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The Strange Case of German «Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik»

1. The mental side of the problem

In 1964, the German pedagogue Wilhelm Flitner¹ attempted to determine, as his work was titled, the «Position of Science of Education» (*Standort der Erziehungswissenschaft*). Flitner, a leading representative of the so-called «geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik,» or education as a humanistic discipline in the faculty of the arts and humanities, wanted to explain what kind of science «pedagogy», or «educational science» was. He spoke of «educational science» and not *German* educational science. But the subject he discussed was and is uniquely German, a strange case, that has no correspondent internationally and also cannot be seen as avant garde - something that other countries had neglected to consider. Particularly in view of the relation between «new education» and new science of education, which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, the German case is unique, and it has never been «exportable» to any larger degree.

From the mid 1850s on, two groups of sciences were distinguished in Germany, the *understanding* and the *explaining* sciences, that is, the human sciences versus natural sciences. The German term «Geisteswissenschaften» originated with the German translation of John Stuart Mill's *moral sciences*² and went on to develop independently. What is important with regard to German development of science is the categorical and strict opposition of the human to the natural sciences. The human sciences «understand» mental or intellectual traditions, while the natural sciences «explain» the laws of nature. Flitner shared this fundamental distinction, but he added that a third group was missing, namely, the *professionally oriented sciences*, which had always made up the larger part of academic disciplines at the German university.

¹ Wilhelm Flitner (1889-1990) studied Philosophy, German and English literature as well as History in Munich, Jena and Berlin. He finished in 1912 at the University of Jena his dissertation work in Philosophy guided by Bruno Bauch. Afterwards he taught in German Higher Education. From August 1914 until the end of 1918 Flitner took part in the First World War. In 1919 he became the first head of the newly founded institute of adult education («Volkshochschulschule») in Jena. Seven years later, in 1926, Flitner finished his habilitation work under the guidance of Herman Nohl at the University of Göttingen. In the same years Flitner received a call at the also newly founded Academy of Education («Pädagogische Akademie») in Kiel. In 1929 he became full professor (Ordinarius) and Director of the Institute of Education («Seminar für Erziehungswissenschaft») at the University of Hamburg. His main work in the theory of education is called *Systematische Pädagogik* and appeared in 1933 for the first time. It was rewritten and newly published in 1950 under the title *Allgemeine Pädagogik*.

² The sixth book of John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic* (1843) dealt with the logic of moral sciences. Johannes Schiel translated 1849 moral sciences into «Geisteswissenschaften». Mill was far away from the German concept «Geist» and intended to justify a unified, causal science. What was used later in German Philosophy of Science was only the term «Geisteswissenschaften». The separation between «understanding» und «explaining» originates from the *Logische Untersuchungen* (Logical investigations) that Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg (1802-1872), professor of Philosophy at the University of Berlin and one of teachers of Wilhelm Dilthey, published in 1840.

Flitner called these sciences «hermeneutic-pragmatic». They not only understand or explain but have to find out what can be done. They lay down principles for action that serve for both, better understanding of the field and practical progress (Flitner, 1964, p. 45). This «hermeneutic-pragmatic» formula refers to an assumed reality or practice that is supposed to be interpreted and shaped by a certain science. Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation, pragmatics is the science of action, and the two become related and linked in the professional sciences. In addition to the older faculties of the professions (medicine, law, and theology), Flitner says that also «newer sciences», such as pedagogy, psychology, or the social sciences, belong to the professional sciences (ibid., p. 45/46). The «position» of pedagogy is therefore a *hermeneutic-pragmatic* one. It not only understands the reality of education and interprets it, but it is also linked with action.

More precisely, Flitner wrote:

«The science of pedagogy is related to concrete education here and now on one hand and to offices, professions and laic functions, that have to do with education, on the other. Thus pedagogy is built *pragmatic* - but not *pragmatistic*.« (ibid., p. 46)

Flitner's disassociating of «pragmatic» from «pragmatistic» is not random; it is not simply a play on words, but a program. It serves as defense against what Flitner calls the «modern» understanding of education - he puts «modern» in quotation marks - and to which, he says, North American «progressive education» belongs. Flitner sees the modern understanding as having emerged from two main sources, i.e. Freudian Psychology and John Dewey's philosophy of education (ibid., p. 49).

A «hermeneutic-pragmatic» professional science of pedagogy never developed in Germany. Neither did a professional academic discipline comparable to medicine, law, or theology. At the time Flitner conceived his idea of the «professional sciences», pedagogy was represented at all German universities through professorships, but it was more a philosophical discipline that dealt with the historical-systematic situation of education. Theories of education should meet the bulk of tradition from ancient to modern times. Especially German idealism was considered to be fundamental for the philosophy of education that before 1933 was divided into two camps, Neo-Kantian approaches on side and historic-hermeneutic positions on the other.

To understand the situation it is important to take into account the special development following the Second World War and its particular relation to «reform pedagogy». In 1956, at the end of the short period of American re-education³ efforts in Germany,⁴ Flitner gave a talk on the past yield and future prospects of German reform pedagogy prior to 1933. Flitner's

³ The concept of «re-education» was created by Walter Lippman, then Chief-Editor of the *New York World*. In Mai 1944 John Dewey became one of the organizers of the *Council for a Democratic Germany*. Die basic document for the campaign «reconstructing German education» after the World War II was the *American Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Directive* No. 1067. After all national-socialistic institutions of education had been closed, the whole system of education in Germany should be built anew. The goal was «to eliminate all Nazi and militaristic doctrines and to encourage the development of democratic ideas» (Pollock, Meisel & Bretton, 1949, p. 82). German Reform Pedagogy of the Weimar Republic plays a certain role in this process of renewal but only in the perspective it was recognized in the United States before 1933. See for example: Alexander & Parker (1929).

⁴ It is often overlooked that there has been a *re-education* in the United Staates, too. Around 425'000 German and Italian prisoners of war who were imprisoned in 511 camps throughout the U.S. during the war had been object of massive efforts of instruction and education for democracy. See Krammer (1979) and others.

basic premise was that reform pedagogy had failed everywhere in Europe - in England, Scandinavia, and Germany - due to both sharp divisions within the progressive movements and also external events. There is but one exception to the rule.

«Only in one country reform pedagogy obviously was successful - in Northern America where all ‘progressive’ education was established due to the style of thinking⁵ that belong to William James, John Dewey, or William Kilpatrick. This approach deviates in central views from theories that in Germany promoted reform in education. To name just one point of difference: Followers of Dewey’s view agree that education first of all is adjustment to social life.⁶ Therefore they try to keep the education of the youth as liberal as possible, only to force up conformism to society as highly as possible.» (Flitner, 1956, p. 147)

According to Flitner then, freedom in education serves nothing other than social adaptation or adjustment, which he equated with conformity. The more freedom is granted in children’s education, the higher the conformity, whereby Flitner does not refer to any specific case, but condemns the «pragmatic view» per se. Here he does not make the distinction between «pragmatic» and «pragmatistic», but it is clear that both terms are not used in a positive sense. They carry the negative connotation of adaptation and adjustment, and continuing up to the present day, the word «adjustment» is frowned upon in German pedagogy, even though - or because - in the «thinking of James, Dewey and Kilpatrick» it precisely does *not* mean conformity. What is called «adjustment» should be used in German as «intelligent adjustment», and it refers to freedoms in learning.

