

Democracy and the Two Dogmas of Education^{*)}

The task facing the philosophy of education is the deliberation of conceptual problems in which any analysis has to repeatedly take the history of pedagogical concepts into consideration. In the 19th and 20th centuries two variations of education have been predominately debated, if not exactly developed, and they are regarded as irreconcilable. I call them the *conservative* and the *liberal* dogmas. One is based on the classical study of European High Culture and the other on the history of elementary education. Both dogmas are similarly fundamental in the area of education philosophy to QUINES' *Two Dogmas of Empiricism* for science philosophy.¹ In this paper I shall discuss both variations in their modern contexts of development and analyse them against the background of the theory of democratic education. The central question will be whether there is a position beyond this dualism or whether one can only ever stand on one side or the other, if the philosophy of education is considered with a political understanding. I will not refer here to German pedagogics because although both dogmas exist here there is however no association with the theory of democracy.

1. Democracy and Education: An American Discourse of the 19th Century

Since around the mid-19th Century, the democratic reform of education has become a subject of American public opinion. In 1850 EDWARD MANSFIELD used the term *American Education*,² which referred to the idea of the republic and not to classical education and was based on three principles, the American constitution, the natural sciences and the modern civilisation plus the idea of Christendom as specified in the bible. (MANSFIELD 1850, p. 62).³ This is expressed as follows:

"If America has presented anything new to the world, it is a new form of society; if she has any thing worthy to preserve, it is the principles upon which that society is instituted; hence it is not a Grecian or a Roman education we need - it is not one conceived in China, Persia, or France. On the contrary, it must have all the characteristics of the American mind, fresh, original, vigorous, enterprising; embarrassed by no artificial barriers, and looking to a final conquest over the last obstacles to the progress of human improvement"
(*ibid.*, S. 60).

^{*)} Lecture given for the Korean Society for the Study of Education (KSSE) - International Conference Celebrating Its 50th Anniversary November 12, 2003 Seoul, Korea.

¹ WILLARD VAN ORMAN QUINE: *Two Dogmas of Empiricism*, *Philosophical Review* (January 1951).

² Die zweite Auflage erschien 1877. EDWARD DEERING MANSFIELD (1801-1888) war unter anderem Autor der *Political Grammar of the United States* (New York: Harper & Brothers 1834).

³ Die *American Education* wurde im Januar 1851 in dem *American Whig Review* so rezensiert: "The subject and purpose of this book should comment it to a universal attention. A system of education truly adopted to this country, politically and morally, is *the* great desideration. All contributions to a thorough discussion of the subject should be eagerly welcomed and universally considered" (The American Whig Review 1851, S. 96).

Similar considerations can be found in countless treatises which appeared in the decade prior to the American Civil War. Demands were made for an education not just for the elite but for the whole population which became known as *popular education* (MAYHEW 1850)⁴ and which included the vanquishing of the current education system with its undemocratic procedural operations (ANDREWS 1853) and a *revival of education* based on the material and curricular condition of schools. (MAY 1855)

This was accompanied with the conceptual avoidance of European High Culture and its classical education. HORACE MANN stated in his inaugural speech to Antioch College in 1854,⁵ that Latin and Greek are subtleties or diversions from the practicalities of life and cause those learning to become incapable of taking action. (Dedication of Antioch College 1854, S. 39f.) The teachings of the "ancients" are only useful if they are understood against a background of the progress of the present (ibid., S. 58). They are *not* the foundation of a democratic general education, which HORACE MANN in his capacity as the first secretary to the *State Board of Education* in Massachusetts from 1837 had decisively and impeccably promoted to and for the United States.⁶

The change in American education was accelerated by the Universities and was subject to public discussion. It was therefore not decreed by law and state-run as was the case in Prussia and France. The contemporary objections against the development of a state, free of charge general education provision were always objections against the power of the state, associated with the refusal to pay tax for the education of foreign children. As a result the establishment of education for all refers to the public good but always from a subsidiary point of view. (SEARS 1875, p. 6). Moreover, the economic benefits of public schooling - and not the educational benefits - had to be placed at the heart of things. HORACE MANN presented the argument in 1841 showing how economic prosperity can grow assisted by an educated population and this argument has underpinned the whole discussion ever since.⁷

A state education for all, based on the objectives of a *civil society* was justified in 1854 by FRANCIS WAYLAND,⁸ the long-serving President of Brown University. According to WAYLAND, the huge progresses being made in industry, the increase and unequal distribution of society's prosperity, the increased mobility and the facilitation of social interaction suggested that a public form of communication had to be attained by everyone for everyone would be affected, directly or indirectly by all these developments.

⁴ Um 1867 neu gedruckt unter dem Titel *The Means and Ends of Universal Education* (MAYHEW 1867).

⁵ Das *Antioch College* in Yellow Springs, Ohio wurde 1852 von der Christian Church gegründet und ein Jahr später eröffnet. HORACE MANN wurde sein erster Präsident. Er setzte sowohl eine koedukative als auch eine sektenfreie Ausbildung durch.

⁶ HORACE MANN (1796-1859) wurde 1816 als Autodidakt in die sophomore class der Brown University aufgenommen und studierte anschließend Jura. 1823 eröffnete er seine erste Kanzlei, von 1827 bis 1832 war er in der Verwaltung von Massachusetts tätig, danach ging er nach Boston und engagierte sich in Unitarier-Kreisen. Nach drei Jahren im Senat des Staates Massachusetts wurde MANN 1837 auf den neu gegründeten Posten des Sekretärs des *Massachusetts Board of Education* gewählt, den er bis 1848 inne hatte. MANN gründete in dieser Stellung 1839 die erste Public Normal School in den Vereinigten Staaten (in Lexington), entwickelte das System der High School, sicherte den Schulbesuch mit einem gesetzlichen Halbjahresminimum und entwickelte die Lehrerbildung. Das Board hatte keinerlei Macht, durchgesetzt wurden diese Reformen allein durch die Beeinflussung der öffentlichen Meinung. Kontrovers war vor allem die Idee eines nicht von den christlichen Sekten her bestimmten Religionsunterrichts.

⁷ Fifth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education (1841).

⁸ FRANCIS WAYLAND (1796-1865) war von 1827 bis 1850 Präsident der Brown University.

”Thus the public mind is ever wakeful. Every man is continually forming judgements, true or false, but yet judgements. Not only concerning the events of his own town or village, but events that are occurring throughout the Republic and the world”
(WAYLAND 1855, p. 18).

The solution to these problems of the industrialised world is not rigid social inclusion, but mobility and education. Civil society needs educated citizens who can participate in public businesses. The Northern states of America carried out the necessary development work, stated WAYLAND seven years before the secession.

”They established a civil society on the foundation of equal rights. They well know that equal rights could only be secured on the basis of intelligence and virtue. Here, then, they laid the corner stone of their social edifice. They determined that every citizen should be instructed in good learning, and be provided with the means of religious instruction. They were well persuaded that a people nurtured under such auspices could never be either slaves or oppressors; for he who is intelligent and just, must love liberty, as well for his neighbour as for himself. Their first care was, therefore, the establishment of schools for the whole country”
(ibid., S. 19).

