



Tracking the Educationalization of the World: Prospects for an emancipated history of education

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Abstract: *This article reconstructs the rise, the national differentiations and the decline of the genre history of education and outlines subsequently what the history of education could mean if it emancipated itself from the conditions that lead to its emergence, religion and nationalism – conditions, that, nota bene, are by no means as dominant as they once were.*

Keywords: *historiography of education, moralism, nation-building, history of the present*

There is no doubt that in many parts of the world, the academic educational sub-discipline ‘history’ has long been in crisis. There are indeed reasons to mourn this institutional loss of importance, but there are even better reasons to reflect upon it – as a historical development. Who, if not the historians of education, should be genuinely motivated to reconstruct the trajectory of the emergence, the heydays, and the decline of the history of education as an academic sub-discipline of education? At the same time, the question is: Why should anyone outside the research field care to learn about the institutional rise and fall of the history of education? Facing this provocative question, we ought to keep in mind that over the last two centuries, for instance, Hebrew, ancient Greek, and even Latin have lost much of

their academic prestige and – probably with the exception of the representatives of these fields – not too many people thought that this development indicated a serious problem which needed to be solved. So, indeed: why should anyone outside the history of education itself care about the decline of this educational sub-discipline?

The comparison with Hebrew, ancient Greek, and even Latin is striking but not really fair. At the least Hebrew and ancient Greek were important, foremost in the training of theologians as major agents of the institutionalized churches. However, the social and cultural importance of the churches has declined over the recent decades, which makes the institutional decrease in the importance of central curricular areas in the training of the future actors of



the churches (ministers, priests) understandable. In contrast, however, the importance of education in general and schooling in particular has increased dramatically in recent decades. Nowadays, we no longer talk only about the educationalization of social problems (Smeyers & Depaepe, 2008; Labaree, 2008) but also about the educationalization of the world as such (Tröhler, 2016a). A more appropriate question is, therefore: why has there been a dramatic increase in the assigned social and cultural relevance of education and schooling over the last two hundred years on one side, and a rapid decline in the importance of an academic educational sub-discipline on the other?

To answer this more specific question, a more suitable comparison than with Hebrew, ancient Greek, and Latin may be helpful. For example, no one expects a future officer to be a better officer just because he or she has studied military history, and no one expects a soon-to-be surgeon to be a better professional because he or she has studied the history of medicine. Representatives of the respective histories of sciences never doubted the value of their research, but they did not see this value as lying in enhanced skills of future professionals. One of the very early historians of medicine stated, in 1836, that the “History of Medicine ... is the history of peace and good will, of endless harmony, and unceasing philanthropy” (Hamilton, 1831, p. v), and the first lec-

turer in military history at the University of Cambridge, Sir John William Fortescue, argued in favor of his academic field by emphasizing that “great men are best studied in their letters and their actions, whether they were great speakers or not; and by no means the worst way of appreciating the actions of very many of them, both civilians and soldiers, is to read military history” (Fortescue, 1914, p. 149).

Apparently, military history or the history of medicine were seen as important because they gave readers access to the ‘noble part of mankind,’ but the fields do not themselves claim to improve the practical skills of future professionals. None of these historians would ever have argued that the surgical techniques of the ancient Romans should be a model for hospitals in the nineteenth century, and no one would have suggested that becoming acquainted with the combat tactics of the Huns or the Vandals would improve the war tactics of the present time. They would have argued that the history of the respective field is of general public interest and perhaps part of the general education (*Allgemeinbildung*) of a future professional but is not directly linked to his or her professional skills. Accordingly, the historians of these fields hardly legitimized their existence on the basis of arguments citing professional training and professional utility, and in line with this, they had a rather weak curricular standing in the training of these future professionals.



This is strikingly different in the field of education, and for two reasons. First: basically, the educational sub-discipline ‘history of education’ was developed deliberately for the purpose of teacher education in order to improve teachers’ professional quality, in which for a very long time the teacher’s professionalism was almost equated with the teacher’s moral qualities. This development occurred after 1800, at a time when the emerging European nation-states began to imagine their future, their strength, their singularity, *and* their exemplarity more and more in terms of education – the first tangible appearance of the educationalization of the world. This created the basis for the reform and expansion of education and schooling, including the reorganization of the education of the major bearers of this reformed, expanded, and differentiated education system: future teachers.