Flitner’s talk on March 15th, 1956, titled «Experiments, models and theories in their significance for internal school reform», was held at the German Institute for International Educational Research in Frankfurt am Main.⁷ The institute had been established five years previously with sizeable American funding as a foundation under public law in the German federal state of Hesse. The aim was to confront traditional German pedagogy with the democratic approaches of Pragmatism and to put pedagogy on the way towards empirical research, of which international comparison was considered to be a very important part. In German academic pedagogy, the dominant approaches were actually philosophical, and they were oriented to neither empirical nor comparative research. The German approaches remained constant after the war, in contrast to Italy, for example. The institute in Frankfurt long remained a foreign body, an alien element, in Germany to which the odium of the American re-education efforts adhered.

The founder and first director of the German Institute for International Educational Research in Frankfurt was Erich Hylla,⁸ who translated John Dewey’s book, *Democracy and Education*.⁹ Hylla was engaged in the American re-education after the Second World War.

⁵ «Denkart» in German original.

⁶ «Anpassung am das soziale Leben» in German original.

⁷ DIPF: Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung.

⁸ Erich Hylla (1887-1976) was a trained teacher who studied at the University of Breslau. After working as head of a «Realgymnasium» he served as school superintendent. In 1922 Hylla was called to the Prussian Ministry of Culture where he worked until 1933 in several positions. His translation of Dewey’s *Democracy and Education* (1930) originates from his one years’ stay at the Columbia University. Hylla’s own book *Die Schule der Demokratie* (1928) also resulted from that stay. After his emigration Hylla taught for two years Comparative Education at the Columbia University (1935-1937), and then later at the *Cornell University* (1938).

⁹ The first German edition was published 1930 by Ferdinand Hirt in Breslau, die second edition appeared 1949 in the publishing house Georg Westermann in Braunschweig. There is evidence that Dewey was read in Germany, especially in the institutions of teacher training. See Bittner (2001).

Dismissed by the Prussian civil service in 1933, he emigrated to the United States, where he taught at a number of universities. Directly after the end of the war he was appointed school superintendent in Bavaria. In 1946 he was named advisor to the head of the education division of the U.S. military government and occupation of Germany, and in this function he was in charge of the re-education efforts.¹⁰ Later Hylla became minister of education in Hesse before he was elected as first director of the Frankfurt Institute.

The structural political goal of American re-education was the introduction of a democratic comprehensive school for all children on the model of the American Elementary and High School. This would have been a clear break with the German educational tradition of selective schooling. Beyond that, rapid democratization of the universities was declared as a goal. Both of these efforts failed once the German *Länder* or federal states, newly formed from 1946 on, were put back in charge of education. Re-education, if at all, influenced teachings aids, the public media, or the opinion climate in the young German Republic, but it did not impact the structure of the educational system or the pedagogical theory associated with it.

Erich Hylla was among those present to hear Flitner's talk in 1956, and he listened to what his colleague from Hamburg had to offer as an alternative to North America's «progressive education». Flitner said:

«I only have to mention names like Theodor Litt, Ernst Michel, Romano Guardini, Herman Nohl, Peter Petersen to remind you of completely different philosophical views of education, authority, freedom and the formation of character of the young.» (Flitner, 1956, p. 147)

This statement of Flitner's is very revealing. Freedom in and of itself is neither a means nor an end of education; democracy is not mentioned at all. In its place, value is attached to the «substantive matter» of education, and the necessity of authority is emphasized. None of the figures Flitner mentions, with the exception of Peter Petersen, is normally seen as belonging to German reform pedagogy, which the lecture was supposed to be about. At that time Theodor Litt and Herman Nohl were representatives of academic educational philosophy in Bonn and Göttingen, Romano Guardini held the chair of religious philosophy in Munich at the time, and Ernst Michel, who had been director of the Frankfurt Academy of Labor up to 1933, was a psychotherapist and teacher in adult education.

There are many philosophical differences among these authors; regarding education they have some things in common; but most of all, they represent a *German* alternative that was acceptable to recall in 1956. All of their names were - or seemed so at least - untainted by National Socialism,¹¹ and, in addition, none of them was suspected of taking an American,

¹⁰ Hylla later served as assistant to R.T. Alexander, who in March 1947 became head of the Education and Religious Affairs Branch of the Office of Military Government for Germany (OMGUS). Alexander was Professor for Comparative Education at Columbia University's *Teachers College* and an expert for German reform pedagogy. See Details in Tent (1982) pp. 126 sq.

¹¹ This was clearly not the case with Peter Petersen (1884-1952), and that should be known in 1956. There is evidence from new studies that Petersen was engaged for national socialism not only with his theory of education but also in the context of the University of Jena where he held the chair of education since 1923. The University of Jena was National Socialism's elite university with strong following in all faculties (Hossfeld, John, Lemuth & Stutz, 2003). Petersen was not a singular case. Herman Nohl had initial sympathies for the new regime and expressed his views very clearly in his lectures after 1933 (Klafki, 2003). And there are texts written by Wilhelm Flitner that articulates sympathy for the «völkisch» part of the NS-ideology. It should also be

thus «pragmatic», position. Flitner offered them as the better alternative to William James, John Dewey, and William Kilpatrick, whose theories he categorically rejected, without acknowledging a single difference among them. In international comparison, this is an anomaly, and not only in view of Pragmatism's wide reception.¹²

Between 1880 and 1900 there arose something like an association of modernizers in the education system, to which at least four larger groups of actors belonged:

- the emerging field of the psychology of the child, with authors from William Preyer to G. Stanley Hall, who were at the same time active school and education reformers,
- independent ethical societies and theosophical groups, from Felix Adler to Annie Besant, who organized education reforms independently of state control and outside churches,
- political movements, such as progressive democrats or anarchists, who produced school experiments and discussed radical modernization,
- reform groups both within and outside of organized teachers' associations, which developed plans for the new education and founded model schools.

Academic educational science is involved here insofar as it aligns itself with one or more of these groups, such as, for example, Pragmatism aligning with the progressive political movement in the US or child psychology in the canton of Geneva aligning with social democratic school reform. In that sense, educational science entered into alliances with reform groups and established itself in the universities as a modernizing factor.

In Germany, things were different, that is, things *became* different after having begun in quite an analogous manner.¹³ William Preyer's educational political engagement in Hugo Göring's society for the «new German school» accords with the pattern, as do Ernst Meumann's activities for the German teachers' associations, which invested in empirical research to promote school reform. But German «reform pedagogy» did not emerge, as in France, from small, left-wing groups - not, as in the United States, from sweeping democratization movements - and not, as in England, out of ethical societies or the theosophical brotherhood. What in Germany was never referred to as «new education», but instead from around 1900 was named «reform pedagogy», is primarily a matter of state developmental policy or of dissidents that sought alternatives to the state schools.

