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Vocational and Liberal Education in Pestalozzi's Educational Theory

Artículo de reflexión

109

Educación vocacional y liberal en la teoría
de la educación de Pestalozzi

Educação vocacional e liberal na teoria
da educação de Pestalozzi

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Abstract

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's most popular catchphrase "head, heart, and hand" implies the concept of a holistic combination of all human capabilities as a well-balanced development of intellectual, religious-emotional and physical forces enabled by education. This paper aims to examine Pestalozzi's notion of vocational and liberal education as a means to secure a sustained and decent life of a fully developed person. This meaning needs to be contextualized, in order to understand Pestalozzi's concern about his educational theory being reduced to mere education of the poor. Pestalozzi's attempts to combine vocational education with a psychological understanding of the human development can also be read as a strategy to bridge the gap which stands for the dominant divide within German (educational) tradition: a notion of utilitarian education *versus* the aesthetic concept of inward Bildung.

Keywords

liberal education; vocational education; Bildung; schooling; Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi

Resumen

El popularísimo lema de Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi "cabeza, corazón y mano" implica tanto la concepción de una combinación holística de todas las capacidades humanas como un desarrollo equilibrado de las fuerzas intelectuales, religiosas-emocionales y físicas, posibilitados por la educación. Este artículo pretende examinar la noción de Pestalozzi de una educación vocacional y liberal como un medio para asegurar una vida sustentable y decente de una persona completamente desarrollada. Este sentido necesita contextualizarse a fin de entender la preocupación de Pestalozzi sobre la reducción de su teoría educativa a una mera educación de los pobres. Los intentos de Pestalozzi de combinar la educación vocacional con una comprensión psicológica del desarrollo humano también pueden ser leídos como una estrategia para cerrar la brecha que representa la división dominante dentro de la tradición (pedagógica) alemana: la noción de educación utilitaria *versus* el concepto estético de Bildung interior.

Palabras clave

educación liberal; educación vocacional; Bildung; escolarización; Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi

Resumo

O popular lema de Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi "cabeça, coração e mão" implica tanto a concepção de uma combinação holística de todas as capacidades humanas quanto um desenvolvimento equilibrado das forças intelectuais, religiosas-emocionais e físicas, possibilitados pela educação. Este artigo pretende examinar a noção de Pestalozzi de uma educação vocacional e liberal como um médio para garantir uma vida sustentável e decente de uma pessoa bem desenvolvida. Isto precisa se contextualizar, a fim de entender a preocupação de Pestalozzi acerca da redução de sua teoria pedagógica a uma educação dos pobres. Os intentos de Pestalozzi de combinar a educação vocacional com uma compreensão psicológica do desenvolvimento humano podem ser lidos como uma estratégia para preencher a lacuna que representa a divisão dominante na tradição (pedagógica) alemã: a noção educação utilitária *versus* o conceito estético de Bildung interior.

Palavras-chave

educação liberal; educação vocacional; Bildung; escolarização; Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi

The Swiss educational and social reformer, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), is said to be the author and the advocate of the famous slogan “head, heart, and hand”. This saying implies the vision of a holistic development of all innate human capabilities, i.e., of a human being’s intellectual, religious-emotional, and physical abilities. Despite the conciseness and fame of this slogan, Pestalozzi did not “invent” it. It is not until the end of the 19th century that the exact wording appears, in an essay by the Swiss school historian Otto Hunziker (1841–1909), who was intellectually engaged with the work of Pestalozzi and active in keeping alive what he assumed to be Pestalozzi’s legacy. In this essay, Hunziker (1881) worried about a current shift in schooling: from a focus on educational tasks to a focus on teaching knowledge and subjects. Hunziker underlined his critique with references to Pestalozzi and his attempts to reach the ultimate moral aim in education. “The purpose of Pestalozzi’s ideal school is education; education for morals”, Hunziker (1881, p. 91) argued. He also said that

Pestalozzi wanted to develop the hand, heart and head of the people consistently and according to their specific life conditions. The teacher is therefore not a scholarly man, [...] but a man with a clear vision, a warm heart and a firm hand. (Hunziker, 1881, p. 91).

