for a ‘modern self’ from the nineteenth century, the ‘development’ of its modern education through international educational interactions and the more recent troubled education of its modern history. She reminds us of the importance of context in our comparative work, especially the inter-relationship between education, national history, and international politics. In doing so, she addresses Cowen’s claim (2000b) that it is necessary to ‘read the global’. She offers an interesting reading of the global: how the Japanese read the international world of their times, and constructed their educational systems and their modern selves in terms of that reading.

The final chapter shifts our attention to creativity and curiosity in comparative education. In this chapter, Marianne Larsen explores some of the conditions that enable us to be imaginative, creative and curious in our comparative work. She begins by suggesting that our field has faced two problems in our traditional epistemology: our long-standing emphasis on a nomothetic approach and deductive research methods. Larsen then shifts to a discussion about the notion of creativity and current thinking on the new creative economy, and explores some of the paradoxes of current trends in educational research that both promote and preclude fostering creativity. In light of these contradictory trends, she argues for the development of a creative
imagination in our comparative research, and need to locate new spaces and places where creativity and curiosity can be fostered in the field.

Authors in this volume adopt a variety of conceptual and theoretical lenses to interrogate the role of comparison in educational studies, and the episteme of comparative education itself. Most, although not all, authors draw upon post-positivist conceptual frameworks to enhance our understanding of comparative education. Popkewitz, Sobe and Fisher, and Carney all make reference to the work of Foucault in their discussions about governmentality, and the technologies of schooling in producing governable subjects. Some, like Lingard and Rawolle, Mehta, and Manzon turn to the work of Bourdieu in their analyses of social and intellectual fields as structured and contested spaces. All of the authors engage in new and critical thinking about the interpretive concepts of time, space, mobilities and the relationship between them. Finally, all authors have construed a “complex intellectual problematique” (Cowen, 2009a, p. 3) in their work as comparativists, and in this respect they are brave, renegade voices in the field.

CONCLUSION: READING THE WORLD

The authors in this volume take up Cowen’s (2000b) suggestion that we ought to be ‘reading the world’ by offering up new interpretations of the political, economic, and historical worlds in which we live and education takes place:

It is of extreme importance that comparative education should look courageously to a difficult future and comment on it and recognise its complexities.

We are already surrounded by those who know; those who know the future with confidence; and even some –the most terrifying of all – who know the future with certainty (Cowen 2003a, p. 9).

This book is a Festschrift in honouring the work of Robert Cowen. I am privileged that he supported this project, and I hope that he is honoured by the reflections and new thinking present in this text. Returning to the German meaning of Festschrift, I like to think of this book as a celebratory piece of writing: a celebration of the work and ideas of Robert Cowen and a celebration of the field of comparative education. What we require, according to Cowen, is a Cassandra voice in comparative education. Cassandra was a figure from ancient Greece who said what no one wanted to hear. Although her predictions were generally right, the Greek authorities killed her. This book is a compilation of comparative education Cassandra voices. Above all, it is a tribute to Robert Cowen, the questions he has provoked us to consider, his generous and gracious spirit, and his dignified and defiant research imagination.

NOTES

1 Noah and Fischer’s chapter “Mobility, Migration, and Minorities in Education” was originally published in R. Cowen & A. M. Kazamias (Eds.), International handbook of comparative education (pp. 359–371). Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer. It is reprinted here with kind permission of Springer Science and Business Media.
REFERENCES


2. COMPARATIVE STUDIES AND UNTHINKING COMPARATIVE “THOUGHT”

The Paradox of ‘Reason’ and its Abjections

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I explore comparative studies through examining systems of reason (Popkewitz, 2008). This focus pursues, from a different register, an important element of Cowen’s scholarship about historicizing on epistemes and the political of schooling. His scholarship has avoided the traditional historical functionalism attached to the field of Comparative Education (Cowen, 1996d, 2000b). My focus on systems of reason is to explore the epistemes historically generated about what is thought, known, and acted on in different time/spaces. The notion of cosmopolitanism is used as an analytical ‘tool’ to consider different social and cultural grids that give intelligibility to schooling. This historicizing of schooling is to take what is given as natural and unquestioned about the schooling and make that causality fragile.

The first and second sections explore reason as a historical phenomena, comparing Greek and Church notions of time and ‘agency’ to the Enlightenments’ cosmopolitanism that mutate into Northern European and North American pedagogy and comparative education studies. My interest in the Enlightenments’ cosmopolitanism is to point to, at one level, a heterogeneous field in which pedagogy, conceptually if not in the spoken word, underwrites and which is assumed in comparative studies. Cosmopolitanism, I argue, embodies particular historical cultural theses about human agency and progress designed by the use of reason and science. Agency and progress, however, also embodies comparative principles that frame differences in societies and individuality. The third section explores other notions of cosmopolitanism outside of the west and the issues of comparative studies of multiple modernities. The fourth section focuses on social and education sciences as a form of action, a method of comparison and abjection, casting out and differentiating populations and qualities of life into spaces outside of the commonsense of ‘reason’. The conclusion explores the contribution of Robert Cowen’s scholarship to rethink principles of the study of education.