After the civil war in 1869, CHARLES ELIOT created the slogan of ”new education”.⁹ This aimed to describe a reform of higher education in the United States with a more practical approach more oriented towards natural sciences, modern languages and political economy.¹⁰ In his capacity as the long-standing President of Harvard University, Eliot had a concept of education in his mind that was to break away from the European interpretation of "sophistication" or "self-education" and place social usefulness and efficiency at its heart. (ELIOT 1903).

The educational situation was also criticised at that time:

”The history of education is full of still-born theories; the literature of the subject is largely made up of theorizing; whoever reads it much will turn with infinite relief to the lessons of experience”
(ELIOT 1869, p. 204).

With such a speculative science it was impossible to see how a democratic education could be developed. MANSFIELD (1850, p. 62) had already made this point, saying that metaphysics did not fit into modern education unless it were to become a science and therefore a controlled experience.

The progresses of this development were accurately recorded. (WHITE 1874). The *Government Printing Office* in Washington published a report in 1874 on the status of state education directly associating it with the progress in prosperity and social culture. (A Statement 1874, p. 11/12). Industrial development, the distribution of wealth and the productivity of corporate employment demanded the training of the intelligence of the whole nation and not only the elite. The report was compiled for the Education Office of the Department of the Interior by DUANE DOTY and WILLIAM TORREY HARRIS, one a

⁹ In: *Atlantic Monthly* (February, March 1869).

¹⁰ Ausführlich dargelegt in: What is a Liberal Education? (*The Century*, June 1884) (ELIOT 1909a, S. 87-122).

Superintendent of State Schooling in Detroit and the other in St. Louis. The key sentences of this influential report were as follows:

”The modern industrial community cannot exist without free popular education carried out in a system of schools ascending from the primary grade to the university. And without a free development of productive industry, enabling the individual to accumulate the wealth necessary for the supply of necessities of life faster than he consumes them, there is not left the leisure requisite to that cultivation of intelligence needed in the theoretical discussion and comprehension of public affairs; and without such occupation of the individual with public affairs, a democracy could exist only in name”
(ibid., p. 12).

The proposal from the *Department of the Interior* supported many aspects of this development, even if the distribution and emphasis of the real curriculum remained contested. However, observations of European developments led to a higher emphasis being placed on technical education than on the classical humanities which resulted in a marginalisation of classical languages. (STETSON 1874). In general the emphasis shifted from the question of the curriculum to the methods deployed (ABBOTT 1871 or KIDDLE/HARRISON/CALKINS 1877), a process which was also observed in the development of the elementary schools in German-speaking countries and which indicated the shift from an education of the elite to a qualitative education for all. The drill-methods then deployed in elementary education were questionable and were to be replaced by what was described in 1877 as the procedure for intelligent problem solving. (BECKER 1877, p. 37contd.)

The "new education" developed along these lines with the priority being given to pragmatic learning objectives, concentration on the methods and the quest for public acceptance with the condition being that a democratic general education was provided for all children free of charge. The investments were justified through the ensuing benefits to society and pure education was no longer a theme for the reformers. The central purpose was the development of democracy through state-provided education. It was therefore a functional view which ran counter to European sophistication, which seemed to be nothing more than a perpetuation of feudal ways of governing society. This is correct in so far as the subject of democracy has never been as central a theme in any European education system as it has been in the American one since the Civil War.

The first large synopsis and lexicalisation of American education including the "new education"¹¹ was published by PAUL MONROES¹² in his five-volume *Cyclopedia of Education*, between 1911 and 1914.¹³ MONROES *Cyclopedia* was also the first educational encyclopædia which took up the slogan "Democracy and Education." The creator of this slogan was JOHN

¹¹ T Die öffentliche Kampagne für *New Education* wird mit dem "Committee of Ten" zusammen gebracht, das die Schulreform nachhaltig beeinflusste und dem ELIOT vorstand (CREMIN 1961, S.92ff . Zwischen 1890 und 1914 wurde aus "New Education" ein viel zitiertes Schlagwort, das auch unabhängig von ELIOT oder DEWEYS Interpretationen Verwendung fand. Das zeigt sich etwa in der aufwändigen Dokumentation des Bildungssystems der Vereinigten Staaten für die Weltausstellung 1900 in Paris (BUTLER 1899).

¹² PAUL MONROE (1869-1947) schloss sein Studium 1897 mit einem Ph.D. an der University of Chicago ab. 1902 wurde er *Professor of Education* am *Teachers College der Columbia University*. Er blieb in diesem Amt bis zu seiner Emeritierung 1938. MONROE war von 1915 bis 1923 Direktor der *School of Education* am *Teachers College*, nach 1923 leitete er dort das *International Institute*; in beiden Funktionen sorgte MONROE für die Ausbreitung der amerikanischen "new education".

¹³ *A Cyclopedia of Education*. Vol. 1-5 (1911-1914). Vgl. BRICKMAN/CORDASCO (1970).

DEWEY, who summarised the American debate since the middle of the century. According to him, democracy and education are linked in two ways:

- On the one hand democracy requires educated citizens, both male and female, in order to be able to perpetuate itself.
- On the other hand democratic ideals influence education itself, in particular the creation and running of the state schools (DEWEY 1985, p. 417/418).

The pre-requisite for this is the respect for individuality and thereby the vanquishing of feudal authority in the process of differentiation in society.

”Democracy inevitably carries with it increased respect for the individual as individual, greater opportunity for freedom, independence and initiative in conduct and thought, and correspondingly increased demand for fraternal regard and for self-imposed and voluntarily borne responsibilities”
(ibid., p. 418).

DEWEY wrote many contributions for MONROE'S *Cyclopedia*, in which he frequently referred to CHARLES ELIOT, who had pioneered the central themes of the "new education". They aimed to identify the differences in the American education system from the English and Continental European systems, with the former being more associated with educational freedom, the more pronounced personalisation of teaching and above all, as already mentioned, the function of education within a democratic society.¹⁴ ELIOT is also one of the authorities for DEWEY'S famous formula, according to which education is to be viewed as the continuous reconstruction of experience. (ibid., p. 431).¹⁵ Therefore, education is neither limited nor specifiable but merely an endless process of intelligent adaptation to every new situation of life provided that this education has a democratic constitution and that everybody has the opportunity to participate in it.

2. Consequences of the "New Education"

This *shift* of the theory had consequences. Individuality was no longer, as in the European tradition of sophistication, the "internal" world juxtaposed to "external" society. The very dualism of the individual and society was thrown into question. Society is not a "thing" as far as the individual is concerned, but a complex interaction between individuals and groups. All social institutions or procedures are *solutions to problems*, which can be modified in the light of new problems and new solutions. Therefore it would become impossible to relate education to a permanent cultivation of the internal. This is an important starting point for the pragmatic theory of education. It relates to social interaction and also therefore to democracy, which for its formation cannot and must not claim any unrequested authority.