In this reference, two educational belief systems are addressed: first, the importance of well-reflected education and the orientation of this kind of education towards children’s real-life situations, and second, the downgrading of the importance of knowledge for the respective teachers. In Hunziker’s eyes, schooling was not first and foremost a framework where a specific set of knowledge was to be taught, but a place in which to educate and transport a set of morals, traditions and habits; this he ensured with reference to Pestalozzi’s writings and practical work. This argumentation was not singular, but expressed a widely shared belief within the educational line of thought in the German-speaking world: the belief that schooling is more than just a setting in which a specific set of knowledge should be transported, but a place in which education in a moral sense should take place, while both knowledge and education are defined in their respective roles within the concept of *Bildung*.

Even if the slogan of “head, heart, and hand” roots in Hunziker’s essay, the *meaning* of this catchphrase is widespread in Pestalozzi’s work, and a similar wording can be found in one of his essay’s titled *An educational debate with pastor Witte* from 1805. In

this debate, Pestalozzi rhetorically asked if it went too far if—by natural education—the poor were helped to achieve what they were able to be with the help of head, heart, and hand and what everybody could be—with the help of head, heart, and hand—for God, themselves and for their homeland (Pestalozzi, 1973). Pestalozzi’s essay had been triggered by a written account by Prussian pastor Karl Witte (1767–1845), who had reported on his visit of Pestalozzi’s institute in Switzerland and interpreted Pestalozzi’s educational method as non-academic and therefore designed to enable the poor masses to become skilled craftsmen (Witte, 1804; 1805).¹ In his response, Pestalozzi (1973) disagreed with Witte’s interpretation, emphasizing the need of a harmonious education of everybody’s abilities, regardless of people’s future social roles as citizens, of their social backgrounds, and of their social statuses.

Against the background of this debate, which took place in 1805, there stood the question of what schooling was meant to be with regard to a society’s future citizens and to the way in which the curricular translation was to be designed accordingly. Moreover, this debate mirrors two different concepts of wholeness, one oriented towards the aesthetic-inward formation or *Bildung*, the other towards a civic usefulness, such as employability. Hence, this debate represents the two main strands of German educational thought since the late 18th century, which still dominate today. One stands for vocational ideals aimed at employability, the other for the liberal beauty of an inward moral soul. In general, the notion of *Bildung* prevails over the notion of employability, which is also characterized as “just” or “mere” knowledge, while *Bildung* is said to have an end in itself (Horlacher, 2016a).

This paper examines Pestalozzi’s catchphrase as a metaphor for vocational *and* liberal education and, in sum, as a means to secure a sustained and decent life. To this end, the notion of vocational and liberal education needs to be contextualized in order to understand Pestalozzi’s debate with Witte and to recognize Pestalozzi’s fear of having his educational theory reduced to a mere education of the poor. Thus, the paper methodologically argues in line with Quentin Skinner’s (2002) considerations on texts and the importance of context in order to—historically—understand a text.

1 Witte visited Pestalozzi by order of the royal consistory of the duchy of Magdeburg. His report about his journey was first published in a magazine in Halle (Witte, 1804) and subsequently in a book (Witte, 1805).

We need [...] to grasp not merely what people are saying but also what they are *doing in saying it* [...] As well as grasping the meaning of what they said, we need at the same time to understand what they meant by saying it. (Skinner, 2002, p. 82).

Thus, it is not the aim of the paper to ask whether and in what way the slogan of “head, heart, and hand” was Pestalozzi’s saying or not, nor to offer its “right reading.” This paper aims at contextualizing the meaning of the saying in order to shed light on a much-cited dichotomy of educational thought, namely the contrast between liberal or general *versus* specific education and schooling. Pestalozzi’s attempts to base his educational theory on a psychological understanding of human development can therefore be read as a strategy to bridge the gap between vocational and liberal education as *Bildung*.

I will discuss this in three steps. For contextual reasons, the first outlines the notion of vocational and liberal education in Germany around 1800 and the two associated concepts of wholeness. The second step explains how Pestalozzi’s notion of vocational and liberal education responds to this debate, and the third concludes with some considerations about the consequences of the contextualization of Pestalozzi’s notion of head, heart, and hand. It will be demonstrated that Pestalozzi’s and Witte’s debate and the concepts which lie therein refer to a specific historical time frame and to specific historical questions, which should not be read and understood without their respective contexts, if they aim to be anything more than meaningless, decontextualized slogans serving as a means of self-assurance for historical warrantors.

