

Analysis of Urban Bias in “Morality and Life” and “Morality and Society” by Jiangsu Education Press

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Abstract: *After analyzing the sample textbooks “Morality and Life” and “Morality and Society” by Jiangsu Education Press, we can find that there is a serious urban bias through its illustrations and contents. Generally, it’s beneficial to the study and development of urban children, while bad for children in rural areas. In some sense, it results in the reproduction of urban and rural difference.*

Keywords: *Jiangsu Education Press, Morality and Life, Morality and Society, Urban Bias.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Great differences between urban and rural area have been hampered construction of affluent society, containing many educational differences, such as funds difference, device difference and so on. Besides these, it is found by some scholars that teaching materials have city bias, which is bad for rural students. So it is important to analyze the city bias in textbooks.

2. METHODS

We choose textbooks of “Morality and Life (Grade 1 and 2)” and “Morality and Society(Grade 3,4,5 and 6)” from Jiangsu Education Press, which are nine-year compulsory education experimental textbooks, as analysis objects. That is because of their sociality and flavor of real life, which mainly reflect primary school students’ thoughts and behavior. We use random sampling to select the books of the second semester in Grade 1(the second volume),the first semester in Grade 2(the third volume),the second semester in Grade 3(the sixth volume) and the second semester in Grade 4(the eighth volume) from 12 volumes randomly, and then analyze the urban-rural parts, including illustrations and contents. Here, we should note that we only analyze illustrations of the second and third volume as these two volumes show the related contents with more illustrations and less words. What’s more, these words don’t embody urban or rural characteristic obviously.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Analysis of Illustrations in Selected Textbooks

The author divides illustrations into three kinds. They are illustrations of obvious rural characteristic, obvious urban characteristic and neutral. Illustrations about cartoon have been attributed to the neutral. Because of the large proportion, the writer classifies neutral illustrations in detail as follows.

There are 114 illustrations in the second volume. Details are shown in "Table1".

There are 110 illustrations in the third volume. Details are shown in "Table2".

There are 105 illustrations in the sixth volume. Details are shown in "Table3".

There are 110 illustrations in the eighth volume. Details are shown in "Table4".

Table1. *The rural-urban differences in the second volume from "Morality and Life"*

Urban and rural characteristics		Number	Details
Obvious urban characteristic		21	urban household life, bus (stop), sidewalk, computers, play football, games, school
Obvious rural characteristic		5	well, farmland, farm photos
Neutral	View objects	19	parterre, wild trees, natural scenery
	Animals	10	insects
	Characters and actions	30	swim, talk
	School life	14	study, manufacture, have lessons, play games
	Other items	15	Human organ

Table2. *The rural-urban differences in the third volume from "Morality and Life"*

Urban and rural characteristics		Number	Details
Obvious urban characteristic		8	urban household adornment, park, city landmarks, school, sculpture
Obvious rural characteristic		5	rice, farmland
Neutral	View objects	18	parterre, fruit, vegetables
	Animals	7	insect
	Characters and actions	36	historical figures like Little Soldier Zhang Ga, Li Shizhen, Walt
	School life	25	Reading, manufacture, have lessons, school environment, clean up
	Other items	11	pictures, string, shoes

Table3. *The rural-urban differences in the sixth volume from "Morality and Life"*

Urban and rural characteristics		Number	Details
Obvious urban characteristic		20	city floor, bus pavilion, vegetable market, dustbin, school, residential area
Obvious rural characteristic		3	peasant girl, the farmer and the fox, feed the hens, village houses, farmers carry vegetables
Neutral	View objects	4	parterre, natural scenery
	Animals	1	cow
	Characters and actions	33	nations, Ji Gong Save people, foreigners, haircut, production worker
	School life	31	talk, manufacture, have lessons, games, study
	Other items	11	conch, clay figurines, map, computers

Table4. *The rural-urban differences in the eighth volume from "Morality and Life"*

Urban and rural characteristics		Number	Details
Obvious urban characteristic		40	bus, shop, zoo, welfare house, urban traffic, Tian'anmen, modern city construction, traffic police, school
Obvious rural characteristic		3	dwelling, reclaim land from lakes,
Neutral	View objects	10	Huangshan, trees
	Animals	3	pigeons, horses
	Characters and actions	23	An'nan, Li Jiacheng, Hawking, the blind girl
	School life	15	Newspaper publishing, manufacture, tennis, tug-of-war
	Other items	16	Television pictures, folk festivals, computers

From the four tables above, the writer concludes the traits of illustrations in four volumes from "Morality and Life (or Society)".