ELIOT had criticised the large gulf between educational cultivation and the benefits for society. Society is the natural setting for all educational matters (ELIOT 1909, p. 39) and that requires a modification of the concept, namely an end to the historical nature of education

¹⁴ *Liberty in Education* (Speech before the Nineteenth Century Club of New York 1886); *Undesirable and Desirable Uniformity in Schools* (Address given to the National Educational Association, Saratoga, July 12, 1892); *The Function of Education in Democratic Society* (An Address delivered before the Brooklyn Institute on October 2, 1897) (ELIOT 1909a, S. 123-148; 271-300; 399-418).

¹⁵ Artikel "Education" im ersten Band von MONROES *Cyclopedia* (DEWEY 1985, S. 425-434).

with its the search for past values, and a determined reference to modern languages, the specialisation of education¹⁶ and finally to the stimulus of innovative problem solving or "constructive imagination" (ibid., p. 40 contd., 45).¹⁷ ELIOT continued that it followed therefore that the individual activities and the individuality of the school pupils had to be addressed.¹⁸ "In school and college alike the really effective teaching ... is what is addressed to each individual pupil" (ELIOT 1909a, p. 318). Instruction, wrote DEWEY in 1900, must not simply preserve knowledge and act as if there were neither doubts and difficulties nor any need for any further thought (DEWEY 1916, p. 189 contd.).

In January 1896 under the leadership of ALICE and JOHN DEWEY, the *University Elementary School* was opened at the newly founded University of Chicago. The school was also called the *Laboratory School* in order highlight its focus on individual activities and investigative, discovering ways of learning. Two years previously in his essay entitled *The Unity of Educational Reform*, ELIOT made prominent usage of the phrase "laboratory method"¹⁹ in connection with a natural-science based teaching system, even though he did not invent this term himself.

"The old-fashioned method of teaching science by means of illustrated books and demonstrative lectures has been superseded, from the kindergarten through the university, by the laboratory method, in which each pupil, no matter whether he has been three years old or twenty-three, works with his own hands, and is taught to use his own senses"
(ELIOT 1909a, p. 318/319).

ELIOT had also explained that the objective of all education should be its effective relation to actions not the storing up of knowledge or an expectant sophistication which had no relevance to practical life.²⁰ This would require far-reaching modifications to the curricula and instruction methods which constitute what became known as "new education" and subsequently also "progressive education". DEWEY developed a proposal for this in the article about the structuring and running of study courses for MONROES *Cyclopedia*.²¹ According to DEWEY, the construction of the curricula²² had to overcome three main problems:

- the significance of subject-matter in general

¹⁶ "Culture ... can no longer imply a knowledge of everything - not even a little knowledge of everything. It must be content with general knowledge of some things, and a real mastery of some small portions of the human store" (ELIOT 1909, S. 45).

¹⁷ "Constructive imagination is the great power of the poet as well as of the artist; and the nineteenth century has convinced us that it is also the great power of the man of science, the investigator, and the natural philosopher. What gives every great naturalist or physicist his epoch-making results is precisely the imaginative power by which he deduces from masses of facts the guiding hypotheses or principles" (ELIOT 1909, S. 48f.).

¹⁸ CHARLES WILLIAM ELIOT: *The Unity of Educational Reform*. In: Educational Reform (October, 1894). (ELIOT 1909a, S. 313-339).

¹⁹ DEWEY definierte "laboratory" 1900 in dem Aufsatz *Some Stages of Logical Thought* wie folgt: "In the laboratory there is no question of proving that things are just thus and so, or that we must accept or reject a give statement; there is simply an interest in finding out what sort of things we are dealing with. Any quality or change that presents itself may be on object of investigation, or may suggest a conclusion; for it is to be judged, not be reference to pre-existent truths, but by its suggestiveness, by what it may lead to. The mind is open to inquiry in any direction" (DEWEY 1916, S. 208).

²⁰ "Effective power in action is the true end of education. Rather than the storing up of information, or the cultivation of faculties which are mainly receptive, discriminating, or critical" (ELIOT 1909a, S. 323).

²¹ Artikel *Theory of Course of Study* (DEWEY 1985, S. 395-404).

²² Gesagt im Anschluss an *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902) (DEWEY 2002, S. 83-100).

- its relation to experience
- its classification (ibid., p. 396)

The content of the instruction had to prove its importance and therefore was not to be based only on great books or on the traditions of the canons but also had to establish a connection with the pupils' experience and be based on a convincing classification not easily depicted by the traditional syllabus. Teaching aids and syllabuses, the tools of instruction and therefore of learning, must not exist independently and should remain linked to their experiential context. They are *social* products and not exclusive media of schools or any educational tradition.

On the other hand, children are not just open books who learn what the schools offer them without making their own experiences.

”The experience of pupils is already more or less socialized. It has been built up through suggestions and interpretations derived from the social groups of which the child is already a member. It is already saturated with social values that are akin to these presented in the studies of the curriculum” (ibid., p. 400)

The understanding of the socialised child, that the school does not treat as a ”*tabula rasa*”²³ refers mainly to CHARLES COOLEY'S (1902, 1909)²⁴ theory of the "primary group" which was later further developed by WILLIAM THOMAS and others. All groups or social relationships are "primary groups" in which and with which the small child gains his/her first basic experiences. The world-view of the adult is subsequently built upon these first, close-at-hand experiences. Therefore the child does not learn this at school but is already attuned to his/her social environments from the very beginning. School education is not a qualitative leap and it can only then be really successful if it taps into the primary experiences. COOLEY also further developed the idea of ”social self” which should bridge the Cartesian chasm between the internal and external worlds. Children should not be attuned, as claimed by ROUSSEAU, *first* to nature and *then* to society, for they are *already* actively learning about "society" and this is how they understand primary social relationships. Therefore they also learn about democracy in their primary culture.

But is the new education really better than the old one? Or is it a question, as suspected by DIANE RAVITCH (2000), of educational reform propaganda which is not determined by the practice of education but only by the convictions of its activists? To answer this question - principle or practice? - DEWEY himself wrote a criterion:

”All principles by themselves are abstract”, he wrote in *Experience and Education*.
 ”They become concrete only in the consequences which result from their application”
 (DEWEY 1991, p. 7).

²³ ”The *tabula rasa* doctrine of perception” spielt bei der Entwicklung der pragmatistischen Erziehungstheorie eine zentrale Rolle. GEORGE HERBERT MEAD (1938, S. 135) ersetzt diese sensualistische Doktrin durch eine Theorie der symbolischen Sozialisation (OELKERS 2003).

²⁴ CHARLES HORTON COOLEY (1864-1929) studierte an der University of Michigan und machte dort 1897 seinen Ph.D. Von 1893/1894 sind *notebooks* erhalten, die Vorlesungen von JOHN DEWEY aufzeichnen. DEWEY war im Juni 1886 zunächst als Assistenzprofessor für Philosophie an die University of Michigan berufen worden. COOLEY lehrte seit 1892 im Department of Sociology der University of Michigan.