Schooling as Liberal Education or Vocational Training

After Napoleon’s army defeated the German forces in 1806, intellectual discussions in Germany became extremely nationalistic, and the concept of *Bildung* was placed in the center of the discourse, offering to serve as a distinguishing feature with regard to the two dominant neighboring countries—France and England (Berger, 2007). One of the prominent advocates of the belief of a national recovery by education was Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), who, in his *Addresses to the German Nation* (*Reden an die deutsche Nation*, 1808), argued in favor of strengthening educational aspirations so that the nation could fully take on its standing in world his-

tory and in the grasp of national purity (Hegewisch, 2015).² Apart from the notion of cultural purity and the like, the belief in education and schooling as an important factor to build and implement the nascent nation-state(s) was widespread throughout Europe.

Among the prominent representatives of this movement was Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), who was appointed head of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior in 1808. In his position as head of the Ministry, Humboldt proposed the improvement of elementary schooling in the *Königsberg and Lithuanian School Plan* (*Der Königsberger und der Litauische Schulplan*), written in 1809. The intended system comprised three tiers: “elementary schools,” “schools,” and “universities” (Humboldt, 1920, p. 260). Elementary education was to focus on literacy and basic arithmetic. These subjects could be supplemented with basic lessons in history, geography and life sciences for those students who intended to receive no further schooling. Concurrently with elementary school, the plan provided a pre-school for students who wished to attend further schooling and to proceed to *Gymnasium*. Here, the curriculum was to focus on language, history, and mathematics, as well as on learning how to study. The aim was to produce a student capable of acquiring knowledge independently so that he would be prepared to move on to the last tier: university. Whenever possible, strict division among the various disciplines was to be avoided, for the main objective was to cultivate an understanding of the unity of all sciences and to call forth the “creative forces” of the human being (Humboldt, 1920, p. 261). According to these principles, the educational process is basically unending; it is meant to continue throughout a person’s life. Therefore, there was no specific goal or endpoint set by any organizational authority. Furthermore, the actual content of a student’s studies was deemed to be relatively insignificant, given that the “creative forces” could be elicited by and practiced with any object of knowledge.

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- 2 Fichte regarded Pestalozzi’s practical work as the fulfillment of his educational aspirations. “As, in our own considered opinion, the idea of such new education is on no account to be regarded as an image set up simply to exercise our astuteness or disputatiousness but should be carried into action at this very hour and introduced into life, so it is incumbent on us to indicate, first of all, what already exists in the real world from which we can proceed with the execution of this idea. [...] it shall proceed from the course of instruction devised and proposed by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, and already successfully put into practice under his supervision” (Fichte, 2008, p. 119).

All of these characteristics comprising liberal education framed university as an ideal place to develop the true human being, to educate and shape a person's abilities in acquiring knowledge and carrying out research. It is this self-directed exploration of cultural objects and the natural world which was thought to ultimately form the educated human being. Once the skills which would enable an individual to work toward his or her own self-perfection had been attained, the human being was considered to be prepared to venture out into the "real world." Prior to and as a condition for this, university was to provide something like a protected environment.

This notion of the educated human being was developed in 1793 or 1794 in a famous (but only much later published) draft or torso on *Bildung*. Humboldt wrote,

What man needs most is simply an object that makes possible the interplay between his receptivity and his self-activity... In order to attach the image of the ultimate goal to every step forward he takes, he seeks to transform scattered knowledge and action into a closed system, mere scholarship into scholarly *Bildung*, merely restless endeavor into judicious activity. (Humboldt, 2000, p. 60).

He postulates a theory of human forces, enabling man to "strengthen and heighten the powers of his nature and secure value and permanence for his being" (Humboldt, 2000, p. 58). Thus, Humboldt's theory of *Bildung* mainly focuses on individual development and individual perfectibility. Schooling—according to the idea of *Bildung*—implied a notion of inward wholeness preceding any vocational training. Even if the concept implies, in principle, that *Bildung* is possible for everyone, its institutionalized form and its curricular translation turned out to be a powerful distinguishing feature between social classes (and less so between the sexes). A conceptual distinction prevailed here, setting vocational education sharply *against* liberal or academic education. Even if Humboldt's notion of *Bildung* favors liberal education for *all* and postulates a follow-up in vocational education in view of the pupils' future professions, schooling was in fact separated into two educational tracks after the first few years of elementary education: one for liberal education and one for vocational education. This distinction had far-reaching implications for German society as a whole: *Bildung* functioned as a social differentiator (Horlacher, 2016a).