Second: the authors of histories of education and their target groups, the teachers, were different, in the beginning at least. Fortescue, the author of the military history mentioned above, was a trained historian of the British Army. Sir William Hamilton, the author of the history of medicine mentioned above, had graduated in medicine, but turned his interest to history before becoming a philosopher. Hence, they were representatives of the fields in which they had been trained. In contrast, the first historians of education were neither trained historians nor trained teachers. As a rule they were German theologians and/or

philosophers, interested in the origin and historical manifestations of eternal (educational) ideas as they became manifest in some of the heroes of the past. As the first historian of education, Friedrich Heinrich Christian Schwarz, who was a Lutheran minister, theology professor, and head of the normal school in Heidelberg, wrote in the introduction to perhaps the first monograph on the history of education that the central ideas of education had been discovered in classical Antiquity and disseminated through Christianity as the “deepest sources” for an inward moral-mental cultural education (*Geistesbildung*) and thus acted as a “sacred power” of the “genius of mankind” (Schwarz, 1813, p. iv). The purpose of history is accordingly “practical” or functional, as it allows teachers to compare their own attitudes and classroom practices with historical examples and to change them, when needed, as the geologist and devoted Pietist Karl Georg von Raumer emphasized in the introduction to his three volumes on the history of education (Raumer, 1846, p. vi): the history of education has to create a “sense of emulation” in the professional (p. iv).

In this paper, the reflection will reconstruct the rise, the national differentiations, and the decline of the history of education genre and will then outline what the history of education could mean if it emancipated itself from the conditions that led to its emergence – conditions, that, *nota bene*, are by no means as dominant as they once were.



THE GERMAN ORIGINS OF THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION: MORAL TEACHER EDUCATION AND NATION-BUILDING

The ‘history of education’ sub-discipline was created in a German Christian-idealistic Protestant milieu around and after 1800. Against this background, it is not surprising that the professional quality of the teacher was seen, in this genuine Protestant way, as a particular kind of morality. At the center of this ideal was the reflexive self-assurance of the teacher, monitoring on one side the degree to which they did indeed incarnate these eternal ideas and on the other side how strongly they were willing to realize them effectively in the classroom (and for a long time also outside it). The history of education, then, acts as an intermediary between these eternal ideals, or their earthly incarnations in “excellent men” (Raumer, 1846, p. v), on one side, and the responsible professional teacher on the other. This explains the ongoing *Quest for Heroes* in education (Horlacher, 2016a), a quest that crossed the German borders after the middle of the nineteenth century. As the English history of education lecturer, Robert Herbert Quick, stated in 1868: “There are countries where it would be considered a truism that a teacher in order to exercise his profession intelligently should know something about the chief authorities in it” (Quick, 1868,

v), and his model was the German historiography by Raumer and Schmidt (both mentioned above) and entries in a number of German general encyclopedias (viif.).

Hence, the history of education genre was created as a sequence of historical manifestations or incarnations of a blend of antique Greek idealism and universalism, personified by Plato (and his unfortunate teacher Socrates) on the one side, and of Christian idealism, personified by Jesus, on the other. The emphasis on idealism in both cases, the ancient Greek and the Christian, refers to a system of thought assuming the actual existence of a transcendent idea(l) that offers the model that the earthly world should follow. The Lutheran theologian Karl Schmidt began the introduction to his three-volume history of education accordingly: “God’s nature lives in the universe, and reveals itself to humanity as reason, beauty, and morality. The domination of these ideal powers in the world of the human world is the aim for which humanity is striving” (Schmidt, 1868, p. 1). In the emerging context of the history of education genre after 1800, the heroes between Plato and Jesus and the present times were Luther and Melancthon, and the overall hero was Pestalozzi, the undoubted and undisputed figurehead of the educationalization of the world (Tröhler, 2013a). It is no coincidence that Fichte, the passionate anti-French German nationalist and author of the influential *Addresses to the*



German Nation in 1807/1808 (Fichte, 1808/2008), compared Pestalozzi's personal character to Luther's, thereby giving Pestalozzi's educational method the highest possible dignity (p. 119) with regard to an educationally-based, thorough reform of the German nation.