The principles of educational reform, as they had been discussed since the mid-19th century, were very fundamental, far-reaching and very abstract. Anyone who wants to understand them correctly cannot start from a position of an "Either/Or Philosophy", therefore being on one side or the other. Everything depends on how these principles are interpreted in the *practice* of education, in schools, families and other social environments. It must be discovered how these aspects *tangibly* determine the experience - or not and the "new" education is not simply the better one due to its self-assertions. It has to prove itself and also through its results. (ibid.).

I call this the "DEWEY-Criterion". This should apply unconditionally, but can it actually be used? What happens when one takes the "new education" literally and examines what it means in practicality and what the consequences of it are. Are the activists ready to be corrected by experience or will they defend their principles *against* the empirical evidence? These questions are just as fundamental for the philosophy of education as they are for the development of an education system for they refer to the basic opposition to the theory and the associated political background. They also demonstrate the capability of the system to learn which is synonymous with the capability to correct errors.

Fundamental educational convictions are of course not simple errors for they cannot be wiped out and they also do not disappear. Even today the educational camps are still characterised by the divide between the "progressives" and the "conservatives" and this is not only the case in the United States. This can still be traced back to the opposing views of "High Culture" and egalitarian education and the subject has never really been discussed in a new way. In my third section I will describe how the problem of classical education returned - and not by chance was it at the time of the largest power in American educational reform - namely its participation in the *New Deal* in the 1930s.

3. The Return of Classical Education

Experience and Education appeared 1938.²⁵ At the end of 1936 DEWEY had argued with a provocative book written by the President of the *University of Chicago*, ROBERT MAYNARD HUTCHINS,²⁶ in which the *progressive education*, which was and is still ascribed to DEWEY,²⁷ was attacked in the most violent way. The central view of HUTCHINS' *The Higher Learning in America* (1936) stated the opposite opinion to the programme of the American educational reform. HUTCHINS again justified what is called *liberal education* in the Anglo-

²⁵ JOHN DEWEY: *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan Co. 1938) (DEWEY 1991, S. 1-62; DEWEY 2002, S. 227-281).

²⁶ ROBERT MAYNARD HUTCHINS (1899-1977), Absolvent der *Yale-University*, lehrte von 1925 an zwei Jahre an der Yale Law School, bevor er dort Dekan wurde. 1929 wurde er der fünfte Präsident der *University of Chicago*, eine Position, die er bis 1945 innehatte. Von 1945 bis 1949 war er Kanzler (chancellor) der *University of Chicago*. Von 1943 bis 1974 war HUTCHINS Chairman of the Board der *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 1954 wurde er Präsident des *Fund for the Republic*, von 1969 war HUTCHINS Chairman of the Board des *Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions* in Santa Barbara/Calif. HUTCHINS war ein rigoroser Verfechter der akademischen Freiheit, in den fünfziger Jahren verweigerte er den Loyalitätseid der Fakultäten.

²⁷ JOHN DEWEY: *Rationality in Education*. In: *The Social Frontier* Vol. III, No. 21 (December 1936), S. 71-73. JOHN DEWEY: *President Hutchins' Proposals to Remake Higher Education*. In: *The Social Frontier* Vol. III, No. 22 (January 1937), S. 103/104. ROBERT MAYNARD HUTCHINS: *Grammar, Rhetoric, and Mr. Dewey*. In: *The Social Frontier* Vol. III, No. 23 (February 1937), S. 137-139. JOHN DEWEY: *Was President Hutchins Serious?* In: *The Social Frontier* Vol. III, No. 24 (March 1937), S. 167-169.

Saxon world, namely an education liberated from practical relevance.²⁸ According to HUTCHINS what is fundamental is not the relationship of learning to actions, and thereby the testing of abstracts in experience, but the canons of a higher education, which would be handed down in an obligatory set of great books. Central to this therefore is reading and not method.

Unlike the way DEWEY had presented it, education could be not be grasped either instrumentally or functionally, but the educational process had to be conditioned much more by the cultural tradition in which every pupil had to align himself/herself to. Therefore it was not democracy that underlined it but the education itself. According to HUTCHINS, there was a false educational idea of democracy underlying the progressive camp that could lead to anything:

”According to this notion a student may stay in public education as long as he likes, may study what he likes, and may claim any degree whose alphabetical arrangements appeals to him. According to this notion education should be immediately responsive to public opinion; its subject matter and methods may be regulated in great detail by the community, by its representatives, or even by its more irresponsible members” (HUTCHINS 1936, p. 13/14).

The opposite of this is described with the idea of *liberal education*. In March 1937 HUTCHINS rewrote the objective of such an education to be ”intellectual discipline”, which should be differentiated from the educational reform objective of "development of the personality".²⁹ Education must be disciplined in view of the levels demanded and this is only possible with an obligatory intellectual delivery mechanism about which subjective decisions cannot be made and are not a matter of choice. This is the only way in which the personality of the student can develop in a challenging way. Therefore there must be no practical reference in this higher learning. Every day experience and intellectual education were the divided entities of greatness. Therefore one could not use experience and the practical consequences thereof as a measurement benchmark of education. In this sense it had to be self-sufficient.

As a result the organisation for higher education demanded the abandonment of the principle of usefulness which was formulated by HUTCHINS as follows:

”This is the position of the higher learning in America. The universities are dependent on the people. The people love money and think that education is a way of getting it. They think too that democracy means that every child should be permitted to acquire the educational insignia that will be helpful in making money. They do not believe in the cultivation of the intellect for its own sake” (ibid., p. 31).

One could read this passage as a critique of the theory of human capital *before* this actually existed. Education is a purpose in itself and cannot be functionally understood either in a political or in an economical sense. There is more at stake here than mere conservatism.

²⁸ Nach MILL war von *liberal education* immer weniger die Rede. Amerikanische Autoren wie G.F. BECKER (1877, S. 29) sprechen von "a thorough liberal and professional education", aber drücken damit eher eine Verlegenheit aus.

²⁹ Diskussion mit WILLIAM A. NEILSON (Präsident des Smith College) am 7. März 1937 im the *New York Times Magazine* (S. 1-2, 25). Die Metapher der "Disziplin des Geistes" ist allerdings nicht neu (siehe etwa YOUMANS 1867).

The first big debate about *liberal education* as an academic alternative to the educational reform lasted until after the Second World War and was publicly conducted by authors such as JACQUES MARITAIN (1943),³⁰ C. S. LEWIS (1947)³¹ and JACQUES BARZUN (1945)³². All these authors reject the philosophy and pedagogics of pragmatism and here lies the intellectual dividing line behind the argument about the correct education.

One of the main authors who did create a great deal of controversy was the philosopher MORTIMER ADLER,³³ who died in 2001. In 1940 in *Harper's Magazine*, ADLER established a connection between the decline in education and the crisis in culture to which the rise of fascism could be attributed. He saw the blame for this in the basic pedagogical decisions of the 19th century, namely the predominance of empirical sciences and more precisely the spirit of these sciences in American College and University education. According to ADLER, the average college student learned four principles during his education, namely:

- The only valid knowledge is that gained from experimental and empirical research
- Questions which *cannot* be answered through natural science or social science research are unfounded and worthless
- The scientific method is the *only* way to solve problems
- The analysis of social phenomena can only be scientific if they take place in an objective environment
(ADLER 1940).