Although individual perfection was the main goal of Humboldt's concept of *Bildung*, one ancillary benefit was the improvement and perfection of the

State. This was the reason for the submission of a petition to the Prussian King in 1809, calling for the establishment of the University of Berlin. The university was designed as a prototype for all "modern" universities, as teaching and research were to be brought together and students were to be provided a well-rounded education in the humanities (Tenorth, 2014). The first attempts to institute a university in Berlin date back to 1784. At first, there had been little consensus as to whether a university would be a benefit or a drawback, because without one, the city did not have to deal with "the petty jealousies of the scholars among themselves; the base trickery they use to push others out or ruin their reputations; the disgraceful cabals; all such things have no place here," as the German theologian, teacher and educational reformer Friedrich Gedike (1754–1803) wrote in his *Berlin Monthly Magazine* (Gedike, 1784, p. 465). But soon enough, arguments in support of a university came to dominate the conversation, even if the direction the university would take was still unclear. Ultimately, especially after 1806, it became obvious to almost everybody that "the state must replace through intellectual powers what it has lost physically" (Tenorth, 2014, p. 18) in the Napoleonic Wars. The loss of territories and the related loss of reputation had to be compensated by education and schooling, and university as the lighthouse project of schooling and the incorporation of *Bildung* got particular attention.

The institutionalized form of *Bildung* affected the *Gymnasium's* curriculum to a considerable degree, as it prepared students to enter university. In keeping with the idea that the ancient world provided a model for aesthetic wholeness and harmony—ideals meant to nourish the soul in its process of maturing—almost half of the *Gymnasium* curriculum was devoted to the study of Greek and Latin, whereas math and science combined comprised hardly twenty percent (Becker & Kluchert, 1993). Since all high-ranking positions in the Prussian administration—and Prussia is representative here for the German way of conceptualizing education and schooling—required at least a *Gymnasium* diploma, the administrative elite of the federated German nation-states was trained in Latin and Greek, a fact that expressed the idea that *Bildung* served as a qualification for a job in the ministry.³

3 In doing so, schooling of the German elite followed a slightly different path than, for example, the education of US-Americans, who were trained with "useful" knowledge for their future trade or profession. For this reason, on his trip to Europe several decades later, Horace Mann (1786–1859) was

This educational setting was predestined to create a social class of its own, the so-called *Bildungsbürgertum*, the educated (upper) middle-class, which, on one hand, distinguished itself from the nobility and the mercantile bourgeoisie, but which, first and foremost, distinguished itself from the largest part of society, the less educated middle and lower classes. The emergence of an educated bourgeoisie in Germany was also stimulated by political debates on the meaning and consequence of the French Revolution as well as the introduction of the *Civil Code* (1804) in France, which was essentially the legal foundation for a civil society. In Germany, however, with respect to the practical implementation of ideas coming out of these political debates, things turned out differently. While the French aristocracy was more or less irrelevant after the revolution in 1789, the German bourgeoisie tried to fashion itself after the aristocracy and attempted to do so by reaching out for higher *Bildung* (Lundgreen, 1985). University professors, in particular, took a leading role in this development. Discussions concerning the social position of the bourgeoisie derived from the philosophical discourse of Enlightenment as well as from the concrete experience of post-war economic recovery (Gabriel, 2012). Nobility, with its legitimacy based on heredity, found it increasingly difficult to justify its traditional social dominance in light of the rising political and economic influence of the commercial and merchant classes. The latter, in fact, had begun demanding their right to participate in politics with increasing vehemence (Brose, 2013). At the same time, many feared that with the collapse of the old order—namely the breakdown of the principalities—an undisciplined and violent takeover by the masses would ensue (Brose, 2013). Hence, the debates about *Bildung* were not just questions about the adequate way of educating and schooling the future generation, but implied questions about political participation and social stratification; in sum, the question of how the social and political future of the “German nation” was to be designed and was to take on a leading role in this process.

At the time and for the contemporaries—not just in the case of Fichte—, Pestalozzi’s theory of elementary education seemed perfectly compatible with the concept of *Bildung*. Under the dichotomy of liberal and vocational education and the corresponding social stratification, it was either read as vocational education under the aspiration of wholeness, focus-

ing on the education of the poor, or as academic education under the aspiration of wholeness and therefore focusing on the education of the children of the socially advanced families. As Pestalozzi’s debate with Witte shows, this reception did not correspond with Pestalozzi’s own ideas of elementary education.