Firstly, the numbers of illustrations about urban and rural life in each volume are different. There are 21 illustrations that reflect urban life in the second volume, 8 in the third volume, 20 in the sixth volume and more than 40 in the eighth volume. Compared with that, there are about only 3~5 illustrations that reflect rural life in each volume. From that, we can find that the gap between the numbers of urban and rural illustrations in each volume is great, except the third volume. Generally, the higher the grade is, the more the illustrations about urban life are.

Secondly, the focus of illustrations’ contents about urban and rural life are different. With regard to illustrations about urban life, they focus on some basic rules of morality and conduct related to children life, something happened around, like family life, school life and so on. For example, there are 21 illustrations that reflect urban life in the second volume. The first one is the toilet, the second the kitchen, the third is students play computers together, the sixth is about home decoration and the eighth is about buses. There are 8 illustrations that reflect urban life in the third volume. The first one is the swimming pool, the second the living room, the fourth the kitchen. There are 20 illustrations that reflect urban life in the sixth volume. Among them,6 are about neighborhood and municipal refuse,3 are about places of recreation such as parks,6 are about computers, telephones, bus stops which are related to life. For instance, we can find a boy is pouring water on the balcony downstairs in the third illustration, rubbish are scattered everywhere in the corridor in the sixth illustration, a boy is giving a call in a public phone booth in the seventh illustration,2 guys litter in the waiting room in the 18th illustration. There are 40 illustrations that reflect urban life in the eighth volume. However, the focus has changed. It can be easily seen that things related to children life have become less and less and that reflect urban characteristics have become more and more, such as tall buildings, expressway, telecommunication. For example, the 25th illustration is a contrast between the expressway and the mud road, the 26th illustration is about overpasses and tall buildings, the 30th, 31st and 32nd illustration are about city factories, the 35th, 36th and 37th illustration are about high-tech products. Apparently, the focus that reflects urban life has changed from children life to city life constantly with the growth of grades.

Apart from the typical rural life, there are also lots of natural scenery in illustrations. For example, there are 5 illustrations reflecting rural life in the second volume. From that, only one shows the farm life and the others are about beautiful rural scenery. There are 3 illustrations reflecting rural life in the third volume, and all of them reflect rural scenery, such as the 1st one, attractive paddy scenery. There are 5 illustrations reflecting rural life in the sixth volume. From that, the third one is feeding the hens, the fourth one is about farmlands and buffaloes, and the rest are about rural scenery. There are 3 illustrations reflecting rural life in the eighth volume, and they all reflect rural scenery or animals.

Thirdly, except for the illustrations that reflect urban and rural life, the rest are neutral that used for describing scenery, animals, characters and its actions, school scenes and so on.

3.2. Analysis of Contents in Selected Textbooks

To avoid the coincide with illustration analysis, the writer chooses contents in “Morality and Life (or Society)” which have specific theme and take words as main narrative means. Here, illustrations just play the role of explaining or making examples. The unit of analysis is chapters, including Making up stories, Telling the Truth, Scientific Literature, Short Stories, Have a Talk, Telling you, Dictionaries, Information, Having a discussion and so on.

There are 37 chapters in the sixth volume. Details are shown in "Table5".

There are 56 chapters in the eighth volume. Details are shown in "Table6".

Table5. *The rural-urban differences in the sixth volume from "Morality and Life”*

Urban and rural characteristics	Number	Details
Obvious urban characteristic	5	Public Service,"True Stories", City Electronic Map, I'm One of my Hometown, Beautiful Legends
Obvious rural characteristic	7	Good neighbors, Different tweedle, A Letter to the Head of a County, The most Beautiful Smile in the World, Migrant Workers, Beauty cannot be Ignored, Potherb in my Hometown
Neutral	25	The Stories of Jacob, Neighboring Relations, Moving Three Evictions, Welcome New Students," Beautiful School, My Home", Ancient Private Education, Dress up the Classroom, A Letter to the Teacher, My Teacher and I are Friends, Origins of Teachers' Day, Experience Diaries, Notes about Labor, Such People in Life, Article 25 in "Security Administration Punishment Act", Provincial Administrative, Talking Map, Tips to Navigate, On A Quiet Night, Our Large Motherland, A Beautiful Song, Folkways, A Song : "I Love China"