To prevent misunderstandings, I should mention that in German cities, too, there were ethical societies prior to 1914 that addressed issues of education reform. The same holds for theosophical groups, which in Rudolf Steiner brought forth an original founder, whose esoteric anthroposophy certainly today recruits the largest followers of German originated reform pedagogy worldwide. But up to 1933 «Steiner education» or «Waldorf School Movement» was only a marginal phenomenon, similar to the way that the ethical societies did not leave their mark and the approaches of alternative education did not, or only in isolated fashion, become the thrust of a counterculture. Even a very well-known project of child-

marked that none of the three were influential in the core of the national-socialistic theory and practice of education.

¹² Flitner also in March 1956 gave a lecture at the London Institute of Education where an «Anglo-German Conference of Professors of Education» were organized. Flitner talked about «two contrasting principles in today's education», the empirical on one side and the idealistic on the other. A year before, in a German lecture in April 1955, Flitner talked for the first time about «education in democracies» without mentioning American pragmatism. This was the only time that Flitner made «democracy» a subject of his writings (Flitner, 1956a).

¹³ Data and Details for the following are to be found in Oelkers (2005).

centered education like Berthold Otto's «Private Tutor School» in Berlin remained a project of the dominant Wilhelmine culture, and what is more, in political terms it became a part of the right wing of that culture.

Projects on the left within German reform pedagogy mostly appeared after 1918, when the Social Democrats, who had shown no previous interest in «new education», sought to reform state school policy along the lines of the reform pedagogy of the public school teachers. This trend towards left-wing school reform and thus development towards an egalitarian system can be observed following the First World War in many European cities, from Vienna to London, but again we find an anomaly in Germany. The diverse attempts to redesign the structure of the school system did not gain the support of academic educational science, or only in a very different way.

The self-understanding of German academic pedagogy was and still is basically a historical one, in the sense that it seeks normative reference points in the past. A special form of historiography was developed to secure the guide-lines of this approach.¹⁴ For reform pedagogy the reference point was located in the political Romanticism at the beginning of the nineteenth century. With this, the new education was tied to the «Volksgemeinschaft», the community of the people, or the nation. It is here that the names listed by Flitner have their main commonality: none of them held to a theory or the practice of democratic education. And this has something to do with the history of the discipline of German pedagogy and fundamental decisions in relation to reform pedagogy.

2. Lines of the development of German pedagogy

Up to the middle of the eighteenth century, there was no national form of pedagogy in Europe. Problems in upbringing and education were issues for the two large Christian denominations to handle. Secular theories arose mainly in England and in France, and they were not restricted to either national culture. The anticlerical psychology of Sensualism and the approaches of a utilitarian theory of education enjoyed reception across Europe. Sensualism placed the child's learning at the center of attention, while utilitarianism focused on human strivings towards happiness. Both of these were preconditions of theories of education in the Enlightenment throughout Europe and also in Germany.

A national pedagogy deviating from those trends emerged only at the beginning of the nineteenth as a response to the philosophy of idealism, particularly to Immanuel Kant's three Critiques of reason. Taking this line, German education distanced itself from both the learning theory of Sensualism and the utilitarian maxim of the «greatest happiness for the greatest numbers». In 1806, Göttingen philosopher Johann Friedrich Herbart published his theory on *General Education (Allgemeine Pädagogik)*,¹⁵ which saw the morality of the individual as the purpose of education. Happiness and morality were not longer differentiated and were supposed to be identical. In 1824/25, August Hermann Niemeyer published the concluding edition of his textbook on education as a scientific discipline,¹⁶ which similarly saw the task

¹⁴ This particular construction of historiography is discussed in Oelkers (2004).

¹⁵ Johann Friedrich Herbart: *Allgemeine Pädagogik aus dem Zweck der Erziehung abgeleitet*. (Göttingen; Bey Johann Friedrich Röwer 1806).

¹⁶ August Hermann Niemeyer: *Grundsätze der Erziehung und des Unterrichts für Eltern, Hauslehrer und Schulmänner*. Band I-III. 8. Auflage (Ausgabe letzter Hand). (Halle: Waisenhaus.Buchhandlung 1824, 1825).

of education to lie in the morality of the subject. Niemeier's textbook, moreover, defined the categorical form of education, or its conceptual system.

In contrast to what happened with German political science,¹⁷ for example, or the technical fields of study, these drafts did not succeed in becoming linked with the development of an academic discipline. This was essentially because the professional literature for the teaching professions was not, or not primarily, oriented to a science of education. Each of the two main parts of the school system, that is, the *Volksschule* (primary school, expanding since the mid 1850s) and the reorganized *Gymnasium* (privileged with the university entrance examination) had its own literary genre. Both genres focused on the problems of school subjects and school development; the required research basis and the collection of data were provided by either public administration or other disciplines, such as medicine (Oelkers, 1998).

The two large educational professions of the nineteenth century developed sustainable and mostly regionally organized communication forms,¹⁸ which up to 1914 were not, or at least only marginally, attuned to the idea of a university professional science. *Pedagogy of Elementary Education* was developed by writers within the profession and comprised in the main school subject methodology. Primary and secondary school teachers were trained in this type of education at the teachers' seminaries, where the primary emphasis was on the activity of teaching lessons. *Pedagogy of Higher Education* was developed in parallel; it was a stronger response to the human sciences of the nineteenth century, especially philosophy and history, but it also did not envisage a university science of the educational profession. The writers of the main works in this area were directors of Gymnasias and Teacher Seminaries, not university professors.

At the end of the nineteenth century, there were only a few chairs of education at the German-speaking universities. The field of study, even though it was categorically differentiated for Elementary and Higher Education and appropriated funding, was offered at the university level almost always as a minor field of study only, as an accompaniment to future Gymnasium teachers' main courses of study. There are a few notable exceptions, such as the University of Jena. Jena had in Karl Volkar Stoy and Wilhelm Rein two professors of education who leaned towards Herbart's educational and psychological theories and were committed to a science of education. Together they founded Herbartianism, understood clearly to be the professional science of teachers, which between 1880 and 1900 became the first international paradigm of educational theory, with an impact so far-reaching that it influenced American and Japanese teacher education (Coriand & Winkler, 1998).

Another exception was the *Technische Hochschule* in Dresden, which as early as 1876 established a chair of education and philosophy that was held by Fritz Schulze up to 1908, followed by Theodor Elsenhaus (1908 to 1918) and Karl Bühler (1918 to 1922). Similar chairs were established at Swiss and Austrian universities, but these were isolated efforts and not by chance outside the realm of Prussia. In contrast to the United States, no fully developed university discipline was instituted up to the First World War, mainly because the largest group of teachers, primary and secondary school teachers, was trained in the teachers' seminaries outside the universities. Teachers' seminaries were training schools that could be attended after completion of obligatory schooling, usually at the age of 16 or 17. The

¹⁷ «Staatswissenschaften» in German original.