The political of schooling is differentiated from politics (see, e.g., Foucault, 1979; Rancière, 2004). The politics of schooling is a tradition of locating winners and
HISTORICIZING REASON: A BRIEF EXCURSUS INTO NOTIONS OF COMPARISON IN ANCIENT GREECE AND THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

I want to begin this discussion of comparative studies through differentiating the particular systems of reason of the present from the reason that ordered the classical Greek senses of past and present, the Medieval Church’s notion of eternal time. While these past systems of reason did have what might be called comparative principles to distinguish people and past/future events, the notions of comparison embodied different possibilities of thought and action than what culturally and socially emerges in the long 19th century and travels from the European and North American Enlightenments into contemporary comparative studies: notions of human agency as a ‘force’ in changing the world, the linking of individuality to notions of society, and time as an irreversible, regulated and planned for process, tied to ideas about progress. My drawing attention to these differences in the rules and standards of reason is not to entertain another ‘Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns’ in an evolutionary history. Rather it is to provide a way of thinking about the epistemological changes that underlie the comparative thought of comparative studies.

European and North American Enlightenments’ cosmopolitanism embodied a particular cultural thesis about individuality as ‘an actor’ whose reason and rationality (science) can intervene in the conduct of daily life and society in the name of human progress. The difference of that system of reason can be considered when placed next to that of the Greek Stoic tradition. Two spatial orders were fused: the cosmos (recording of the natural order of celestial events) and the polis (practical activities that depended upon human experience and the ability to command order). In this way, the practical was linked with the natural order of things within the “cosmopolis” (Toulmin, 1990, p. 67).

The two orders of nature and practical life were reasoned by memory centered on the past and not the future. The subject was modified through the acts of memory that liberated one’s own being. For the Greeks, knowing oneself meant knowing the past that is drawn from the wisdom given by the gods. The primacy of memory was to “sing the hymn of gratitude and recognition to the gods” and “to grasp the reality of which we cannot be dispossessed which makes possible a real sovereignty over ourselves” (Foucault, 2005, p. 468). Wars and distant places were defined through the oracles and history as a chronicle of events and its heroes.

If there was a comparative quality to life, it was to locate oneself in distant places without implicating one’s self in a logic of time and progress brought by human intentions. Humans were a natural part of the cosmos and also part of the
origins of things embodied in that cosmos. The mind preoccupied with the future is consumed by forgetting, incapable of action, and not free. To speak of the future indicated hubris as the future did not exist for people but for the gods. The Greeks saw the search for the future as destroying memory and the person who forgets as “doomed to dispossession and emptiness… [Individuals] are really no longer anything. They exist in nothingness” (Foucault, 2005, p. 467). Reason, in its modern sense, did not exist as it excluded the possibility of human agency in controlling the future and planning one’s life.

The Greeks’ idea of knowing one’s self was through the past that was linked to a cyclical notion of time rather than a chronological, progressive time. Time was a circular vehicle in which things came to be and then passed away. Everything in the present had its place such as in the setting of the table. History told of man being defined in an indefinite cyclic time rather than in a logical temporal order that linked the past, present and future. For example, the Greek historian Herodotus chronicles in the 5th century BC described the cycles of truth that had appeared in the past. Distant ‘things’ that influenced life in time was cast in cycles. The Pre-Socratic philosopher Pythagoras depicted history as one world historical cycle in which the sun, the moon and all other planets return to their original positions. There was no conception of a regularized and irreversible time; nor was time a device to calculate and compare individuality and societies for the future as what was given was known by gods and prophesies. Comparative studies were not possible in the sense of placing people on continuums of time and spaces related to their human attributes.

The Medieval Christian Church’s claim to universality and questions of redemption in the afterlife mediated the conceptions of distance, comparativeness and the proximities of life (Pocock, 2003). There was no sense of inserting individuality in a sequence of regularized time that spoke of human agency and progress as a temporal quality to judge and order the capacities of humanity. Time had a past that was defined eternally and told in the New Testament that succeeded the Old. Reason disclosed the eternal, immemorial ordering and hierarchies of nature and events in which people maintained their place in the cosmology of God. Philosophy, the highest form of reason, contemplated the universal categories that rose above human and the practical, earthly knowledge.