As a result of this, philosophy has been reduced to a mere commentary on scientific discoveries and an ethic on a type of psychoanalysis which does not evaluate but qualifies. The reasons for the change are deemed to be the attitudes of progressive education which have ensured a "deweyisation" of the country's state education system. DEWEY's name represents the scientification of education which is synonymous with the dissolution of obligatory standards and *good habits* since science should be conducted objectively. Since

³⁰ *Education at the Crossroads* (1943) geht zurück auf die *Terry Lectures*, die JACQUES MARITAIN 1943 an der Yale University gehalten hat. MARITAIN war Ende 1939 in die Vereinigten Staaten übergesiedelt und wurde 1943 Präsident der ein Jahr zuvor in New York gegründeten *Ecole libre des Hautes Etudes*.

³¹ *The Abolition of Man* (1943) verteidigt das westliche Naturrecht gegen ethischen Relativismus und kritisiert die damit verbundenen pädagogischen Folgen am Beispiel des wertfreien Schulunterrichts, wie er Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts an englischen Höheren Schulen vertreten wurde. *The Abolition of Man* geht zurück auf die *Riddell Memorial Lectures*, die LEWIS im Februar 1943 an der University of Durham gehalten hat. Die englische Ausgabe der Vorlesungen wurde im gleichen Jahr von der Oxford University Press veröffentlicht.

³² *The Teacher in America* (1945 (Neuaufgabe 1995 im *Liberty Fund Inc.*). Die These des Buches bezieht sich darauf, dass amerikanische Lehrer auf das Lernen ihrer Kinder und nicht auf pädagogische Theorien achten sollten, die von der Aufgabe des Unterrichtens nur ablenken würden. BARZUN hat sich danach immer wieder zum Problem der Bildung geäußert, etwa 1991 über die vergessenen kulturellen Bedingungen des Lehrens und Lernens (BARZUN 1991).

³³ MORTIMER J. ADLER (1902-2001) studierte Philosophie an der Columbia University unter JOHN ERSKINE und JOHN DEWEY. Als ADLER 1930 in die Philosophische Fakultät der Universität von Chicago berufen wurde, sorgte er für einen Eklat, weil er das liberale Curriculum zugunsten eines obligatorischen Studiums der Klassiker ändern wollte. ADLER wechselte 1931 als Professor für Rechtsphilosophie in die Law School der Universität von Chicago. Sein Bestseller *How to Read a Book* erschien 1940 und ist seitdem ununterbrochen im Druck. 1983 trat ADLER zum christlichen Glauben über, 1999 wurde er katholisch getauft. Seine zahlreichen Essays sind im Internet zugänglich. Vgl. The Mortimer J. Adler Archives: <http://www.radicalacademy.com/adlerdirectory.htm>

then there has been much controversy which still continues today and it conceals the fact that the basic problem is still unresolved and will hardly be resolved in this manner.

HUTCHINS was in fact DEWEY'S opponent in the American debate about the future of education. HUTCHINS tried to replace both the central themes in DEWEY'S educational work, *freedom and democracy*, with his own educational theories.³⁴ In 1952 HUTCHINS wrote the following in an article for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

”The Spirit of Western Civilization is the spirit of inquiry ... To put an end to the spirit of inquiry that has characterised the West it is not necessary to burn the books. All we have to do is to leave them unread for a few generations”. ”On the other hand, the revival of interest in these books from time to time throughout history has provided the West with new drive and creativeness. Great books have salvaged, preserved, and transmitted the tradition on many occasions similar to our own.” (HUTCHINS 1952)

”Great Books” were to set the intellectual benchmark³⁵ and individual experience was simply not capable of making a decision on these. It was rather that the experience was initially "formed" by passing through the literary and philosophical tradition. In 1936 HUTCHINS devised a programme of general education aimed at the cultivation of the intellect. (HUTCHINS 1936, p. 67). The ”child-centric" school was no substitute for it because it lacked its objectives and content. (ibid., p. 70 contd.). The cultivation of the intellect can only be achieved through an intensive grappling with the intellectual tradition. Classical books are required for this. Contemporary to *every* era, these books ensure a classical education. (ibid., p. 78). ”The classics provide models of excellence” (ibid., S. 83). Therefore, it is not just a question of reading but of *the study of books*.

The basic conflict can be illustrated by another, less famous, but still a very enlightening example today. In 1959 LEO STRAUSS tried several times to define what constituted the core of a *liberal education*. He determined it to be as follows:

”Liberal education is education in culture or toward culture. The finished product of a liberal education is a cultured human being ...
 ‘Culture’ means derivatively and today chiefly the cultivation of mind in accordance with the nature of the mind ...
 Pupils ... have access ... to the greatest minds, only through the great books. Liberal education then consists in studying with the proper care the great books which the greatest minds have left behind”
 (STRAUSS 1959).

It is easy to make this position seem ridiculous. It sounds conservative, elitist, vague and narrow-minded.

- For what are the "greatest minds"?
- Can the "mind" improve?
- How can a ranking be established?
- And when is one allowed to give up reading?

³⁴ *Education for Freedom* (HUTCHINS 1943) und *The Conflict of Education in a Democratic Society* (HUTCHINS 1953).

³⁵ HUTCHINS war 1952 Herausgeber der vierundfünfzigbändigen *Great Books of the Western World*. ”The Great Books Foundation” ist heute zugänglich unter: www.greatbooks.org/home.shtml

STRAUSS simplified this task for himself for he limited his comparison of "education" to the *enculturation* of "western traditions", and therefore not only from today's point of view was he reproached for bestowing onto his own culture the highest educational value and thereby ignoring all others. STRAUSS also said that educational aristocracies were, precisely in democracies themselves, the only bulwarks against mass culture and its tendencies for intellectual levelling out. This had also been a thesis of German cultural criticism which had famously been represented by FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE followed by OSWALD SPENGLER and then later modified again by ALAN BLOOM (1987) and tailored for the American conditions.

Therefore it seemed clear that the old elitist education should be re-activated, whilst a democratic education could only be justified when applied in an egalitarian way. The minimal extent to which this dispute has been resolved is illustrated by the more recent canon discussion in relation to BLOOM, who has picked up ADLER'S radical thesis on decline and tried to bring it up to date. MARTHA NUSSBAUM (1987) and JOHN SEARLE (1990) made attempts to clarify the positions but it is obvious that the basic differentiation between the "progressive" and the "conservative" positions is too deep to permit an amicable clarification. Literary scholars such as HAROLD BLOOM (1994) revived HUTCHINS' thesis, according to which education must be understood against the background of obligatory books and to which personal experience is subordinate or must be tailored to this type of education.

It is still possible today to make assumptions of decline targeted against a liberal education policy which is reproached as having surrendered academic standards. (KIMBALL 1990 and many others). In 2000 JACQUES BARZUN even wrote a story about the decline of Western culture and education which ended in what he called "demotic life and times", meaning a time that had fallen behind or that could not be moved. *Demotic* is the most contrary term possible to *democratic*. Ever since NIETZSCHE'S Basle lectures on the future of educational establishments (1872), democratic education has been reproached for levelling out, precisely *because* it is designed around the participation and openness of educational cultures.