¹⁸ Buchheit (1939) presents a nearly complete list of educational journals and newspapers that existed between 1871 and 1914.

knowledge necessary for entry was usually acquired at «preparatory institution» for teachers where no higher school degree was required.

Academic studies for primary and secondary school teachers developed in Germany only after 1918 and, with few exceptions, still outside of the university, namely in educational academies or colleges that had no official academic standing. This made it difficult for education to build up its own younger generation of educational scientists, because teaching positions in teacher education, both within and outside the universities, were de facto filled by representatives of the various social sciences or psychological disciplines, without starting out from a specific guiding discipline or professional science. Until the last third of the 20th century education never took on a function like that of medicine, also because it was never able to build up a scientific status of its own.

In the United States, starting in the late nineteenth century, new private universities were founded in rapid succession, and they built up educational and psychological research institutes and courses of study for aspiring teachers. The two most well-known examples are Teachers College at Columbia University and G. Stanley Hall's child study research program at Clark University.¹⁹ Hall was a persuasive advocate of research, and within a few years, child study had become a full-fledged, international movement. The development of educational science in Germany occurred much more hesitantly and was not fostered by the founding of new institutions. The development was also hampered by disparagement of primary and secondary school teachers, who were not to be put on a par with academically trained pedagogues, that is, the Gymnasium teachers. On the other hand, however, the public school system, which had been built up intensively after 1871, became a professional field that demanded scientific study and reflection. Not by chance, the teachers' associations of primary and secondary school teachers called for the development of educational science research; it became established from about 1890 and was called «experimentelle Pädagogik» (experimental science of education), it had international connections and promising topics of research (Hopf, 2004).

Not least, psychological and physiological research in nineteenth-century Germany was of prime importance for the formulation and implementation of a program for educational science with an empirical basis. French authors did not find it difficult to cite German work and forms of organization, in addition to American work, as constitutive of experimental education in France (Blum, 1899). This view is largely uncontested up to the First World War, both with regard to priority and effect. For writers in France at the turn of the twentieth century, «le mouvement pédagogique» is *exclusively* a question of empirical child psychology that was essentially stimulated by American and German developments (Jeanjean, 1909/1910).

At the start of the twentieth century, educational science on a psychological-experimental basis had a number of visible advantages: it demonstrated exactness, gave proof of measurability, could be applied to teaching technology, and overcame the limitations of the subject matter of classical pedagogy. The leading figure of German educational psychology, Ernst Meumann, described the range of topics in 1907 and listed the following central areas of research:

- the influence of the school on the course of children's development
- the subjectivity of children's perception and its empathetic character

¹⁹ G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924) became president of the newly founded Clark University in 1889. Here he developed his famous *child studies*.

- the method and economy of memory
- the definition and development of children's language
- unique features of childhood and their analysis
- development of talent and intelligence
- the mental world of the child
- and the didactics of reading, writing, and arithmetic (Meumann, 1907).

The accent of these topics was clearly on professional knowledge for teachers, and research results were intended to be useful for the everyday practice of teaching. Professional knowledge of this kind did *not* emerge in Germany at a large scale level. First of all, a decisive factor in this was the resistance on the part of most universities, which prior to 1914 did not want to have anything to do with teacher training. An indication of this is the founding of the Central Institute for Education and Instruction (*Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Bildung*) in 1915 in Berlin, which aimed to affiliate with research institutes abroad.²⁰ The central institute was supported by a foundation called the «Anniversary Foundation for Education and Teaching» (*Jubiläumstiftung für Erziehung und Unterricht*), of which the teachers' associations were a part, but not the universities.

But the development of school education also played a role, as its interest was in practical reform and not the development of a university discipline. Outside the teachers' unions scientific research was viewed with reservation and accepted only according to a very narrow criterion of usability, something still holds true today. The experiences of reform pedagogy were decisive here, for they showed that changes to the school system in a very strictly organized government framework as in Germany certainly had to be backed up by educational theories, but not necessarily also by research. Reform pedagogy in Germany at least was supported by the teachers, the public authorities, and the broader public - guided by its own media, but not by an academic discipline.

In contrast to the United States, England, or French-speaking Switzerland, no reform pedagogical strivings gathered force in the conservative German universities, and therefore no theoretical paradigm was developed that would have the same strong influence as the education of Pragmatism or Jean Piaget's developmental psychology. In addition, reform pedagogy in Germany was highly dependent on nineteenth-century ideas like the «work school» or the «soul» of the child just as much as political ideas like the «community of the people». No clear break of theory can be found, on the contrary German reform pedagogy linked itself to the traditions of the 19th century, especially that of Pestalozzi and Fröbel.

There is another special factor: Much more so than in comparable international developments, the carriers of reform were teachers in the civil service, mostly elementary and secondary school teachers, who wanted to improve, but not radically change, the existing school system. Educational science was considered to be useful as a support for the endeavor, but not in the sense of an independent branch of research. On the other hand academic pedagogy developed outside the professions of education.

²⁰ The most important institute was Columbia University's *Teachers College* in New York, founded in 1887. Other international institutes should be mentioned, e.g. the *Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau* in Geneva, founded in 1912, the Institute for Psychology and Education at the University of Petersburg, the Centre of Educational Research at the Free University of Brussels (since 1919 called *La section de pédagogie*), or the *Institute of Education* of the University of London, founded in 1902.

3. Education as an academic discipline in Germany

After the First World War, chairs of education were founded at Prussian universities, and they formed the basis for the establishment of an academic discipline. The tasks of the new discipline, according to an expert opinion by Ernst Troeltsch in 1917,²¹ were philosophical and historical in nature, oriented towards disciplines such as historical theology and historical philosophy. Not by chance, many of the professors were philosophers who were closely aligned either to Wilhelm Dilthey's historicizing philosophy of life or neo-Kantian moral philosophy. Academic educational science in Germany thus established itself with a philosophy-based program, uncoupled from empirical research and also finding no access to newer philosophies, such as to American Pragmatism (Tröhler & Oelkers, 2005).

Up to 1933 neo-Kantian philosophers of education like Richard Höningwald²² or Jonas Cohn²³ on one side competed with the «geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik» connected with Eduard Spranger²⁴ or Herman Nohl²⁵ on the other. What both directions have in common is they both disassociated from earlier professional considerations. Educational science was to be conducted as an independent discipline on a philosophical basis, that is, not oriented to the professional practice of education. The new academic educational science was no longer to be associated with «school hands». Clear boundaries had to be drawn against the nineteenth-century pedagogy of the elementary and secondary school and the Gymnasium. Philosophy of education on both sides was regarded as «pure» science that was taught at the universities

While it is true that followers of Nohl like Wilhelm Flitner or Erich Weniger developed a concept of the professional science (Tenorth, 2003) for the academies of education that were founded after 1926 in Prussia for the new teacher training, this concept

²¹ Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) became Ordinarius for Philosophy at the University of Berlin in 1915 and served as an influential advisor to the government during and especially after the war when he also became secretary of state in the Prussian ministry of culture. Troeltsch was one of the defenders of the Weimar Republic and thus of democracy.