Time in the Church’s annals chronicled divine intervention and providence. Time was owned by God and the medieval church fought against town merchants who wanted to place secular clocks on its steeple. Truth or reality was grounded in the self-contained quality of timeless propositions. The propositions about what moral rules guided man [sic] to the afterlife stood in contrast to circumstantial, accidental and temporal knowledge. The significance of the events of time was passive and inert, subservient to the eternal paths given by God. Koselleck (1985) argues, for example, that paintings for Renaissance Christian humanists were didactic lessons in which temporal differences were not significant. The time of the painting, the time of its subject matter, and the time of the observer were contemporaneous.
History told of expectations related to the constant anticipation of the end of the world and its continual deferment to that end. Reason for St. Augustine and Erasmus was given by God and thus distinguished the Christians who, by virtue of the recognition, were civilized and differentiated from the infidels and ‘savages’ who could not recognize the sovereignty of God and his earthly ministries.

NORTHERN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN COSMOPOLITAN REASON IN SEARCH OF PROGRESS AND THE COMPARATIVE FRAMING OF SOCIETY/INDIVIDUALITY

European and North American Enlightenments’ cosmopolitanism embodied a particular cultural thesis about individuality as ‘an actor’ whose reason and rationality (science) can intervene in the conduct of daily life and society in the name of human progress. The thesis of cosmopolitanism was the Enlightenment’s hope of the world citizen whose commitments transcended provincial and local concerns with universal (but historical, particular) values about humanity. Cosmopolitan reason and rationality (science) was to provide the rules and standards to order the conduct of daily life and society in the pursuit of human progress and individual happiness. The notion of cosmopolitan agency traveled with and overlapped historically with notions of intervention and planning of which the notion of welfare state, social reform and mass schooling are contemporary exemplars. Liberal, neoliberal and Marxist traditions of social and educational science embody, albeit different mutations, of the Enlightenments’ cosmopolitanism in their theories and methodologies.

The notion of the intervention of human actors was spoken of through discourses about progress that inscribed hopes of the future and fears of degeneration and decay. The double gestures of hope and fear embodied a continuum of values, populations and qualities of life that did not ‘possess’ the civilizing and moral capacities of reason and science. Cosmopolitan agency and the idea of progress generated principles that compared the characteristics of those people who possessed a generalized and universalized quality of ‘humanity’ and the nation against those differentiated and placed in spaces outside of its normalcy - those not ‘citizens’ of the nation were placed in a continua of value about advanced and less advanced ‘civilizations’, societies and cultures.

How can this comparativeness be understood historically as it relates to the problematic of comparative studies of education? The Enlightenment’s turn toward secular time replaced the static temporality of the Christian journey. Time became linear, progressive and irreversible. Reason brought the natural laws of history into the development of the present and the making of the future (Commager, 1950). The modern idea of progress appears in the long 19th century and, as Koselleck (1979/1985) suggests, enabled political calculations as a humanist project that marks out the plan for the future.

The importance of the modern present and its future was conceptualized in contrast to that of the past traditions. The future was to be without an authoritarian system
of religious and aristocratic institutions and without fixed classes. Pragmatism, a particular American philosophy, was to shed the Old World’s traditions that prevented progress and, ironically, embraced salvation themes within the terms of the Enlightenment rather than within their religious cosmologies. “The old culture is doomed for us because it was built upon an alliance of political and spiritual powers, an equilibrium of governing and leisure classes, which no longer exists” (Dewey, 1916/1929, p. 501–2). The future was to disregard present traditions. The nation and its citizen were given a history in rational time that inscribed salvation narratives and redemptive practices previously the provenance of the Church and sovereign.

With much debate, the Enlightenment’s cosmopolitanism associated reason and its scientific superiority as the more advanced state of living than that which had been found in antiquity. The comparative logic about past and present was embodied in ‘The Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns’ in late 17th-century France. The debates were about whether the present stood on the shoulders of the Ancient Greeks or whether contemporary knowledge superseded the past. The answer was resolved in favour of the present. Its “proof” was the extension and consolidation of European power that had extended to the remotest regions of the globe during the “age of discovery” (Porter, 1991, p. 18).

Men and women could be placed in the landscape of a universalized space of ‘humanity’. That humanity assumes a center stage in an irreversible conception of time that links past/present/future. Friedrich (2009) argues, for example, that a particular temporalization is made visible that positions the emancipated individual as the citizen and subject-agent. The notion of historical consciousness embodies the production of memories and traditions indebted to the past yet different and possible to overcome its traditions through human agency.

Present time was used for future rewards, and the past was for comparison. The 19th-century produced wholesale awareness of change, the future, and history, with the Faustian notion of becoming rather than being. John Stuart Mills pointed out that “the idea of comparing one’s own age with former ages, or with our notion of those which are yet to come, had occurred to philosophers; but it never before was itself the dominant idea of any age” (Eksteins, 1985, p. 30).