This conflict between high culture and democratic education has never disappeared and this cannot only be explained through intellectual narrow-mindedness yet it's a charge that could only stand if both camps continued to uphold their theories which is in fact still the case. The basic dogmas of educational philosophy are still authoritative and influential today. They define the intellectual poles of the conflict, rally supporters around each other and advocate the different educational policy campaigns which can still always be reduced to the opposing views of "progressive" or "conservative." But why is this so? And why has the fundamental dualism never been resolved?

4. *The response of progressive education*

It says something for DEWEY that he reflected on this problem, even when it was embarrassing for him to deny philosophical dualism and therefore to have to move within a political dualism that can hardly be solved philosophically. That one theory over another can be solved or avoided using the criterion of practical results is precisely that which is disputed by the supporters of the theory concerned. In the hermeneutic area of interpretation there is always latitude to reject the seemingly independent DEWEY criterion. Add to this that according to DEWEY'S own criterion, there could not be "practical proof of worth" over the long term, otherwise it would be easy to return to the *Great Books of the Western World*.

DEWEY argued against the shrinkage of education into the content of the curriculum in *Experience and Education* with the central problem not being the priority of subject matter or even a literary canon but its position and importance within experience. Therefore everything depends on finding a correct vision of the relationship within which "education" and "experience" are to be understood.

"I take it that the fundamental unity of the newer philosophy is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education. If this be true, then a positive and constructive development of its own basic idea depends upon having a correct idea of experience" (DEWEY 1991, p. 7).

DEWEY was never a supporter of the radical child-centric education that went back to FRÖBEL'S theory of the kindergarten or what was extracted from this in the American debate. DEWEY'S famous *Pedagogic Creed* from 1897³⁶ refers to two sides of education, a psychological and a sociological. "The child has its own instincts and tendencies, but we do not know what these mean until we can translate them into their social equivalents" (DEWEY 1975, p. 85). Education is not simply a compromise between the psychological and the sociological, (ibid.), but ensures an ongoing, interpretative interaction, in which both must express their legitimacy as much as possible.

DEWEY'S *Pedagogic Creed* became famous as the official guide for the newly forming, liberal American School Reform Movement. The phrases associated with these articles are still used today, such as the "embryonic society" the "active child" or "learning by doing". *Learning by doing* actually became DEWEY'S trademark. In this regard it is often overlooked that DEWEY'S 1897 theses were completely in the *mainstream* of the reforms and were less original than reflected in DEWEY'S emphatic language. The language had promoted *child-centred education*, but had also created DEWEY'S own conflict of standing at the pinnacle of a educational movement which although it had effective slogans, hardly possessed any theories of substance. A really universally convincing theory of the "new education" which was more than a collection of words (DEWEY 1991, p.14), did not exist after the foundation phase of pragmatism, so DEWEY revisited this subject at the end of the 1930s.³⁷

The principal question is - what can constitute or what must constitute an experience or a special democratic experience. Education cannot for much longer refer to the continuity of the mind or of history, but must pre-suppose broken, intermittent experiences. And the theory of education must be democratic, which cannot be said for the largest part of pedagogical tradition. (OELKERS 2000). This problem is solved as follows:

- Basically DEWEY does not separate education on the one hand and experience on the other. Education *is* experience and vice versa.
- There is only *one* world of experience. Every two-world theory is excluded.
- Experience corrects and renews itself constantly. Recourses into history illustrate problems but they do not solve them.

³⁶ JOHN DEWEY: *My Pedagogic Creed*. In: School Journal LIV (January 1897), S. 77-80. (DEWEY 1975, S. 84-95)

³⁷ Das geschah auf Einladung des *Executive Council of Kappa Delta Pi*, der DEWEY bat, die zehnte Vorlesung der "Kappa Delta Pi Lecture Series" der Fragestellung zu widmen, warum zwei gegensätzliche Lager die amerikanische Erziehung spalten und wie diese Spaltung konzeptionell wie praktisch überwunden werden könne. *Kappa Delta Pi*, gegründet am 8. März 1911 an der University of Illinois, ist eine internationale Vereinigung der Erziehung, vor allem der akademischen Pädagogik. Sie hat derzeit 60'000 Mitglieder an 550 Universitäten und Colleges.

- Thinking is problem solving. Intelligence is illustrated with the adaptation to every new situation experienced.
- Even educational theories are only *hypotheses* which must be judged by their practical consequences.
- Pedagogical doctrines that only use "either/or" formulations are speculative and useless.

If one were to look at the overwhelming dominance of the two-world theory in education since the time of AUGUSTIN it can be seen where the benefit of the pragmatic theory lies. It avoids dualism and forces an approach which controls the reflection of the experience, which educational theories find hard to deal with. What they do find easy is their own immunisation, or an approach that actually has to be abandoned with pragmatism since with the establishment and implementation of the theory all the traditional safety-nets such as nature, original sin, history or the protestant spirit fall away

A democratic theory of education must be democratic in the sense that it cannot adopt any higher position than that of experience which in principle is accessible to everyone. Every general conclusion can be modified in the light of new experiences; differently stated theories are not valid because of tradition, but according to the rules of proof in reality. Theoretical systems must also be able to adapt to new situations. They are not simply secured by the pedagogical tradition, i.e. a construct of the writing of history, but by evidence in connection with problem solving.

The main theoretical question was whether an education system could be developed which is based on experience, if experience is not a comprehensive or uninterrupted continuum. In order to deliberate the problem of continuity, DEWEY introduced the concept of the *experiential continuum* in 1938. The following is to be understood by it:

"The principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after"
(*ibid.*, p. 19).

The experience does not merely continue, but it perpetuates itself, which implies ruptures and changes. In this sense one can talk of a *principle* of continuity. The educational criterion is now not the experience itself, but what experiences contribute to development. (*ibid.*, p. 19/20).

"Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into"
(*ibid.*, p. 21).

But experience is not simply "in" an individual. Every genuine experience also influences the circumstances under which it has occurred. Therefore education is always interactive and it does not begin or end with the individual. The individual and the environment stand in constant interaction with both sides being able to change due to new experiences. >From an educational theory point of view, this has far-reaching significance in so far as classic environmental theory does not accept any feedback. Environments determine experience but they themselves are not determined. Environments are closed. Stimuli unleash reactions but reactions do not have an effect on the stimuli. DEWEY'S interaction theory was different. What he called "continuity" was only possible as an oscillating process affecting

both sides, namely the individual and the environment, and often in a permanent and unforeseeable way.

To prove the theory of this process DEWEY needed, in addition to continuity, a second principle, namely that of interaction, or more precisely *interaction* and *situation*. One describes the longitudinal and the other the lateral aspect to experience, presupposing *one* and *only* one world of experience.

”Different situations succeed one another. But because of the principle of continuity something is carried over from the earlier to the later ones. As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts. He does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world. What he has learned in the way of knowledge or skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow. The process goes on as long as life and learning continue” (ibid., p. 25/26).