Pestalozzi’s Understanding of Education and Schooling

In 1800, Pestalozzi founded an educational institute in Burgdorf and subsequently became famous for what was called “the method,” an educational theory, a type of teacher training and the fabrication of the future citizens related to it. Pestalozzi developed his notion of the method as a concept for a harmonious, efficient and easy to learn educational theory in a book entitled *The Method (Die Methode, eine Denkschrift, 1800)*, where he formulated a plan for “psychologizing the teaching of humans” (Pestalozzi, 1998, p. 103).⁴ Here, “psychologizing” meant two things: first, that teaching methods should take into account “the nature of [the child’s] mind,” which is to say that there should be an awareness of cognitive developmental psychology; and second, that the social situation of the future adult should be taken into account when the child was being taught, which is to say that one should teach to the individual “situation and circumstances.” This two-fold adaptation of teaching to the cognitive as well as the social dimensions of life was supposed to produce “inner satisfaction with himself” (Pestalozzi, 1998, p. 103) in the educated individual.⁵ Teaching is to be attuned to the “nature of mind” and to promote the development of the individual creative forces, as they are the basis on which progress is built. In Pestalozzi’s view, the creative forces develop by following a certain scheme which is identical for everyone. The objects, however, which promote the development of these forces, differ and derive from the actual living conditions of the individual child. Pestalozzi assumed that learning, and thus the overall development of the creative forces, takes place only with recourse to the specific social and historical context of every single being. Therefore, it is not the specific school subjects

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astonished to learn that Germans speak Latin and Greek fluently, but do not have “enough of mechanical skill to make a good house-hold utensil” (Mann, 1844, p. 151).

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4 By naming his educational theory “method,” Pestalozzi referred to a widespread hope at the end of the 18th century, the hope that with a detailed, reasonably arranged plan, every envisaged aim would become accessible. Therefore, the term *method* was also a synonym for the belief in a divine order and in a reasonable structure of nature (Osterwalder, 2008).

5 In this, an obviously Protestant vision of earthly redemption is legible (Tröhler, 2013).

which are the crucial point in Pestalozzi's educational theory, but the individual's opportunities to develop its creative forces. This is what caused several misunderstandings not only with his contemporaries, but also later on.

Hence, Pestalozzi's method was at the same time both general and individual: general as to the idea of developing the creative forces, and individual as to the means of development. As a "method," this concept not only responded to 18th-century notions of order and to a "magic phrase" of that time period (Tröhler, 2002), but also to the question that preoccupied many Europeans at the beginning of the 19th century: how is it possible to educate the broader public quickly, efficiently and economically? Against this backdrop, the interest which many European governments took in Pestalozzi's method was not surprising, as it seemed a viable option to be implemented in public schools, promising to educate future citizens efficiently and effectively. The Prussian interest in particular surprised no one, given that Pestalozzi's method, with its emphasis on individuality and religiosity, seemed perfectly compatible with the concept of *Bildung* which predominated in that milieu. Nevertheless, Pestalozzi's method did not prevail in the long term for two primary reasons. First, the British monitorial system provided another method by which students could be educated quickly, efficiently and in a cost-effective manner—although it is true that both methods were often applied simultaneously (Larsson, 2012; Caruso, 2015; Caluori & Horlacher, 2018). And second, this being the fundamental problem, it was quite certain that the high expectations that were placed in Pestalozzi's method would not be met once it was implemented, as it turned out to be rather inefficient, and the supporting text books failed to appear or were of little use. But particularly, the problem was that the required teacher education could not be provided either in good time or in sufficient quality (Horlacher, 2013a).

The search for adequate means to educate future citizens was closely linked to the question of an appropriate curriculum. To what extent did mass schooling mean liberal or vocational education or the combination of these two aspects as either subsequent or parallel tracks? According to his educational theory, Pestalozzi advocated the development of "all forces," by which he meant a harmonious and well-balanced education based on the "natural development" of the human forces. This well-balanced education required the education of the physical, intellectual and emotional forces, all together aiming to educate the whole person or the personality. While Pestalozzi's notion of the whole person com-

bined vocational and liberal education, his notion of liberal education was, in fact, unthinkable without any vocational education or education towards civic usefulness and employability. Often, his admirers received him either just for his emphasis on the cultivation of inner life or—in their words—*Bildung*, or for his emphasis on vocational education and its being a means of mass education. However, they were usually not interested in the mutual dependency of the two aspects. In other words, Pestalozzi's ideas of a holistic education did not fully match his contemporaries' expectations on wholeness; in particular, they did not match their expectations which had been nourished by and expressed in Humboldt's concept of wholeness, entirety and *Bildung*.