The relation of the spaces of individuality and the social and natural world historically overlapped with the emergence of a particular style of comparative thought through notions of society and individuality. Prior to the 18th-century, for example, society was an association or guild of people; individuality was not available as a concept of intentions and purpose. By the 18th-century, society appears as a concept that refers to the anonymous forces and structures that influence life and which gave that individuality, ironically, its independent existence and the possibility of agency as a cultural thesis about modes of living. Liberalism and capitalism were expressions that overlapped this new possibility of individuality and sociality. The 17th-century Englishman John Locke’s political theory linked the consciousness of the self to the knowledge gained in the experiences of society. The Swiss
Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s notion of the social contract placed the relation of government and individuality as central in determining ‘the general will’. Adam Smith’s notion of the invisible hand of markets gave focus to the abstract forces through which the individual pursued self interest in the promotion of the good of society.

Contemporary analyses have pointed to the shift of the regulatory effects of time and space that ‘move’ as multiple and uneven flows, that Cowen (2000b) signals in his work. Some examples, include the work of the French historical school of the Annales, the discontinuous sense of time and epistemological spaces in computer gaming (Gee, 2003), and other recent research on the spaces of architecture (Rajchman, 1997), human geography (Soja, 1989), and social theory (Wagner, 2001). These place humanness in a different relation of time and space in time, which is thought to go “at a thousand different paces, swift and slow, which bear almost no relation to the day-to-day rhythm of a chronicle or of traditional history” (Braudel, 1980, p. 10).

The grid of historical practices makes possible the assembly of practices through which the notion of agency, the ideas that human purpose and intentions can intervene in the world to change it, became possible. The notion of agency is a powerful driving notion of modernity, traveling in styles of thought in such diverse concepts as empowerment, problem solving, and emancipation. They embody a relation of society and individual in regulated and progressive time and spaces that placed human agency and actors as central to processes of change. And paradoxically, the notions of actor and agency embody their opposite through modes of comparison to differentiate people and civilizations in continuums of values. Sociologically, it becomes possible to talk about people who came to school as ‘backward’ at the turn of the 20th-century (Franklin, 1994) and more contemporary discourses that classify children as different from unspoken norms about ‘at-risk’ or lacking efficacy and motivation.

The notion of human agency is made possible through the connection of individual and sociality. The freely acting person (whose freedom demands agency) is never merely acting alone. The norms of freedom are bounded in sociality and seemingly universal, global values of a binding and shared polity through which that freedom is enacted. If Anglo-Saxon, French, and German-speaking worlds are given attention, the individual was “a citizen who could know and act in the world that allowed for the discovery of an autonomous” social order subject to its own laws (Wittrock, 2000, p. 42).

That autonomous social order could be compared to others through its universals from which differences were inscribed. This instantiation of a social order entails, Eisenstadt (2000) argues, first

the bridging of the transcendental and mundane orders–of realizing through conscious human agency, exercised in social life, major utopian and eschatological visions. A second [tendency] emphasized a growing recognition of the legitimacy of multiple individual and group goals and interests, [and] as a consequence allowed for multiple interpretations of the common good (p. 5).
The ordering of conduct through principles of the agentic individual embodied the classification of distant spaces intricately bound to the time in which life is enacted. This linking of global spaces with the intimacy of daily life was expressed by Marx in the 19th-century as the “annihilation of space by time” (cited in Tomlinson, 1999, p. 3).

COSMOPOLITANISM: HISTORICAL SPACES OF DIFFERENCES IN SYSTEMS OF REASON

The Enlightenments’ notions of cosmopolitanism were quickly inscribed in the making of the modern nation. The citizen embodies the relation of individuality and a society that is captured in the double gesture of the ‘we’ in the 1776 U.S. Declaration of Independence that started with the phrase ‘We, The People’. That phrase signifies individual social contracts and the government as the collective, social ‘will’. Further, cosmopolitan principles of life as a process of becoming are absorbed in ideas of liberty and freedom of modern democracies.

Cosmopolitanism bore transcendent ethics in the search of progress that leached into the pedagogy of schooling. Cosmopolitanism gave intelligibility to the grid of historical practices through notions of society and individuality inscribed in trajectories of time about processes of becoming rather than being. That process of becoming is inscribed in the invention of modern historicism as well as in the pedagogical practices of schooling. The school pedagogy embodied the optimism of a future that was to be guided by the reason and rationality of cosmopolitanism. But, as I will argue, that optimism is a comparative system of reason that enunciates and divides the child who holds the emancipatory future from those feared as threatening the promise of progress.