Table6. *The rural-urban differences in the eighth volume from "Morality and Life"*

Urban and rural characteristics	Number	Details
Obvious urban characteristic	12	On the Bus,A Special Undergraduate---Liu Tao,Face Hawkins,He Comes through the Rain---Stories of Zhou Enlai,Visit Binhe Square,Tall Buildings and Gardens,A Persistent Boy who Loves his Hometown very much,A Survey on the Time those urbanites Spend on TV ,”Addicted to the Internet Bar,the Young Died Suddenly”,Little Reporter on a Big Occasion
Obvious rural characteristic	2	Teachers who Change the World,A Painful Lesson
Neutral	42	Picking up Litter off the Cliffs,A Blind Woman,Information related to the Disabled,A Letter from a Disabled Boy,Part of”People with Disabilities act of the People’s Republic of China”,Taking Care of the Disabled,Li Jiacheng’s philanthropy, Sympathetic to their Misfortune,Sympathy to the Disabled,What Should I Do,On the Mother’s Day,Hands,Hand in Hand,A Discussion about Food and Clothing,China-Japan Chopsticks Trade,”Listen to Wu Ming ? ”,Sweat and Tears,Garbage is resource on the wrong places,Priority to Buy Green Products,Protecting Environment is Easy,Traditional Festivals,Spend the Spring Festival with Grandparents,Traditional Recreational Activities,Folk Customs of Different Ethnic Groups,Transportation,Build the Sky Road in Snowy Days,Mobile Emission Pollution,Zhan Tianyou and Jing-Zhang Railway, Televitis, Turn Off the TV,Nutrition Advertising,Traffic Safety Advertising, National Internet Civilization Convention for Teenagers, The Earliest Newspaper in China,I’m a Reporter,The first Children’s Newspaper in China,The Communication and its Development,Transmitting Happiness

From the two tables above, the writer concludes the traits of contents in two volumes from “Morality and Life (or Society)” as follows.

Firstly, from the aspect of numbers, there are 93 chapters in two volumes. Nine of them reflect rural life obviously, seventeen of them reflect urban life, and the rest are neutral. From the aspect of fascicule, there are 7 chapters reflecting rural life, 5 reflecting urban life and 25 neutral in the sixth volume. What’s more, there are 4 chapters reflecting rural life, 12 reflecting urban life and 42 neutral in the eighth volume.

Secondly, from the aspect of contents ,there are only 9 chapters reflecting rural life in the two volumes. And they only concern with several aspects of rural life, such as the common problem of migrant workers. However, chapters that reflect urban life are always closely associated with children’s daily life, behavior and urban construction. For instance,”I’m One of my Hometown” in the sixth volume,”On the Bus” and “A Persistent Boy who Loves his Hometown very much” in the eighth volume have shown children’s daily life and behavior.”Public Service” , “City Electronic Map” in the sixth volume and “Visit Binhe Square”,”Tall Buildings and Gardens” ,”Little Reporter on a Big Occasion” in the eighth volume have shown that city’s basis is keeping pace with the development of modern society.

There are 67 neutral chapters in two volumes, including history, geography, poems,singers. What’s more,most of them are closely related to children’s healthy growth. For example,”Notes about Labor” and “Such People in Life” in the sixth volume,”What Should I Do”,”Protecting Environment is Easy”, ”Nutrition Advertising” and ”Televitis” in the eighth volume.

In addition, someone has analyzed illustrations in nine-year compulsory education textbooks “Ideology and Morality”. The study shows that rural-urban difference is really clear. Chapters like “Believe in Science instead of Superstition” and “Don’t be Deceived”, which are warning, prohibition, persuasion oriented, are always on the background of villages. In this chapters, we can see rural women with kerchieves, cotton-padded jacket are burning incense and worshipping the gods. We can see a rural boy is scooping water from the metal bucket and picking the cucumber from the melon stand into his mouth at the same time. Instead, chapters like “Pay Attention to State Affairs” and “Reform and Openness Start a

New Chapter”, which are praise and promotion oriented, are always on the background of cities. For example, we can see from texts that the old and the young are sitting on the sofa, with tea tables, color TV and bonsai around them. They live in Shenzhen Special Zone, surrounded by high buildings and crisscrossed overpasses. Besides, illustrations with city characteristics are predominant when it comes to study and life habits. On the contrary, illustrations related to labor are full of rural characteristics, and relatively backward, such as severe environment, simple tools, dim tone.

In general, we can find out as follows.