²² The Hungarian jew Richard Höningwald (1875-1947) studied medicine at the University of Vienna and Philosophy at the Universities of Halle und Graz. His supervisors in Philosophy were Alois Riehl and Alexius Meinong. In 1904 Höningwald defended his doctoral thesis at the University of Halle and two years later he finished his habilitation work at the University of Breslau. Here he obtained in 1916 a professorship for Philosophy, Psychology and Education that was changed three years later into a full professorship. 1930 Höningwald was called to the University of Munich. He was forced to leave the University after 1933 and was sent into the concentration camp of Dachau five years later. In 1939 Richard Höningwald emigrated into the United States where he taught at the Yale University.

²³ German jew Jonas Cohn (1869-1947) studied Biology at the University of Leipzig, Heidelberg and Berlin. He received his doctor's degree in Systematic Botany in 1892. In the same year Cohn became member of the Leipzig section of the «Society for Ethical Culture», founded in New York in 1876 by Felix Adler. Cohn's interest in the study of education originated from this society. In 1894 he was habilitated for Philosophy and Pedagogy at the University of Freiburg/Br. Not before 1919 he received a professorship in Philosophy of Education which he held until 1933. He was discharged from his office, the letter of dismissal was signed by Martin Heidegger, then rector of the University of Freiburg. Jonas Cohn went into Exil in march 1939 and died in England.

²⁴ Eduard Spranger (1882-1963) finished his habilitation work 1909 at the University of Berlin and was called to the University of Leipzig in 1911 as professor for Philosophy and Education. 1920 he went back to Berlin in the same position, and in 1946 he changed to the University of Tübingen. Spranger became famous for his concept of *Lebensformen* (1914/1921), a theory of psychological understanding that was developed in opposition to empirical research in psychology.

²⁵ Herman Nohl (1879-1960), the intellectual center of the «geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik», finished his habilitation work 1908 at the University of Jena, supervised by Rudolf Eucken. Nohl took part in the First World War and was called to the University of Göttingen in 1920 as professor of philosophy and education. His concept of «autonomy» of education also reacts against empirical psychology.

never really guided German teacher training. This had to do not only with the fact that the structure and organization of teacher training underwent constant changes,²⁶ there were also conceptual problems. Although teacher training was always brought together with the emphatic concept of «Bildung», it did not follow any kind of philosophical pedagogy. The two central elements of teacher training were and always remained school subjects and teaching methods.

The two directions in educational philosophy of the Weimar Republic differed in the starting points of their approaches: the neo-Kantian concept of education was oriented towards a transcendental moral philosophy, while the «geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik» followed the guidelines of the Romantic philosophy of history, according to which the present must take its direction and its role models from the past. In both cases the historical school of the nineteenth century in cultural studies had to be rejected and overcome. This entailed a price, for the basis had to be either a philosophy divorced from history or a concept of history as a moral reservoir for the present and future.

However, it is not correct to view academic educational science in Germany only from the perspective of educational philosophy. Various new disciplines, from educational sociology to psychoanalysis and Gestalt psychology, took up the issues of education and *Bildung*. In addition, with the work of William Stern, Aloys Fischer, and Gustav Deuchler, empirical research was gaining strength under the name of «pedagogical psychology». It was in this field that also women found careers. Charlotte Bühler,²⁷ Hildegard Hetzer,²⁸ and Rosa Katz²⁹ made names for themselves with their empirical research in university institutes. In the realm of the «geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik» this was possible for women almost only in the area of social pedagogy; the philosophical focus remained in men's domain.

It is also interesting to look at differences in the topics that were raised. Empirical questions were not predetermined on the basis of «moral philosophy» or norms; instead, the aim was to determine children's world of experience through unbiased observation and to

²⁶ The first seminaries for teacher education in Germany were founded at the end of the 18th century. Between 1820 and 1918 these seminaries were constantly enlarged and improved. The short period of Prussian Academies for Teacher Education (1926-1932) ended the long continuity of the seminars. Die national-socialist «College for Teacher Education» (1933-1945) were replaced by the so-called «Pädagogische Hochschulen» in the Federal Republic of Germany (1945-1970) and a fully integrated University teacher education in the Democratic Republic of Germany (1946-1989). The «Pädagogische Hochschulen» were integrated into the universities after 1970, with the exception of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg. After 1989 all new federal states took over the system of the two-phased teacher education which is unique compared to all other systems of teacher training.

²⁷ German jew Charlotte Bühler (born Malachowski) (1893-1974) was the first German female who finished a habilitation's work in Psychology at the Technical University of Dresden. In 1927 she received a professorship at the University of Vienna. She stayed in office until 1938. After her husband Karl Bühler (1879-1963) was sent to prison they left Austria first for Norway and then for England and finally for the United States. Charlotte Bühler taught Psychiatry in Los Angeles since 1945.

²⁸ Hildegard Hetzer (1899-1992) studied Psychology in Vienna. After finishing her Ph. D. she became research assistant at the Institute of Psychology under Karl and Charlotte Bühler. In 1931 received a call to the Academy of Teacher Education in Elbing (West Prussia) where she worked as Professor of Psychology and Social Education. She was discharged from office in 1934. After the war Hildegard Hetzer regained her professorship, first in 1947 at the Educational Institute in Weilburg (Hesse) and later at the University of Giessen.

²⁹ Ukrainian jew Rosa Katz (born Heine) (1885-1976) was born and raised in Odessa. From 1907 on she studied at the University of Göttingen where she finished her Ph.D. in Psychology in 1913. After the First World War she was one the key promoters of the Montessori-Pedagogy in Germany. In 1919 Dora Heine married David Katz (1884-1953), who was called to the University of Rostock in the same year as Professor of Psychology and Education. Rosa Kratz wrote an influential book on die «system of education of Maria Montessori» (Rostock 1925). After the coming into power of the Nazis Rosa and David Katz emigrated to England and later to Sweden. David Katz in 1937 became Professor for Psychology at the University of Stockholm.

represent it as precisely as possible. The reality of education was not determined categorically, as in neo-Kantianism (e.g. Hönigswald, 1913), but also not traced back to historical models, as in Herman Nohl's (2002, pp. 164-176) theory of the «educational relationship», which is still influential today. Instead, the observation of children's behavior and development was to be decisive, without following schematic models of natural development as, for example, is the case in the work of Maria Montessori.

Empirical child research in the mid 1920s investigated topics such as the following:

- pre-school children's abstract thinking abilities (Eljasch, 1927),
- the personality of little children (Köhler, 1926),
- fairy tales and children's imagination (Bühler, 1925),
- lying in children and adolescents (Baumgarten, 1926),
- the effects of spontaneous communities of children (Doroschenko, 1928),
- or the psychology and logic of conversations with children (Katz & Katz, 1928).