My focus on American and European Enlightenment discourses is to highlight the emergence of comparative studies within these historical spaces and to outline certain principles in the problematic of comparative study. It is, however, important to focus for the moment on other notions of cosmopolitanism. There are, for example, forms of cosmopolitanism that were not political. One can think of the literary movements that spread Sanskrit as a cosmopolitanism whose epic poems and drama traveled before the Common Era. Traditional Chinese thought also expresses a cosmopolitanism but one different from those of Europe and North America. The writings of Confucius, for example, embody a style of reason of indirectness or detours that give focus to flows and movement concerned with the renewal of things, and approaching the real through detour without the otherness of western analytics. The flows and movements provide a way that people are ‘put’ in touch with its regulations and thus its detours are also of access (Jullien, 1995/2004; Wu, 2006). These principles approaching reality indirectly are different from the ontological concern with the world that focuses on object of representations and figurative meaning to represent something symbolically that I have addressed above. The goal of traditional Chinese speech is to modify and to identify moral judgments through the way in which facts are mentioned and not to strive to reproduce
the real in order to ground it in a transcendent or idea of Truth. Instead of listing arguments as a way of arguing truth, traditional Chinese thought is to mobilize energies out of the poetic that are to reason through shaking resolve and altering sentiments of others rather than attempting to persuade (Jullien, 1995/2004, p. 78). The point of conversation is not concerned with literal meaning and is without a concept of representation, the latter places the individual within flows and movements and without essences.

To consider multiple modernities through the study of systems of reason is to recognize that there are different historically formed rules and standards that order what is seen, talked about and acted on. Notions of difference and comparativeness in traditional Chinese thought, for example, do not inscribe the same kinds of representation of actors, agency, and society as do the logo-centric traditions of western social and educational sciences. To consider modern Chinese reforms would require understanding how past systems of reason are assembled, connected, and discontented in the present in a manner that is never merely the sum of the parts. While it is possible to think of the globalization of the school reforms in the present, for example, its notions of learning and accountability are assembled, connected, and discontented in different ways that are not merely about ‘traveling’ discourses. There are historical specificities through which differences are related and provide homogeneity.

COSMOPOLITANISM AS INSCRIPTIONS OF HOPES AND FEARS
IN ORDERING DIFFERENCE

Cosmopolitanism embodies a particular mode of organizing difference. Difference was embedded, at one level, in the hope of the Enlightenments’ cosmopolitanism that was differentiated from the dangerous and dangerous populations. As Chamberlin and Gilman (1985) suggest, “hope was looked after by progress and seemed as the tenor of the times, but fear was contagious” (p. xiii). The Renaissance equation of degeneracy and diversity led observers increasingly to refine and elaborate symbols of corruption; the Enlightenment projected degeneracy on the lower categories of the taxonomies of humankind rather than, as previously held, on doctrinal opponents in sectarian disputes (Boon, 1985). The all-enfolding plenitude of the great chain of being described the comparative morality and physicality of humanity as a qualitatively disparate species in which some were constructed as dangerous to the development of civilization (Boon, 1985). The Enlightenment view of legal codes was less to mirror the distinctive customs and practices of a people than to create a cultural community by codifying and generalizing the most rational of those customs and suppressing the more obscure and barbaric ones.

One can read cosmopolitanism as a continual inscription of hope and fear that circulates through the 18th-century to the present (Popkewitz, 2008). The French Enlightenment’s philosophes narrated the idea of civilization as a story of the evolution of a universal humanity through the application of reason. When the leaders of the American Revolution in 1776 claimed ‘all men’ had the same common nature,
that claim about the social order had particular boundaries about who had instinctive capacity for moral judgments (Wood, 1999).

Human time was placed in a sequence as a connection between ontology, nationality and theories of racial difference. Race was given as an ontological principle that linked biology and culture. It associated not only with the idea of authenticity and national principles but also with the elevation of race to a determining position in theories of history, especially those that spoke of “war and conflict, naturalizing them in the convenient idea of specifically race-based imperial conflict” (Gilroy, 2001, p. 64).

The civilized and the barbaric were differentiated in the manners and bodily relations—how one sits, drinks, greets, shares one’s bed, and handles questions of nudity and sexuality. “Civilized” encompassed a politeness, refinement, and new manners and decencies between people (Passavant, 2000; Elias, 1939/1978). Kant’s “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose” placed the civilizing manners of Kultur in distinctions that direct the individual to the future and progress. Kant (1784/1970) argued that

We are cultivated to a high degree by art and science. We are civilized to the point of excess in all kinds of social courtesies and proprieties. But we are still a long way from the point where we could consider ourselves morally mature (p. 49).

Europeans identified the characteristics of their own polite civilization as infinitely superior to others. The travel literature of the Scottish philosophers, for example, commonly had accounts of savage societies in the New World and Africa. The comparisons judged the other societies in relation to the degree with which they progressed in terms of their approximation of the European models (Jack, 1989). Elias (1939/1978) argues that the image of self that I associate here with the cultural thesis of cosmopolitanism is the standard bearer of expanding civilizations in colonial arenas, but it is also in relation to sexual regulation in the differentiations and distinctions of the citizen of the nation.