NATIONAL HISTORIES OF EDUCATION

By the end of the nineteenth century, the history of education, disseminating from Germany, had become firmly established in modern teacher education training curricula, but the histories had taken on nationally idiosyncratic characteristics. Whereas perhaps the first English language history of education, written by Henry Immanuel Smith, a professor of German language at the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in 1842, still excerpted "substantially from the work of [the above-mentioned] Schwarz" (Smith, 1842, p. v), the situation was different half a century later. This had much to do with French endeavors to build up their nation in the context of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870/1871 by virtue of educational reform. With the rising tensions with Prussia, in 1868 the *Académie des Sciences morales et politiques* [Academy of Moral and Political Sciences] launched a prize competition, because, in its opinion, educational reflection in France was too strongly oriented to "foreign nations" [the Germans] and the "tradition of our own

history" and France's own "national genius" were in danger of becoming forgotten (Gréard, 1877, 345ff.). The winner of this competition was Gabriel Compayré, a confessed republican and French Protestant. Compayré published his winning work in 1879 as a two-volume history encompassing almost 1,000 pages and titled *Histoire Critique des Doctrines de l'Éducation en France depuis le Seizième Siècle* [Critical history of the educational doctrines in France since the sixteenth century]. In the foreword to the book, Compayré stated that the historical volumes had been written for the purpose of discovering "abiding truths" and to make them fruitful for a theory of education (Compayré, 1879, i). As early as in the second paragraph of the introduction, it is clear that this effort also contained polemics against Germany: "Let us not believe that education is the exclusive property of Germany" (ibid.).

Four years later, in 1883, Compayré published a handier, more universal, and, at the same time, shorter version, titled *Histoire de la Pédagogie* (Compayré, 1883), still focusing largely on French 'heroes', setting a contrast to the German histories of education emphasizing first and foremost German 'heroes' (Tröhler, 2006). An English translation of Compayré's book was published five years later, in 1888, in Boston, annotated by William H. Payne, who was perhaps the first university professor of pedagogy in the United States (the University of Michigan appointed him

in 1879). In accordance with the European historiography, Payne asserts that a teacher – as a “man of culture” – should be acquainted with the “acutest thinkers of all the ages” who “have worked at the solution of the educational problem”: “Is it not time for us to review these experiments, as the very best condition of advancing surely and steadily”? (Payne, 1888, p. v). Remarkably, Payne’s English translation makes a small but typical change to the table of contents. Whereas the original French edition titles the final chapter “Leçon XII. La science de l’éducation. Herbert Spencer et Alexandre Bain,” naming two British educationalists, Payne’s American edition adds the names of two Americans to the chapter title: “Chapter XII: The Science of Education. – Herbert Spencer, Alexander Bain, Channing, and Horace Mann” (Compayré, 1888, iv). However, the text of the chapter is the same in both publications, the French original and the English translation.

The history of education – or rather, the histories of education – was meant to strengthen the professionalism of teachers as moral agents in fostering their particular nation. Teachers were to become conscious and morally obliged, not only with regard to idealism in education but also at the same time regarding their nation, representing – in their national self-perception – true progress to their respective forms of idealism. In the same way as education and schooling became central pillars in the process of nation-building, educated teachers

became the central agents or implementers of these visions, being trained and supported by particular historical accounts – histories of education – serving them as respective moral guidelines for their Christian-national missions. The teachers did not so much have to be skilled professionals in the technical sense but rather particular kinds of persons, serving as models. In the German-speaking world, this kind of person was called *Persönlichkeit* (personality), for a true “teacher educates more through what he is than through what he knows and teaches”, as the father figure of German teacher education, Wilhelm Rein, argued in 1907 (Rein, 1907, p. 634). And the Germans had no doubt that a *Persönlichkeit* was something that was genuinely German and that sharply contrasted with the British ideal of a “gentleman,” for instance (Jacoby, 1912). Interestingly, this educational ideal of the *Persönlichkeit* is still taken for granted among prominent German educationalists today (see for example, Herrmann, 2007, p. 172).