Firstly, from the aspect of numbers of illustrations, we can conclude that urban illustrations are more than rural illustrations. Meanwhile, urban contents account for the majority and become more and more with the growth of grades.

Secondly, neutral contents get a lot of coverage when selecting materials, such as animals, plants, characters and actions, especially school life. However, there are also some differences in specific contents. For example, urban contents are still more than rural contents. Even serious urbanization exists during the presentation of some knowledge. The materials reflecting rural contents are too monotonous than those reflecting urban contents. We can see typical traffic, high buildings, communication, and so on from urban contents.

Thirdly, from the traits of rural and urban illustrations and contents, we can find that the only little rural contents just reflect natural scenery. Instead, urban contents reflect deep cultural characteristic, such as family life, game scenes and colorful school life.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1. Analysis of Urban-Rural Differences in Texts

After analyzing the contents of four textbooks, there is no doubt that urban-rural difference exists. And urban contents far exceed rural contents, which add seriously to urbanization unintentionally. This phenomenon may be because of textbook editors’ unconsciousness, or even there is no right or wrong as urbanization is originally the direction of social development.

As a unified textbook, why is there more urban contents and less rural contents? Many experts believe that there exists a pressure group that represents the interests of urban residents. In spite of the existence of the peasant interest group, it finally failed to be the pressure group due to history. The urban-biased education policy is a reflection on education of city interest group’s benefit protection decision. Then, textbook editors are basically urbanites. Thus, they are used to urbanization thoughts when editing. Even they have tried to add something rural, the contents are just endowed with urbanization implication consciously or unconsciously.

4.2. Analysis of Complexity of Rural and Urban Students’ Learning Process

Cultural Capital explains that there are several factors influencing students’ study results. Not only family background, but also the inheritance of cultural capital has a great effect on students’ academic achievement. Specifically, Cultural capital, inherited by family education, and the continuity and discontinuity of school education result in the difficulty of learning and academic achievement. As the children who were born in the city, their educational environment is more abundant than those who were born in the village. The urban contents in the textbook are parts of urban children, instead, unfamiliar to rural children. On the other hand, the rural contents in the textbook are far away from the real rural life and most of them describe rural scenery. Most importantly, the expression of contents is too formalized, which is totally an exterior and a new symbol system. Even children are familiar with that originally, but when they see such new expression, they may feel strange, such as the scientific names of flora and fauna. This phenomenon doesn’t exist only in “Morality and Society(or Life)”, but in Nature, Chinese, Physics and so on. Some scholars have said that the study of Nature is a process of making familiar things unfamiliar for rural children.”Even rural children are too familiar with one thing, but after the study of Nature, they may feel confused. For example, the scientific names of flora and fauna don’t match what they think. And they may have never known animals and plants’ internal and external structure”. For urban children, if they want to know rural life, they can get more detailed, scientific and accurate information through reading, visiting, surfing the Internet. So, it’s common that rural children cannot understand urban contents. With regard to neutral contents, there are also

urban-rural differences in specific illustrations and contents, which can affect urban and rural children's learning process. That is because of the difference between urban and rural families in early education and cultural capital created for children. It seems to be neutral, impartial choice and teaching process, but actually, it's beneficial to those who have gained language competence. People like that are more likely to achieve success and status and reconstruct a larger social hierarchy.

4.3. Influence on Children's Study and Value Orientation of Urbanization in Textbooks

To some extent, the difference has affected the study of rural children. According to the curriculum standard of "Morality and Life(or Society)", "Children's character and sociality come from their cognition, experience and comprehension to life. Children's real life has special value to their morality development." From that, we can conclude that the real life and surrounding environment are too important for the formation of morality and values. Urban children live in cities and what the textbook has presented is closely related to their life. Thus, in their thoughts, society is a city, high buildings, informatization, and they know little about rural life. This can lead to urban value orientation, which may make them more approved of urban culture, and unfamiliar with rural culture. Obviously, that's bad for urban children to form right world outlook and philosophy. For rural children, such urbanization education can cultivate students' admiration and longings for city life so that they will study hard to enter the city. On the other hand, because of the contradiction between the real life and the textbook, children's values will become ambiguous. As time passes, rural children may get tired of studying. Furthermore, the limit of their early education and family culture capital also avoids their academic achievement. Ultimately, education just delivers a small number of rural talents to cities. The rest are those who don't love villages but have no practical skills. And the gap between cities and villages will become larger and larger.

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