Cosmopolitanism demarcated difference. The comparative spaces of the cosmopolitan citizen entailed the racializing of populations through its system of reason. Inclusion/exclusion was simultaneously recognition of children in becoming American or Swedish and yet different and outside the boundaries of normalcy that shaped the characteristics of ‘the race’ (Popkewitz, 1987, 2001). To paraphrase American curriculum writers of the 19th century, the hope of schooling was to ‘preserve’ the American race and its civilization by preventing ‘the barbarians’ from knocking at the door of the nation. Horace Mann, a leader in forming mass schooling, reported to the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1867 that schooling was concerned the inner self of the child. The hope of education was to bring civilization to the child through developing

a general amelioration of habits, and those purer pleasures which flow from a cultivation of the higher sentiments, which constitute the spirit of human
welfare, and enhance a thousand fold the worth of all temporal possessions, these have been comparatively neglected (Mann, 1867, p. 7).

If education did not succeed in its transcendental image of humanity, then Mann asserted the barbarians would be let in the gate and destroy the Republic.

SCIENCE AS A FORM OF ACTION: A METHOD OF COMPARISON AND ABJECTION

The comparative method inscribed in cosmopolitan reason made possible the analytical qualities of modern science and medicine. The earlier classifying differentiating of plants in the work of Linnaeus and the biological evolutionary theory of Darwin were made possible by an analytical quality of thought through which parts could be differentiated and placed in a hierarchy of things and events. This comparative installation entailed an analytical consciousness that could see things in its parts that would relate to some unity of the whole; classification and differentiation formed a continuum of value and hierarchy that placed ‘man’ in a continuum of people and civilizations from advanced to less advanced and uncivilized. Nations traced their histories through progressive developments of ‘civilizations’ that started in Ancient Greece or Rome and arrived at the present.

Science carried a millennial belief in rational knowledge as a positive force for action. Many Enlightenment thinkers, for example, found the answer to the dilemma of progress in knowledge provided by science. Its methods would bring an infinite progress in the natural world and morally righteous and productive lives to the civil world. The task of the liberal human sciences was to provide the rules and standards of reflection and action that enabled the pursuit of cosmopolitan values about social progress and individual liberty and happiness.

Modern philosophy and sociology made the arbitrariness of differences into necessity and inevitability (Rancière, 1983/2004). Plato, Rancière (1983/2004) argues, had no propensity for dissimulating inequality. Firm boundaries were maintained about redistributions that refined the chorus (cicadas) of the poor that did not deploy any notion of inequality, and which placed the poor in a continuum of values related to others. The dissimulation of inequality stood as a point of difference or unlikeness (Rancière, 1983/2004). The new discourses of the Enlightenment, the positivist sciences of Auguste Comte, and the new sociologies, Rancière (1983/2004) continues, brought discourses of differences and states of rehabilitation of people that were no longer of an arbitrary order. Social science theories, for example, disclose differences that exclude the ethos that made workers, artisans, and racial groups. The recognition of difference stabilizes the groups as outside normalcy and “incapable of ever acquiring a taste for the philosophers’ goods—and even of understanding the language in which their enjoyment is expounded” (Rancière, 1983/2004, p. 204).

The comparativeness of reason is embedded in the methodology of science itself. Serres (1982) argues that the notion of structure has an algebraic origin that inscribes a notion of order and ordered relations. The notion of structure in
the work of Descartes (and a parallel text of Leibniz’s *Meditations*) transformed science into what Serres calls a game of strategy, with rules and moves that inserts the will to win. The ‘will to win’ inscribes antagonistic relations that seek the constant ‘optimization’ of action. The optimization universalizes one position from others in a comparative order through thinking of the specifics is done through absolutes that place the ‘I’ and ‘we’ in a continually superior position. The universalizing to raise doubt, Serres (1982) continues, inscribes procedure to compare “relations to maximal relationships such that nothing can exist beyond it” (p. 26).

THE STUDY OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION: SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES

At this point I return to the contribution of Robert Cowen for rethinking the episteme of comparative education. His writing has emphasized the political of schooling for the study of comparative education. That political is lodged in understanding the significance of an historical way of thinking about the complexity of school practices through thinking about how ideas and practices flow and fill and shape the spaces through which the objects of schooling are seen and acted on (see, e.g., Cowen, 2009h). This chapter has pursued these themes of the political and the historicizing of schooling through focusing on systems of reason. As part of this inquiry, I differentiated the political from the study of the politics of schooling. The former is to denaturalize the commonsense about the subjects of educational studies. The historical was given attention through understanding how different social, cultural and religious principles have come together to provide standards and rules about what is thought, hoped and acted on in schooling.