The Psychological Institute at the University of Vienna was a European center for this direction in research, which stood at the interface of psychology, education, and societal development (Benetka, 1995). School reform in Vienna was essentially supported by the Psychological Institute. Karl Bühler (1936), who directed the institute, contributed his own drafts of school reform, and many members of the institute, such as Paul Lazarsfeld or Ph.D. candidate Karl Popper,³⁰ were actively involved in the reform efforts. This was not characteristic of educational reform in Germany and its relationship with academic educational science.

4. Reform pedagogy in Germany

The German term «reform pedagogy» has been used commonly since the end of the nineteenth century. Initially referring to the pedagogy of reform-oriented teachers' seminaries and reformed schools, later (and in connection with this) it came to refer to the diverse reform movements before and after the First World War. This was a conglomerate of movements, which each grouped around a particular core issue that determined the program. The core issue became a slogan, thus producing a public signal.

A number of movements can be differentiated in this way:

- the «new schools» or rural boarding schools movement (Landerziehungsheime)
- the art education movement
- the movement of child centered education (Pädagogik vom Kinde aus)
- the «internal school reform» movement, in particular the «work school» movement
- the gymnastics and physical education movement
- personality pedagogy

All of these «movements» existed, under changing names and using varied terminology, and their origins, sponsors, and effects can all be demonstrated. The groups and authors named themselves, usually for reasons that only distantly had anything to do with cultural criticism (Kulturkritik). For example, the «art education movement» emerged from

³⁰ Karl Popper's formative years in Vienna and his educational experience are described in Hacothen (2000).

very different sources and motives, from criticism of the teaching of geometric drawing in the elementary schools to the discovery of creative power in children's drawings, but not from cultural criticism. «Personality pedagogy», the term being coined by German schoolteacher Ernst Linde in 1896, is not derived from nor is it related to cultural criticism. This is not to say that the concepts could not be easily loaded with cultural criticism meanings.

A great deal of publicity was devoted to the founding of «écoles nouvelles» (Demolins, 1898), which were known in Germany by the term «Landerziehungsheime» created by Hermann Lietz. Starting with the rural boarding schools in England, this was a European reform movement by private educational entrepreneurs that gained a great deal of publicity and had a retroactive effect on the public schools. Prior to the First World War, the schools were often based on concepts stemming from Herbart's theory of «educational teaching», which Wilhelm Rein had made known throughout Europe. The new schools were boarding schools with very different curricula than the *Gymnasium* or the lycée and with very high social pedagogical claims, which were tailored to the education of the elite (Grunder, 1910).

After 1918, the German variety of these schools shifted strongly in the direction of personality formation. Their focus was still on educating the societal elite, but «educational teaching», as the history of the *Odenwaldschule* shows, for example, was extended to include the experience of a personality-fostering learning environment (Näf, 2004). This concept was attractive to the intellectual elite, such as to writers like Thomas Mann, but not to the general body of teachers. In contrast to Peter Petersen's Jenaplan-Schule, the Odenwaldschule should not be seen as a general model of the school development, but as an individual project.

Other reform groups were more concerned with criticism of the state schools. These groups supported such things as new, intensified forms of the «work school» of the nineteenth century, new forms of experience learning (Hofer & Oelkers, 1998), or new methods of art education that emphasized free forms of artistic expression. There were also early attempts to reform instruction of the youngest pupils, with the aim to make school instruction more attuned to children's learning,³¹ but without connecting this to radical de-schooling theories. School reform of these types took on essentially local and regional forms of organization up to 1914, such as the groups and writing networks in the Lake Constance region, in the Hanseatic cities in Germany, and in the Saxon centers of civil school development, such as Dresden or Leipzig.

Authors writing on this «internal school reform,» such as Fritz Gansberg or Heinrich Scharrelmann, were widely received in the entire German-speaking realm. Their concepts of active, experience-based teaching of city children had a lasting influence on the development of public school reform in the Weimar era. The Weimar reforms were an attempt to modernize the school that found the support of the teachers' associations, and – after 1918 – the greater part of public administrators and the new teacher training. The key words were «Gesamtunterricht» (wholeness), «integrated teaching», «work school», learning in «projects» and «workshops», «scenic design» or «self-activity» in learning, communicated within concepts such as «The seeking teacher. The creating child».³²

³¹ Such as Göbelbecker's primer called *Lernlust* (desire to learn) that appeared in 1893. Ludwig Friedrich Göbelbecker (1862-1935) is an overlooked figure of South German primary school-reform movement who was influential with his school books and reading materials.

³² *Der suchende Lehrer, das schaffende Kind* (1925).

German reform pedagogy also included the concept of «*musische Bildung*», or cultural education, and the closely linked concept of «*integrated education*», which as early as the nineteenth century was a reaction against intellectualization of the public school. Before and after the First World War, new cultural forms of teaching emerged. These ranged from «*local history*» and history as a school subject to group singing. Cultural education was rooted in the Romantic ideas of unspoiled nature and genuineness that had been emphasized by the German Youth Movement. The main voices raised in favor of cultural education, such as Fritz Jöde, had been strongly influenced by their experiences in the Youth Movement. The «*traditional*» forms of cultural experience and fellowship retained the strong anti-institutional character of the Youth Movement and raised it to a reform pedagogical life principle.

The «*new education*» would hardly have gained the degree of public attention that it did had there not already existed the semantics of fundamental crisis. Existing constructions included the medical decadence of «*nervous*» modernity in addition to political-cultural decadence, and they were taken to signal the decline of civil society. From this arose diverse mixtures of an educational theory that aimed at creating «*new man*», and they had in mind a radical reorganization of culture and society. In the German-speaking countries, various, often conflicting «*life reform*» movements arose that can be seen as anti-bourgeois reactions to the crisis of «*modernity*» (Buchholz, Latocha, Peckmann & Wolbert, 2001) The «*new man*» presupposed new forms of life and, in line with this, «*natural education*» that was supposed to develop out of countercultures (Oelkers, 2005, ch. 5.3.).

These developments took place for the most part outside of academic educational science, which in Germany was not established as a discipline of system reform, but instead as a form of basic reflection that had to accord with the style and concerns of the philosophical faculties of the universities rather than teacher training or even countercultures. This in essence differentiates the German developments from developments in other countries, and the difference has persisted. Added to this is the resolute historicizing of all problems; to repeat this: the normative basis for problems was to be sought not in educational practice, but in history. Here a literary genre called the «*History of Education*» provided aid. It was developed out of German Romanticism and centered on epochs and «*great figures*» of education.

5. *Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik and Reform Pedagogy*

Under the framework of this genre, there were early attempts to view reform pedagogy as a unique and outstanding epoch in German education. The most persisting construction is from Herman Nohl, Professor for philosophy of education at the University of Göttingen, who described the period between 1890 and 1930 as a unity of *educational movements* that created an extensively new foundation for educational practice. Nohl (1933)³³ distinguishes movements for the education of the people (*Volksbildung*), individual educational reform movements, and school reform movements and approaches. Ultimately, according to Nohl, all of these together formed *one single* movement, which he inserts into a particular historiographic schema.