Evidently, the history of education as an educational sub-discipline always had to be a service provider regarding the fabrication of the teacher as a morally conscious loyal agent in nation-building. The histories of education took on different configurations in accordance with the culturally dominant visions of social order and justice in the different nation-states. Whereas in Germany the history of education remained for a long time, and partly up



to the present, a history of (educational) idea(l)s, histories in the United States, for instance, have much more frequently focused institutionally on schools. Likewise, looking for a moment solely at the different school histories we find at least three distinct (national) paradigms in which the school histories are or have been written, and these styles represent dominant visions of social order infiltrating the respective historiographies of schooling. German histories of schooling are traditionally written in the *vertical* tension of social exclusion, focusing on strategies for the social advancement of the bourgeoisie and the exclusion of the middle and lower classes (for instance, Becker & Kluchert, 1993) – mirroring the traditional German striving of academic scholars to move up the social ladder and get close to the German nobility. This style, then, reflects Germany’s difficulties with the establishment of a republic with formally equal citizens, a problem that one will not find in the United States, Switzerland, or France – three of the classical republics. Nevertheless, they differ among themselves: the French and the Swiss historiographies are constructed by focusing on ideological tensions on the *horizontal* level between liberals and conservatives (for instance, Osterwalder, 2011), reflecting in a biased way the commitment to laicism. The U.S. school history, by contrast, has a completely different perspective, representing a paradigm that deals with progress and pertinence or resilience

(e.g. Tyack & Tobin, 1994; Tyack & Cuban, 1995); it mirrors the decidedly social role of American social science (which includes, as a rule, education), which is not meant to aim, as in the German case, at the social advancement of academics but at improving living conditions and ultimately heading to the construction of the city upon a hill (Popkewitz, 2010).

THE DECLINE IN IMPORTANCE DURING THE COLD WAR AND CURRENT PROSPECTS

However, all the different historiographies suffered – to different degrees – after the Second World War, when it had become obvious that the nation per se was anything but innocent and when, with the Cold War, two political systems were striving equally for global dominance. It was not the idea that education should be the major driving force in the global race that was now questioned – quite the contrary, as the striking educationalized reactions towards the Sputnik shock show (Tröhler, 2013b). But the political-cultural conditions of educational thinking started to change, favoring a particular educational language or system of thought that became, not least via the OECD, globalized. Institutionalized education remained a central and even more important servant of these dominant ideas, not in its contribution of historical guidelines for teachers but in its



accountability for measurable output in a context that has been described as the *Cult of the Fact* (Hudson, 1972), expressing a deep culturally anchored *Trust in Numbers* (Porter, 1996). The growing faith in the statistics of output data went along with an epistemological shift in the social sciences towards a model dominating medical research in which clinical trials and statistical correlations – and not mutual understanding – became the bases for the political imperative called “evidence-based”. This consistent medicalization of educational research during the last half-century has necessarily led to a de-professionalization of teachers (Tröhler, 2015) and, with this, to a decline in the traditionally important educational sub-discipline, the history of education. Its decline was culturally and politically decreed, triggering mourning on the part of the historians of education. More or less defiantly, they defended their shrinking institutional terrain, but international discussions about these developments remained largely in reconstructive narratives of national trajectories (e.g. Larsen, 2012). Suggestions that the broader context of this institutional decline should be reconstructed in a comparative way remained rather ineffective.

But there is a second chance. It may be only an irony that roughly a quarter of a century after the end of the Cold War, nationalism in most parts of at least the Western World has once more become a dominant way to think

about politics and that, in connection with this nationalism, the Oxford Dictionaries and the German Society for Language chose “post-truth” and the equivalent “post-factual” as the international words of the year for 2016. This submissive convergence – if not to the medicalized paradigm but to the empirical data-driven paradigm more generally – has exerted pressure on historians of education, promoting all of a sudden the value of data or “true facts” (Tenorth, 2012). However, it may be worthwhile to remember that the leading British historian of his time, Edward Hallett Carr, warned in the 1960s: “The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which it is very hard to eradicate” (Carr, 1961, p. 6). Carr would turn out, to his grief, to be right; the “cult of facts” remained prevalent, as one of the leading contemporary historians admitted (Skinner, 2002). But rather than worshipping the archive as the place of hope to find artefacts (“data”) and, with them, allegedly the key to the illustrious inner circle of the higher-ranked scientific disciplines, intellectuals working internationally have urged reflection upon how education – and with this, the educational sciences – has been fostered in order to make the kind of people that the dominant visions of social order aimed for, and how in this endeavor a whole apparatus emerged to support what was



desired and to prevent or even exclude the undesired (Popkewitz, 2013).