This historicizing strategy was given expression through my discussion of the notion of cosmopolitanism, a cultural thesis of modes of life that has is central to western schooling since the long 19th-century. My interest in cosmopolitanism in this chapter was two fold. It was to make visible important historical qualities that shape and fashion the epistemological principles through which the objects of modern schooling are ordered, distinguished, and differentiated. The grid of practices entailed, among others, principles about human agency that inscribe particular relations between individuals and society, time as a regulatory principle of conduct, and the instantiation of comparative styles of thought that differentiate the capabilities of people in continua of values.

My focus on the Enlightenments’ cosmopolitanism is to point out, at one level, a heterogeneous field in which pedagogy is talked about, ‘seen’, and acted on. Variations of the principles of cosmopolitanism provide the taken-for-grant rules and standards of the narratives of comparative studies. Cosmopolitanism, in this chapter, was an intellectual ‘tool’ to think about a comparative method that speaks to the heterogeneity of the systems of reason in modern schooling and its sciences. The comparisons of Greek, Medievalists, and the ‘reason’ of the pragmatists, as well as in differences in the reason between the Chinese traditions of persuasion and Western argument were discussed to consider historical differences in the
conditions and the rules and standards of reason. The discussion also directed attention to the limits of contemporary comparative education where epistemological inscriptions of the particular are given as arguments for the universal (with underlying enlightened values of ‘the civilized’). Ironically, that universal simultaneously produces exclusion and abjection in its impulse to include. If I consider, for example, contemporary concerns about educational access, opportunity, and equity, they inscribe particular distinctions and divisions about the subjects of change embodied that cannot be assumed but historicized.

The argument was moved through two planes in comparative studies of education. One is comparativeness inscribed in the principles generated about agency, individuality and society in pedagogical practices and research. These principles, I argued, embodied double gestures: the cosmopolitan hope of the future and fears of those populations and qualities of people that threaten that envisioned future (see Popkewitz, 2008). Comparativeness as a style of thought is inscribed in the commonsense and consensus of reform, curriculum, and pedagogy that orders, classifies, and governs reflection and action (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000).

It is this latter and second notion of comparison that provided the method of this chapter. It was to make visible differences historically across time and space in the principles generated about who ‘we’ are, should be, and who is not that ‘we’. This strategy of comparative study I have called elsewhere a social epistemology. It is to study systems of reason in order to locate different ways of thinking and acting (Popkewitz, 1991). The strategy is to understand the political in schooling without (re)inscribing the arbitrariness of differences into necessity and inevitability in theories and methods.

NOTES

1 Foucault and Rancière entail different traditions. The latter is concerned with political theory that entails the search for rules that allow democratic practices through thinking about the dysfunction of the relation of actors and epistemes in inserting hierarchies and differences. The former is a historical political theory and philosophy about the limits of enlightenment thought as a materiality of the present through its principles of order, differentiation and divisions. This chapter is more influenced by Foucault yet recognizes the homology in Rancière’s intellectual approach.

2 I use the term long 19th-century to talk about uneven historical processes that appear from the middle of the 18th-century and continue through the early 20th-century. These processes have no single origin but overlap at different points to form what many refer to modernity and I use cosmopolitanism, the latter giving greater emphasis to the particular principles generated about the cultural theses from which individuality is constructed.

3 As someone who studied Greek art, I recognize that I am merging historically nuances to make the general points.

4 Ironically, the cosmopolitan citizen was to hold values and commitments that extended beyond the local, provincial and nation. This distancing was quickly brought into the construction of political communities that called for new ways of relating individuality with participation in government as exemplified in the modern European republics and in some manner the latter Ottoman Empire that straddled corridors of Europe and Asia.
I use the notion of tradition with some caution, as the notion of tradition is an invention of the present. It is a way of reading the past and entails an amalgamation of different historical trajectories.

REFERENCES


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Amongst the conventional assumptions in Comparative Education is the view – transmitted from one textbook to another and from one introduction to the next – that the origins of the field can be traced to an unfinished “Outline” published in 1817 by an epigone of the final generation of French Enlightenment scholars. The deeply conventional character of this assumption is revealed in its failure to consider either the general context of the history of scholarship – to which each of the ideas outlined by Jullien de Paris is indebted – or, in particular, the comparative studies by authentic representatives of the Enlightenment such as Charles de Villers, Georges de Cuvier, Montesquieu and Louis de Jaucourt. Not only do the works of these Enlightenment figures cast a different light on the genesis of comparative studies in education and the social sciences; they are also, from a systematic point of view, more informative than one might expect of mere constructions of tradition bearing legitimatory intent. A notable example is the lucid article on “Comparaison” by Chevalier de Jaucourt, a well-travelled and polyglot natural scientist and dedicated collaborator on Diderot’s and d’Alembert’s Encyclopédie, published in the third volume of this Enlightenment milestone. It is all the more notable in that, from the very beginning of serious reflection on comparison onwards, it emphasizes the deeply constructivist character of comparative analysis:

Two objects may be given to us simultaneously without our comparing them; consequently, it is a conscious mental act which performs this comparison; and it is this mental act which constitutes the essence of what may be called the relation or connection, which is an act accomplished entirely by ourselves [translation JS].