The implications of this inconsistency between Pestalozzi and his admirers frame the above-mentioned debate between Pestalozzi and Witte in 1805. In his report, Witte argued that the overall meaning of the aim and scope of Pestalozzi's educational aspirations had been misinterpreted in Germany.⁶ He claimed that it was not Pestalozzi's ideal to establish an educational institute for academic knowledge, but—on the contrary—to offer education for wide parts of the population (Witte, 1805). As Witte states, Pestalozzi's lack of money was the reason why he had opened a school for children from wealthier families; thus, he was able to increase his revenues. Unfortunately, this strategy had led the public to link Pestalozzi's idea of education with academic schooling, an assumption that was supported by the publication of several primers, mainly focused on intellectual topics. However, Witte considered Pestalozzi's main focus to be the creation of a new pedagogy to empower every teacher, every mother and father to teach their children to secure a sustained and decent life (Witte, 1805) rather than to train an intellectual elite claiming holism in the notion of *Bildung*. According to Witte, Pestalozzi had the broad population in mind and concretized his teaching in the human body for two reasons: first, it was available for free in every family, and second, and much more importantly, the body mirrored the whole world, as it is a means to interlink the inner with the outer self. At first glance, the resulting exercises seem to be artificial, boring and oppressive. However, this impression must be revised in light of the overall

6 Around this time, several much-discussed reports about Pestalozzi, his educational theory and his institute were published in Germany (Tröhler, 2013). Witte's report was just one in a row. Furthermore, he was not the only ambassador sent by a local German government with the official order to evaluate whether the method could be implemented in its domestic schools or not.

goal of linking of the inner with the outer self. Witte emphasizes Pestalozzi's attempt to not just educate the children to become reasonable individuals, but to teach them the necessary skills to support themselves and to develop their religious feelings. Pestalozzi's educational theory was therefore praised by Witte for its rounded education, which was not restricted to "pure utility" but was still focused on mass education.

In his public response to Witte, also written in 1805, Pestalozzi (1973) formulated this threefold scope of education—rationality, skills, feelings—in the famous slogan of "head, heart, and hand" (1973, p. 167). In his response, Pestalozzi first confirmed Witte's notion of the educational method, especially the claim that his method did not educate the superficial blatherer aiming at masses of knowledge, but offered people the opportunity to live a decent life. But subsequently, Pestalozzi argued against Witte's interpretation of his method as mere education of the poor, as well as against the interpretation of his method as academic education. In fact, he claimed to fulfill both expectations: to offer vocational *and* liberal education without social stratification.

Comparably to Witte, Pestalozzi (1973) explained the public misunderstanding on what his method aimed at by arguing with his own biography and his job as head of an almshouse and orphanage⁷ before becoming head of an educational institute. At the core, his argument was that one must differentiate between his educational practices and professional activities, on one hand, and his conceptual writings, on the other. The shift from the initial focus on vocational education to more emphasis on knowledge and the development of the intellectual forces, Pestalozzi argued, rather reflected his own career than a conceptual reorientation. This shift was thus not an intentional, matter-of-fact based change, but a more random one, caused by his personal circumstances.⁸ Unfortunately, this led to the public perception that the main goal of Pestalozzi's method had become academic or liberal education (Pestalozzi, 1973, p. 172). Moreover, this misconception led to the

7 Pestalozzi published his experiences as head of an almshouse and orphanage (1799) in a book titled *Pestalozzi and his institute in Stans* (*Pestalozzi und seine Anstalt in Stanz*, 1807). However, great parts of this publication were written by his collaborator Johannes Niederer (1779–1843). Even if the description of Pestalozzi's experiences seems to be referring to "real-life-situations," it has to be acknowledged that the text was written in retrospect and with the help of a "ghost-writer," who was pursuing his own agenda (Tröhler, 2006a).