Nohl identifies a decisive forerunner epoch, namely, the «*German Movement*», the period between 1770 and 1830 that established a national culture not only of literature, but

³³ From this article emerged an influential book that was first published in 1935. The eleventh edition appeared in 2002.

also of education. And connected with this, Nohl identifies a negative period before reform pedagogy came into light i.e. the development of industrial society in the nineteenth century, in the wake of which, according to Nohl, the originally organic national and educational culture had become fragmented.³⁴ Industrial capitalism destroyed the sources of national education which German reform pedagogy regained at the end of 19th century. This became a fundamental dogma of educational historiography that was developed between 1920 and 1970 in the writings of the «Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik».³⁵

In the perspective of this historiography, reform pedagogy in Germany is seen to have developed in strict dependency on the cultural criticism of the end of the nineteenth century. *Cultural criticism* is supposed to have made *educational reform* seem necessary; educational reform could not have existed before this. Three names are almost always mentioned in connection with «Kulturkritik», as these thinkers are said to have been its main representatives: Paul de Lagarde, Julius Langbehn, and Friedrich Nietzsche. Paul Bötticher, who called himself De Lagarde, was a *Gymnasium* teacher and later orientalist at the University of Göttingen;³⁶ Julius Langbehn had a doctorate in art history and was a writer in Munich, Dresden, and Berlin.³⁷ The two have nothing in common, except for the fact that they published works within the same time period that were cited more or less often and contained, among other things, passages on school critique and educational reform. Friedrich Nietzsche cannot seriously be brought into connection with either Lagarde or Langbehn.

The historiography refers only to *German* figures, and «cultural criticism» is considered to be a national phenomenon at the end of the nineteenth century, despite the fact that theories on decadence were at a high point all across Europe, although - if we consider authors like Max Nordau, whose writings attacked contemporary European art, social and political behavior - they were not closely connected with educational movements. Nohl (1933, p. 305ff.) writes that Nietzsche, Lagarde, and Langbehn had articulated a consciousness of crisis, to which subsequently the educational movements were a response. Cultural criticism, says Nohl, was directed at culture as a whole (ibid., p. 305); accordingly, the educational movements had to be seen as a living unity (ibid., p. 307) and thus also seen as a whole. «Educational movements» are unions of activists, who come to be known both through their writings and their practice. They articulate, Nohl writes, «new education» *in the wake of and in the spirit of* «cultural criticism».

³⁴ The concept of the «German Movement» (Deutsche Bewegung) originated in Wilhelm Dilthey's inauguration lecture at the University of Basel in 1867.

³⁵ The idea of one unified movement of national educational reform was developed by Nohl in several articles between 1921 und 1926. See Nohl (1949), pp. 9-20, 21-27, 28-38.

³⁶ Paul de Lagarde (1827-1891) finished his Ph.D. in 1849 at the University of Berlin supervised by the famous orientalist (and German poet) Friedrich Rückert who retired shortly before Lagarde's dissertation work on Arabian chromatics (*Initia chronomatologiae arabicae*) was finished. Two years later Lagarde was habilitated at the University of Halle. From 1864 to 1866 he worked as gymnasium teacher and after a three years sabbatical he became successor of the orientalist Heinrich Ewald (1803-1875) at the University of Göttingen. For Lagarde's role in German conservatism see Favrat (1979).

³⁷ Julius Langbehn (1851-1907) studied Archaeology and History of Art. He received his Ph.D. in January 1880 at the University of Munich; his dissertation work was entitled *Griechische Flügelgestalten* (Forms of Wings in the Greek art). After finishing his studies he worked as archivist and curator in numerous, always temporary positions. From 1885 to 1892 Langbehn lived and worked in Dresden, where he wrote his famous - and notorious - book *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Rembrandt as Educator). The book, originally published in 1890, was an initial success and became one of the political best sellers in Wilhelmine Germany. The book was strongly anti-Semitic and anti-modern, it argued in favour of a total «völkisch» renewal of Germany.

Herman Nohl's second mentor, Rudolf Eucken³⁸ (winner of the 1908 Nobel Prize in Literature), had already in 1895 laid out his thesis of an inner emptiness and spiritual defencelessness in the face of «technological work» and mass production (Eucken, 1907, pp. 1-16). Eucken's book *Der Kampf um einen geistigen Lebensinhalt* (The Struggle for a Spiritual Content of Life), which contains a theory on character building, was probably a much more influential and lasting foundation for educational cultural criticism in Germany than the works of Lagarde or Langbehn. It is, at least, more typical with regard to the main line of argumentation which was basically a search for an «absolute and timeless truth» against historical relativism (ibid., p. 48/49). Eucken speaks of building a «secure realm of inwardness» against the merely external changes of the nineteenth century (ibid., p. 256). If a «pure inner world» is lacking, no true equality can arise and no program, no matter how democratic, can offer protection (ibid., p. 257).

At the end of the 19th century this criticism is neither new nor especially original; indeed, it was brought forward throughout the entire nineteenth century. From Friedrich Rückert³⁹ to Friedrich Fröbel, Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl,⁴⁰ Karl Christian Planck⁴¹ and Hugo Göring,⁴² many German authors can be found that viewed «Rationalism» and «scientific education» as national evils. And the reform pedagogy discourse strategies of «turning back» education were all widespread *before* Julius Langbehn published his best-selling *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Rembrandt as Educator). In this body of literature, experience and life were seen as standing in opposition to learning and school; the «irrational» was to be granted more

³⁸ After finishing his dissertation thesis *De Aristoteles dicendi ratione* in 1866, Rudolf Eucken (1846-1926) worked as gymnasium teacher between 1867 and 1871. In 1871 he was called as Professor of Philosophy and Education at the University of Basel, where he stayed for three years with Friedrich Nietzsche and Jacob Burckhardt as Faculty members. In 1874 Eucken changed for the University of Jena and developed his philosophy of «ideale Weltanschauung» (ideal world view) that was read internationally. In 1908 Rudolf Eucken received the Nobel Prize for Literature honouring his philosophical writings and his «new idealism» that was also called «creative avticism».

³⁹ Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) studied Law and later Philology. He finished his habilitation work *De idea philologiae* in 1811 at the University of Jena. He then temporarily worked as gymnasium teacher and became famous as a Poet with his *Deutsche Gedichte* (German Poems) that appeared in 1814. After travelling to Italy in 1817/1818 he met Austrian Orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774-1856) in Vienna. Rückert became interested in oriental languages and cultures which he studied intensively. He was called to the University of Erlangen in 1826 and later taught at the University of Berlin which he left in 1848. Rückert's poetical work combines Romanticism, patriotism and child-centeredness. See for a general assessment of German orientalisms and their intellectual influence in 19th century academia Kontje (2004).