By thus focusing on the fact that comparison in general is framed by specific problems, expectation-generating schemes and theoretical perspectives – and comparison as a method of the social sciences all the more so – these reflections imply the very opposite of yet another largely unquestioned convention of Comparative Education, viz the long-standing dominance of a specifically historicist positivism which has pervaded – and in many respects continues to pervade – the field.

In a largely analogous style of discursive analysis, ironical examination and graphic metaphor Robert Cowen has repeatedly called into question major conventions – “indeed, convictions”, as he puts it – of contemporary Comparative Education (Cowen, 2009c, p. 316). These include the deeply conventional fixation on nation-states which are, in the historicist and positivist tradition, perceived as taken-for-granted structures of reality. This widely held view is all the more “intellectually worrying” (ibid.) in that it prevents comparative scholars from defining their units of analysis according to theoretical problématiques or conceptually specified interests, e.g., not only as “nation-states” or “countries” but also as
“societies”, “cultures” and “civilizations”; not only at the level of entire nations, but also at infra-national levels – such as “conurbations” and “high mountain areas” – and at the level of trans-societal structures – such as “rims”, “networks”, “mobilities”, “trans-national élites” and “transfer processes”.

Likewise, Robert Cowen has kept a critical distance from preoccupations with normative methodologies – particularly those inspired by positivist epistemologies – and has instead preferred to examine and re-examine the process character of a field which, in order to generate meaningful knowledge, is in need of reiterative attunement to shifting conceptions of episteme, shifting ontologies, shifting macro-structures of the world as well as shifting audiences and their expectations. A further “convention-conviction” which Cowen has especially and repeatedly called into question refers to the bias “towards ‘reform’ and ‘advice’ and urgent policy improvement and ‘learning from others’” (Cowen, 2009c, p. 319) which is shared almost universally in the international Comparative Education community. For Cowen finds that this bias is not only concomitant with a theoretical impoverishment of the subject, it also signifies – and this should be emphasized – precisely a rejection of the fundamentally critical cognitive potential of comparative analysis – in other words, a form of empirically-founded criticism which is directed in equal measure at premature generalisations, pseudo-explanations and reform policies and their ideological underpinnings.

Finally, Robert Cowen’s criticism of a further unwarranted convention that is widespread among comparative educationalists operates at the same level. For the calling-into-question of an “interventionist Comparative Education” that is aimed at constraining educational decision-making and acting upon professional practice and reform (Cowen, 1982e) largely parallels criticism of the divorce of comparative and historical analysis. The consequences of such a divorce are far-reaching. Not only do they signify that precisely the policy-oriented works of Comparative Education are reduced to a style of comparison focused on mere present-day data and topical issues and thus systematically limited in the evidence they are supposed to give regarding the social and educational effects of specific innovations and interventions; they also signify the loss of means to register processes of change and their mechanisms – i.e. “a grammar of educational change within a longue durée” (Cowen, 2009c, p. 319).

What distinguishes Robert Cowen and his works from a good many contemporary comparatists, then, is his constant commitment to uphold the very intellectual – and intellectually demanding – character of Comparative Education. While he definitely adheres to comparative analysis as the core element defining the field, he has at the same time kept pace with the changes underway in the inter-state system and global structures, thus giving due weight to analysis of trans-societal structures such as cross-border “mobilities” and “shape-shifts”. Focusing on theoretically defined problématiques – in contrast to immediate policy (i.e. everyday social life) problems – he has at the same time refrained from hasty reliance on overarching social theories and has assigned to comparative scholars themselves the task of coining new terminologies. While he has acquired wide-ranging experience
in the Americas and East Asia as well as throughout Europe and the British Isles, with his particular blend of commitment and irony Cowen unmistakably epitomizes the English academic. Not least through his style – both fleet of foot and rich in metaphor – he has retained what Enlightenment intellectuals around 1800 identified as the essential benefit of comparative analysis, viz “wit” (Witz); that is to say, in the understanding of the time, unforeseen insight, cognizance of contingencies, the unveiling of unexpected relationships across time and space and the elucidation of alternative paths of development in response to apparently similar problems. In this sense, Robert Cowen has preserved much of the intellectual heritage of the European Enlightenment. Legitimately, then, he may be considered an Enlightenment scholar in English robes.

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