8 In general, Pestalozzi had no problem at readjusting his justifications for his educational theory regularly with respect to his audience or political and social circumstances (Tröhler, 2013).

impression that Pestalozzi only addressed the upper classes instead of dedicating himself to the education of the poor. In this context, the saying of "head, heart, and hand" was more than just a plea for the natural development of all human forces and a holistic education. In fact, it strengthened Pestalozzi's rejection of socially segregated education and schooling. It was the assertion of having invented or discovered a method which was available for everyone and which guaranteed the natural development of mankind, regardless of social, racial or gender-related restrictions. Pestalozzi's method indeed claimed to redeem the promises that had been elicited by Humboldt, but he connected them with an improvement of contemporary living conditions instead of airy talk on the "permanence of being."

It was this very conviction which his contemporaries found difficult to understand. It was not only the educational reformers from Prussia and from all over Europe coming to visit Pestalozzi's institute in Switzerland who linked the education observed by them with intellectual education—which led to the subsidiary question on what kind of students Pestalozzi's method may have been suitable for. It was also the case with the majority of the parents who had consigned their children to Pestalozzi's care. Their main interest was in an up-to-date education, designed for future occupations in trade, administration or in the business community, rather than a "thorough development of all forces," even though a general and well-balanced education was welcomed (Horlacher, 2013b). Thus, even the intellectual schooling which was presented in Pestalozzi's institute attracted different expectations: expectations in education toward *Bildung* as well as expectations in education toward employability. Meanwhile, the majority of the parents who sent their children to Pestalozzi's institute were concerned about their children being educated among their peers.⁹

As if these expectations weren't enough to fulfill, Pestalozzi promised even more. In a *Report to Parents* for example, published 1808, he advertised his institute as a place ruled by "the spirit of a large familial association, in which, given the need, a pure, paternal and brotherly sense shone forth everywhere." Life in the house was about "elevating the child's entire disposition and attitude, it is teaching of nature [...] it is a school of familial attachment and familial connected-

9 That was why, when Pestalozzi had to close his institute for the poor in Clindly in 1818, neither the students of the "regular" institute in Yverdon nor their parents were enthusiastic about the merging of the two institutes, which was one of the reasons for the decrease in the number of students (Tröhler, 2013).

ness" (Pestalozzi, 1964, p. 47). The teacher accompanied the students around the clock, took care of them in their free time and, as a rule, also slept in the same rooms as the students (Pestalozzi, 1964, p. 48). Thus, the students were never without educational supervision. Pestalozzi then went on to describe his facility as a "family-like school" (Pestalozzi, 1964, p. 49), seeking to make clear that this school was not "merely" a place for the imparting of knowledge but rather a combined living and working-place, where education and teaching were seen as being linked inextricably. The teachers gathered regularly to discuss their teaching and the students' behavior, which allowed educational progress to be constantly observed, evaluated and improved.

Hence, the catchword *method* subsumed a broad variety of expectations and aspirations. Pestalozzi argued in favor of familial education, which neglected neither intellectual nor vocational aspects. In his eyes, the method was the fulfilment of all aspirations and hopes connected to education and schooling, the ideal tool to fabricate the future citizen, the model for easy and effective mass education and a promise for a decent life. The public, however, also discussed the issue of target groups and tried to integrate Pestalozzi's offer into the existing tradition of education and schooling. Depending on the intellectual or political background of the recipients, different aspects of Pestalozzi's educational theory were preferred or advocated for. This also applies to Pestalozzi's emphasis on educating the poor and his assertion to have invented a method for everybody. This claim was not an ontological statement, but a text in context, both by the author and by the recipients. And this is why Pestalozzi's notion of vocational and liberal education, i.e., what they stand for, was acceptable as rhetoric, but not necessarily in practice.

"Head, Heart, and Hand" as Irony of History

As shown above, Witte's report and Pestalozzi's public answer mirror the different opinions on the aim and scope of schooling and education. Around 1800, the most pressing issue was how to handle mass schooling; an issue which was connected to the formal organization of schooling, questions of infrastructure and teaching materials, and also to appropriate teacher training (Horlacher, 2016b) and a suitable curriculum. In the meantime—and this complicated the discussion about schooling and education in Germany—the notion of *Bildung* and its national-political implementation as a distinguish-

ing concept against other European nations as well as its potential for social stratification was brought into the public discussion, a fact which also affected the discussion about Pestalozzi's method. Within the context of the educationalization of the world, education and schooling were no longer just private, but also public issues. Education was not seen as the mere upbringing of children and the familiarization with desirable conduct, but as a means to solve social problems and to build a better future. These aspirations were all the more welcomed in the context of the nascent nation-states, as schooling was the perfect place to create the envisaged better society and to fabricate the "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991). Pestalozzi's own creed in the importance of his education and method fitted these widespread aspirations perfectly. Ever since his first educational attempts, he had tried to convince the public, politicians and people in charge to implement his educational offers, be it his way of leading an almshouse, an orphanage, or his easy and cost-effective way of mass schooling called the method.