⁴⁰ Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823-1897) studied Protestant Theology but never served as priest. He worked as a journalist for several newspapers in Southern Germany. After the revolution of 1848 Riehl became one of leading conservatives in Germany. His books on *Naturgeschichte des Deutschen Volkes* (Natural History of the German People) (1851sq.) includes all the anti-modern motives that later constitutes political Reform Pedagogy in Germany. In 1854 Bavarian King Maximilian II. called Riehl to Munich where he made a steep career in several offices. In 1859 Riehl became Ordinarius for History of Art and Statistics at the University of Munich.

⁴¹ Karl Christian Planck (1819-1880) studied Theology and Philosophy at the University of Tübingen. 1848 he finished his habilitation work in Philosophy and worked as librarian. He then studied Classical Philology and became gymnasium teacher in the city of Ulm. In 1869 Planck was called as Professor at the Theological Seminary in Blaubeuren and shortly before his death he became Ephorus (superintendent) of the Seminary in Maulbronn. His friend Karl Reinhold Köstlin (1819-1894), professor of German Literature at the University of Tübingen, edited Planck's main work *Das Testament eines Deutschen* (A German's testament) (1881). This work includes a political theory of «pädagogische Gemeinschaft» (educational community) that was read for example by Hermann Lietz, founder of the German «Landerziehungsheime». Most of the German Reform Pedagogues opted for similar theories.

⁴² Hugo Göring (geb. 1849) studied in Jena and Berlin. He was teacher for German at the «Oberrealschule» in Basel since 1878. Göring took his habilitation degree at the University of Basel in 1880 with a study on 18th century German educational reformer Johann Bernhard Basedow. In 1882 Göring left his teaching office in Basel and became one the most profiled educational reformers in Germany before the turn of the century.

forceful validity in education; the aims were directed to nation and community; «abstract» science was viewed as only inimical to the soul; etc.

Criticism of the school and education, then, had no need for an impetus like Nietzsche's critique of educational institutions,⁴³ as Nohl's historiography would have it. The dozen of arguments that Nietzsche makes had been put forward many times, especially among German *Gymnasium* teachers. This type of criticism of the school was in existence long before anyone sought a historical reference point in Nietzsche, Langbehn, or Lagarde. Similarly, in 1867 the then famous Prussian writer and essayist Bugomil Goltz⁴⁴ had taken as given the idea that scholarly education can result in alienation – this argument was so pervasive that it is not ascribable to any particular author. Friedrich Nietzsche would merely pick up on it and buttress it intellectually.

Goltz criticized the «affected/artificial ambition» of the *Gymnasium* to provide «transparent, objective education», the «hollow phrases» of educational discourses, and the «urban educational phantoms» (Goltz, 1967, Vol. I/pp. 45 sq.) He denounced the «machinery of the law» (ibid., p. 50) and saw the «cultural advances» of the nineteenth century as a threat to the human soul and, with that, to human genius (ibid., p. 60 sq.). The modern school, like modern business life, «tyrannized the spirit» (ibid., p. 64). The rush of progress had produced «cultural tuberculosis», and these modern «social and cultural processes» contained «corruption» within (ibid., p. 65).

German reform pedagogy, built on this ground, would assume dialectics of origin and decline, at the end of which sustainable renovation is created. Nohl (2002, pp. 10 sq.) claimed that three utterly new factors had triggered «massive» change of the system of education and *Bildung* «since the 1880s»: the autonomy of education, the «totally new widening of its field of work», and the unity of all approaches in the «educational idea». The most fundamental assumption is that of the *autonomy* of education. At the end of Nohl's representation of the educational movements stand the «eternal truths of the autonomic educational being» (ibid., p. 130) and the resulting difference between worldview and education. This allows what actually can be stated about reform pedagogy in Germany, i.e. *dogmatics*, in Nohl's words:

«The healthy dogma of the educator begins with radical trust in the law of his life's work.» (ibid.)

Nohl presents an exemplary epoch, or in other words, something more than simply the history of groups and reform happenings. Reform pedagogy appears as a concerted ensemble of educational movements, which - with all their programmatic or practical differences - agree on the *idea* and, in this sense, form a platonic unity. This is the construction that dominates the historiography that goes back to Nohl: leading from cultural criticism, between 1890 and 1930 a specific constellation of German reform pedagogy forms. It had never and nowhere

⁴³ Nietzsche's lectures at the University of Basel entitled *Über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* (On the Future of our Institutions of Higher Education) were given between January and March 1872. The lectures have not been published during Nietzsche's lifetimes. They appeared for the first time in 1913 in volume XIX of the second edition of the «Grossoktavausgabe» of Nietzsche's works. Nietzsche's main arguments against the decline of education have to be seen before the background of the German discourse on Higher Education in 19th century (Oelkers, 2005a).

⁴⁴ Bugomil Goltz (1801-1870) studied Theology and Philosophy at the University of Breslau. Because of family problems he never finished his studies. He was forced to sell his family's properties and lived unknown in a small town in Silesia. He was 46 years old when he started writing and became soon well known in the German speaking world. One of his books is a romantic theory of childhood (*Book of Childhood/Buch der Kindheit*, 1847).

appeared before; it is original; and it triggered the far-reaching innovations. It is in the educational movements that what Wilhelm Flitner (1928) called the «nearly ... closed whole» of reform pedagogy appears. This whole is viewed as a unity in its idea, which eclipses any differences among the movements.

Reform pedagogy as the outcome of the «German movement» is, of course, purely a construction. The historical difference between the era of Goethe and the turn of the twentieth century is much too large to allow the tracking of a uniform dynamic by means of relatively simply analogies. There is another effect here that is all too obvious: ennoblement through historiography.⁴⁵ The many scattered attempts at school and life reform, which can either be located in the area of «lower» education or were anti-bourgeois in outlook, now suddenly represent an outstanding epoch of the national history of education. With this, protest becomes achievement, and unrelated projects of often doubtful quality are now a national movement of paradigmatic character.

According to Nohl (2002, p. 129) each single innovation in education becomes complete through integration, through becoming embedded into the «cultural whole,» and this seemed to be the case with the reform pedagogy movements at the end of the 1920s. In a similar sense, Wilhelm Flitner described *phases* of the epoch of reform pedagogy, with the aim to distinguish the start, development, and culmination of a process. At the start of the epoch, he placed the «individual reforms», such as art education, work school, and the rural boarding schools, followed by programs, which aimed towards the «total» reform of the educational system and in this respect were «Utopian» in character. At the end of the epoch, Flitner (1928, p. 245) placed criticism and the transfer of reform into theory, or more precisely, into «educational science as Geisteswissenschaft», whose task it is to think the «whole» of the situation of education.⁴⁶ Since an empirical and pragmatic science of education cannot possibly make such a claim, it can perhaps be said truly that this indeed is a strange case.

⁴⁵ This strategy of ennoblement is not a German speciality. It was and still is common practice in educational theory to construct forerunners to justify lines of modernization (Oelkers 2002).

⁴⁶ «Das Ganze der erzieherischen Situation» in German original. What is called «the situation of education» is not meant empirically. Education is not a flow of situations, but has «its» situation.

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