The theory of experience can be extended in this way into a learning theory. The continuity of experience is set up in a *learning* way, and is not available as an "intellect" or "tradition", because every new situation must be experienced and newly created. "Learning" is therefore always *more* than the object about which or with which the learning is taking place.³⁸ Therefore, the *ability to learn* is the actual result of education:

”The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning” (ibid., p. 29).

Therefore romantic assumptions (ibid., p. 35) about "growth" or "self-learning by doing" from "inner motivations" have to be excluded. Although the ideal objective of education is the "creation of power of self control", the simple revocation of external control is, however, no guarantee for the development of self-control. (ibid., p. 41).

This also relates to ones own supporters. The implication against the specific assumptions of progressive education is that "immediate whim and caprice" are not good behavioural states for they do not contain any real controls. (ibid., p. 42). They lack the objective or the practical intelligence. (ibid., p. 43 contd.). Therefore, the argument is again used against the specific lines of thought in educational reform that it is not the activity itself that is the objective but *intelligent* activity (ibid., p. 45). This leads to the problem of freedom in education, which cannot and must not be understood as being allowed the freedom to grow:

”Since freedom resides in the operations of intelligent observation and judgement by which a purpose is developed, guidance given by teachers to the exercise of the pupil's intelligence is an aid to freedom, not a restriction upon it” (ibid., p. 46).

Therefore it is not the curriculum or the subject matter of the instruction that is decisive, but the *problem* conveyed. Problems are decisive stimuli for thought, but (ibid., p. 52) problems are only created for the learner when they touch his/her experience and do not remain external to him. This is the main reproach against the traditional curriculum and the classical education revived by HUTCHINS where problems are imposed from the outside and

³⁸ "Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular things he is studying at the time" (DEWEY 1991, S. 29).

remain there. (ibid., p. 52/53). But this criticism cannot exclude the situation where good problems are created simply from the immediacy of experience.

”Nonetheless, growth depends upon the presence of difficulty to be overcome by the exercise of intelligence... It is part of the educator’s responsibility to see equally two things: First, that the problem grows out of the conditions of the experience being had in the present, and that it is within the range of the capacity of the student; and, secondly, that it is such that it arouses in the learner an active quest for information and for production of new ideas”
(ibid., p. 53).

Mere activation is not sufficient since the deliberation of problems must lead to results and to a mental discipline that continuously knows how to adapt to new situations. "The ability to learn" is not simply provided through the activation; the learning experience must have results. Otherwise events can only be experienced when everything depends on the intelligent association of experience. Presumably this theory is not easy to refute because the practical results support it. In order to refute this, cases have to be found where it has *not* been attempted to ensure an intelligent adaptation. This attempt can fail but it is at times undertaken nevertheless. On the contrary it will be difficult to find practical attempts of finding the rejection of intelligence.

A pragmatist can hardly go any further than this but even this theory has not solved the basic conflict. The conflict survives through mutual ignorance and is kept alive through an aggressive politicisation. As defined by KANT it is a dispute about the principles of education, which obviously evade a pragmatic resolution. But perhaps the philosophy of education could reflect on how both dogmas could lose their hostility, even if there could only be a *tertium datur* and no dialectic solution. Prima vista makes sense of *both* positions - namely the culture theory and the progressive theory of education - when they are liberated from the usual rounds of imputations with the automatic associations of references and considered on their own merits. Outside the political camps and the educational movements, who always only return to their own particular starting point, we could talk about a hidden complementarity, as had actually already been stated by JOHN STUART MILL in relation to WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT.

The "greatest minds" of cultural history are no ends in themselves. They are not studied because they are there, but because they define the *level* of education and its horizons. It does matter *what* is learnt. When talking of "great" we are referring to the levels and difficulties that must be achieved and overcome if the education process is to move ahead. Education is the growth of a specific skill which at the outset is only understood in a subsidiary way. Great books have a didactic function in this sense; we learn things from them that we do not know, or cannot do. But this also applies to pictures, pieces of music, plastics, exhibitions, museums, scientific disciplines or in short for the entire learning spectrum of culture.

Even children are not really prepared for education out of themselves; if they, as the reformist educationalists have stated, "discover the world", then this happens under the assumption of problems whose solutions are *not* immediately possible. The storing and cultivation of problems and not the solutions is perhaps the one decisive educational achievement, with education being the growth of the respect for a problem. One canon ensures the respect of the intellectual achievements of another however they may have been acquired, yet without having to adopt their solution. Without this respect one would have no reason to accept that one was not always *perfect*. In this sense the acceptance of "great", i.e. the resolution of problems, is not

necessarily a condition for successful learning from the individual's point of view, with "success" being understood as the defeat of the next difficulty. I am prepared to admit that this is not necessarily what current educational theory recommends but I can say in my defence that the assessment refers back to DEWEY'S psychology of learning, which at least in this respect presents *no* opposite view of academic education.

5. Tasks for Educational Philosophy

In conclusion I will aim to run through the thesis of hidden complementarity by using the existing theory. The conservative education theory is known in Anglo-Saxon literature as *liberal education*, in which only German readers can enjoy the irony. The basic idea is that education³⁹ only *liberates*, when its prerequisites are met. MICHAEL OAKESHOTT (1989, p. 93) spoke about this in relation to the education of discipline and emancipation. Anyone involved in educational processes, which nobody has to be but everybody can be, receives a pay-off, but only *after* the effort which has to be undertaken with modesty, tenacity and courage. The reward is personal sovereignty, namely the liberation from the contingency of birth, the tyranny of the moment and the adaptation to the conditions provided by life. From a negative point of view, education is not possible either as just an occasion or as a pure principle of reality, but it must rather gain long-term insights by training the interests.

According to OAKEHOTT this would be plausible if one were to present education as *initiation*.⁴⁰ For OAKESHOTT education is a transaction between the generations into which the newcomers into the world where they are to live should be initiated. Reference can be made to education because "the world" can be understood as a historical culture and a differentiated system of symbols.

"This is a world of understandings, imaginings, meanings, moral and religious beliefs, relationships, practices - states of mind in which the human condition is to be discerned as recognitions of and responses to the ordeal of consciousness. These states of mind can be entered into only *by being themselves understood*, and can be understood only *by learning to do so*"
(*ibid.*; emphasises J.O.).

The basic argument compares education with a continuously improved understanding, given a complex world of meanings, images and relationships. There is a little of HEGEL'S theory of the objective mind resonating in OAKESHOTT but his focus is on the aspect of *initiation*. Whoever wants to learn cannot take what has been learned for granted. Cultural structures must however be developed *from inside*, which presupposes that learning is initiated into them or they initiate themselves. This means that education must be developed sequentially, but not linearly, in which considerable tolerance of ones own inability is required. At the very least more complex world symbols can neither immediately nor directly be understood and when the understanding has developed, then a sovereign relationship is attained under the precondition of a qualitative leap - at least until the next difficulty.