It was precisely this last project, namely the implementation of his method in public schools, which was—beside the debate on vocational versus liberal education—the background of Pestalozzi's debate with Witte and the background of Pestalozzi's notion of "head, heart, and hand." Contrary to Pestalozzi's hopes and wishes, his educational method, when tested for public schooling, did not reach the overwhelming support he had expected, although the quality and the potential of the method were not questioned in principle.¹⁰ It was rather its practical feasibility for mass schooling—when dealing with a large number of students instead of a privileged environment like Pestalozzi's institute—which was questioned. Against this background, Pestalozzi read Witte's report as a confirmation of his educational and pedagogical aspirations, as proof that his concept of education was and should be implemented all over Europe and was suitable not just for the academic education of a few, but for the general, compulsory schooling of all future citizens. In this context, Pestalozzi's notion of the "hand," for example, was not a plea for vocational education, at least not as opposed to liberal or academic education, but a plea for both; for equal and harmonious education, aim-

10 Pestalozzi first tried to force the Helvetic government and then the subsidizing government, the *Tagsatzung*, to accredit his method as suitable for public schooling, but without success (see Ith, 1802; Merian, Girard & Trechsel, 1810; Chavannes, 2011; Tosato-Rigo & Moret-Petrini, 2010).

ing to create a holistic future citizen in the tradition of classical republicanism, who is able to master the manifold challenges of life (Tröhler, 2013).

In light of the above and of the subsequent debates, in particular those during the progressive era and in the contemporary critique on the measurement and standardization of education and schooling, arguing with Pestalozzi's notion of "head, heart, and hand" is somehow misguided. Pestalozzi did not make a point of physical education *in addition* to intellectual education—neither did he make a point of a specific curriculum or of a specific balance within the curriculum—and he certainly did not make a point of a specific, socio-economically defined target group. He made a point of equal education and of general employability: not employability which is restricted to a particular profession, but one of an "employable" citizen as a social, political, economic and, if necessary, military person. Furthermore, the notions of equality and general employability used here may differ from our current notions of equality and general employability, as we live in different times and altered economic, social and political circumstances. For this reason, it is not appropriate to use Pestalozzi as a reference point for conservative or progressive critiques on education and schooling, as contemporary admirers like to suggest.

Apart from the question of what was meant by Pestalozzi's notion of the "head, heart, and hand" and his combination of vocational and liberal education, the debate between Pestalozzi and Witte and their "fight" about the "right" interpretation of Pestalozzi's educational practice in his institute also form a case study for the methodological discussion about the "value" of historical research, and not only in the field of education. While, for a long time, historical research in education was dominated by the history of ideas and the task to supply future teachers with historical knowledge about their institutions, and, most of all, with normative orientation for their future profession (Tröhler, 2006b), the discourse has changed in the last few decades, and questions have been raised as to what extent the history of education still has the means to educate, or whether history (of education) had not better be a topic of historical and thus contextual interest, dealing with up-to-date theory and methodology regarding historical research (McCulloch, 2011, pp. 71–82; Popkewitz, 2013). These debates have also affected the notion of the "history of ideas," which is no longer the pursuit of a "unit-idea," as Arthur O. Lovejoy (1936) had

argued in his *Great Chain of Being*, nor a platonic history of ideas, but a history of ideas in context (Tröhler & Horlacher, forthcoming). As the example of Pestalozzi's notion of "head, heart, and hand" shows, a decontextualized reading of historical texts and seminal authors may result in strange or even false readings and in an unhistorical self-assurance based on historical texts. Yet history and the history of education have more to offer than being a quarry for ideological, political or normative assumptions. It is a complex amalgam of practices, ideas, expectations and interests, a proliferating discourse and an endless source of examples to train one's intellectual capacity, one's power of imagination about human possibilities for action and about modes of thinking about forms of living. In this sense, history (of education) is an archive that serves to think beyond boundaries and—in a pragmatic notion—to learn.

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