³⁹ *Education* - Ich übergehe an dieser Stelle die deutsche Differenz zwischen "Erziehung" und "Bildung", die im Englischen nicht gegeben ist.

⁴⁰ Die These wird erstmalig entwickelt in OAKESHOTT'S Londoner Antrittsvorlesung 1951 (*Political Education*: OAKESHOTT 1989, S. 136-158).

The initiation thesis⁴¹ is also problematic in that it doesn't really make any statements about processes, with the exception of the initiation process itself, therefore the initial transition. Moreover, the "symbolic worlds" thesis is understood to be insufficiently ambiguous and therefore very fixated on the unambiguousness of educational goods. (SCHEFFLER 1997, p. 50 contd.) In fact, when the beginnings have been overcome, neither are the problems solved nor the difficulties reduced, rather the contrary. If I am right, then education is precisely that respect for the difficulties which determine the process and its eventual success, as understood by the continuation of the transition with an improved view.

The liberal variation goes back to JOHN DEWEY and it is ironic that it again sounds very conservative. DEWEY justified the didactic meaning of *difficulties* in the education process in the first issue of *How We Think* (1910). This is very unusual as ever since the didactic methods of the 17th century, teaching or learning methods have always been understood as *facilitations* of learning. Not DEWEY: Learning *is* the constant processing of difficulties which occur and which cannot be artificially minimised. This is the basis for the thinking that no educational process can be successful if it simply only "makes it easy", therefore being a system that wants to remove the natural difficulties. Every problem exhibits itself in such a way that anyone who wants to work through it must go into the problem and difficulties in their entirety, since any artificial shortcut risks the learning effectiveness.

DEWEY calls the facilitation of learning a fundamental and stupid error:

"It is ... a stupid error to suppose that arbitrary tasks must be imposed from without in order to furnish the factor of perplexity and difficulty which is the necessary cue to thought. Every vital activity of any depth and range inevitably meets obstacles in the course of its effort to realise itself - a fact that renders the search for artificial or external problems quite superfluous. The difficulties that present themselves within the development of an experience are, however, to be cherished by the educator, not minimised, for they are the natural stimuli to reflective inquiry"

(DEWEY 1985, p. 230).

Finally education made the decision not to simply be a process of learning but a process of an increasing acceptance of graded difficulties in the development of knowledge and ability. The psychology of the problem resolution going back to DEWEY presupposes that *every new* difficulty has to be emotionally accepted if productive learning is to be implemented. (ibid., p. 236). Without the increased rate of overcoming difficulties, neither a consciousness of personal ability nor the confidence to continue the process despite new and possibly increasing difficulties will be created.

Therefore it is insufficient to talk just about "initiation". The quality of education depends on *every subsequent* challenge, thereby stating at the same time that it is not simply guaranteed due to its presence in the curriculum. At the end of the day it is always a question of making the connections with what has been learned, therefore of creating the next situation. The test is the usage thereof in view of new and surprising problems, which cannot be avoided because *they* constitute the next situation. This is the only way for anything more than repetition to occur, namely quality which is tested on the subsequent difficulty without ever achieving a complete generalisation of what has been learnt.

⁴¹ Die These wurde von RICHARD PETERS (1965) weiterentwickelt, sie beeinflusst in seiner Fassung die angelsächsische Erziehungsphilosophie bis heute. Auch PETERS' These geht auf eine Londoner Antrittsvorlesung (1963) zurück.

DEWEY'S argument goes back to the criticism of the comparison of education with lexicalised knowledge in so far as this adopts the process and had previously provided comforting generalisations. But no general knowledge is in a position to predict *new* learning situations as general principles and facts can always be demonstrated or repeated. The value of knowledge must be shown in every new *application* and can therefore not be understood as a fixed equipment for life.

”No one understands a general principle fully - no matter how adequately he can demonstrate it, to say nothing of repeating it - till he can employ it in the mastery of new situations, which, if they *are* new, differ in the manifestation from the cases used in reaching the generalisation”
(*ibid.*, p. 257).

This vagueness is worked on by DEWEY (*ibid.*, p. 344) but only until the next counter-demonstration. Other plausible alternatives are always possible, because of the extents to which the contrasts can be shifted (*ibid.*, p. 345), so that education does not have to be presented as a *concluding but a continuous* initiation, therefore again a paradox. There is no final quality but always only new proof of the levels once reached. What there always is, however, are the intellectual thorns from the history of problem resolution that we call culture and the great books are also part of this. The question is only, when we read them, not if they are dispensable.

A totally open question is what the effect of these findings will be on democracy. As everybody knows, DEWEY understood democracy as an evolutionary product or better still as a problem solver, which industrial society used to react to the processes of mobilisation and differentiation, and the thereby associated liberation. Emancipation is not an educational programme, but an opportunity for social experience, which is becoming increasingly likely with the development of transnational forms of production and communication. A democratic education presupposes a free and open society, therefore that which seemed in the 1930s politically questionable and was also questioned by many Anglo-Saxon intellectuals. Democracy was often equated to capitalism, an analogy that JOHN DEWEY (1987, p. 297) never endorsed.

In January 1937 he wrote a little-known small essay entitled *Democracy is Radical*.⁴² The claim of the two then contemporary dictatorships that they were essentially democratic, only socially more just than the Anglo-Saxon system was rejected. There was also a rejection of the then contemporary comparative position of political education and the class struggle represented by not a few American authors (such as SLESINGER in 1937). American democracy is not simply capitalism; it stands much more for the constant conflict between freedom and power that can never be brought to a conclusion in an open society. Therefore the question of the means or the method is central to this conflict. DEWEY called it ”radical”:

”*The fundamental principle of democracy is that the ends of freedom and individuality for all can be attained only by means that are acrid with those ends*”
(DEWEY 1987, p. 298).

This is not meant to be seen in the light of a competition between the systems. DEWEY is starting from a position of basic irreconcilability. Therefore he not only refers in this connection to the principle of practical proof, but he assumes a relationship between

⁴² JOHN DEWEY: *Democracy Is Radical*. In: *Common Sense* Vol. 6 (January 1937), S, 10/11. (DEWEY 1987, S. 296-299)

democracy and human nature which can only develop when a culture has been given its freedom. A general education presupposes a culture of freedom which must not be organised *against the principles of democracy*. It is not simply the act of distribution but of participation and exchange, to name both the criteria that DEWEY developed in 1916 in *Democracy and Education*.

Every citizen, male and female, must have the freedom to be able to believe in democracy. (ibid., p. 179). On the other hand democracy demands a experience-based conviction in the unlimited development of human potential (ibid., p. 154) which would not be possible without a moral obligation (ibid., p. 78) and state education. Social integration is not possible in any other way and this is why comprehensive schools or schools for everyone were developed which were to balance out all social benefits and disadvantages through the education they offered. But it does not follow from this that education should only be provided by the school or be reduced to learning by doing. The state school has the problem of equality of opportunity, but it can always only ever suggest and not decide upon educational processes. Finally personal education is a life-long learning task, which envisages a culture in which the learner must participate, but which in reality he/she can only learn a small part of. As far as that is concerned, I end laconically. We'll have to see how far we get.

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