However, the current ‘post-truth’ and the ‘post-factual’ age may be seen as opportunities to think about education in its diverse trajectories not as a moral teaching tool but as ways in which the modern selves were and are being constructed in an educational language. Rather than being – consciously or unconsciously – docile servants of dominant national or global ideologies, the historians of education may feel motivated to emancipate themselves from their moral and national missions. Instead of being ultimately moral agents of the national idiosyncrasy, they should be archeologists, as the eminent historian Pocock stated: “The historian is in considerable measure an archeologist; he is engaged in uncovering the presence of various language contexts in which discourse has from time to time been conducted” (Pocock, 1987, p. 23). An overall historiography or the history of histories – that is, the comparative contextual reconstruction of the rise and fall of the history of education as an educational sub-discipline – would focus attention on the educationalization of the world, the constant increase in the faith in education, which is configured, however, rather differently in different contexts across time and space, institutionally and intellectually. A noteworthy single example of this kind of cultural history of a particular idea is the German notion of *Bildung* (Horlacher, 2016b).

Provided they take a de-moralized, culturally and nationally emancipated, and comparative stance, histories may, of course, take different approaches: as discourse analyses, as (new) cultural history, as gender history, as post-colonial history, as visuality, or as (new) materiality in history (Dussel, 2012; Polenghi & Bandini, 2016; Priem & te Heesen, 2016; Herman & Roberts, 2017; McLeod, in press). In many senses, these approaches are brought together in new curriculum history (Popkewitz, Franklin, & Pereyra, 2001; Baker, 2009; Depaepe, 2012; Popkewitz, 2015; Lesko, in press), with the curriculum understood as a culturally pre-defined melting pot between dominant social and moral ideals and institutions, configuring in each case particular educational practices and materialities (Tröhler, 2016b) that all deserve to be examined historically and to be told. But what is the added value?

THE EMANCIPATED HISTORY OF EDUCATION AND THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

The history of education as a field of study is a research topic that is open to different academic disciplines, a fact that receives more attention in Germany than elsewhere. Accordingly, this multidisciplinary was identified as a severe problem by the German historian Heinz-Elmar Tenorth



in 1987 when bemoaning that “the scholarly history of education” was “in danger of abandoning itself to other disciplines” (Tenorth, 1987, p. 217). In contrast to these interdisciplinary tendencies but in accordance with the German tradition, Tenorth called for a historiography that serves the “orientation of the educational actors” (Tenorth, 1996, p. 357). This kind of historiography would be possible, he argued, by relying on the idea or the principle of “autonomy” or the “inner logic” or “own logic” of education as practice. This idea of educational autonomy was one of the fundamentals of the German *geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik*, with its ideal of *Persönlichkeit* and of *Bildung* (Tröhler, 2011, pp. 148–163), and it is identified and advocated by Tenorth as a corrective of a new, methodologically sophisticated interdisciplinary historiography (“fine craft”) that is, however, separated from its pedagogical mission and that “dissolves the traditional unity of reflection and practice”, thereby losing the opportunity for “orientation of practice” of teachers (Tenorth, 1996, p. 356). According to Tenorth, the problem is not the good quality of historical research conducted and written “outside of education” (p. 352) but that educational historians too willingly and carelessly copy these un-educational histories of education and thereby ignore the “problem-specific, autonomous theoreticization” of the history of education (ibid.).

It seems that elsewhere, this clear-cut epistemological or ideological front between ‘real’ historians focusing on education and historians of education does not have this shattering importance. In France, for instance, Antoine Prost, Pierre Caspard, or Rebecca Rogers are historians by training and do not write their historical studies to foster the professional quality of future teachers but rather – to quote Antoine Prost with regard to contemporary history (of education) – to understand contemporary problems in education, as the history of education can and should in fact explain why certain developments have taken place and others not (Prost, 2004, p. 7). This research program is advocated by the journal *History of the Present*, among others, which defines its purpose as a forum of reflection:

on the role history plays in establishing categories of contemporary debate by making them appear inevitable, natural, or culturally necessary; and to publish work that calls into question certainties about the relationship between past and present that are taken for granted by the majority of practicing historians. (“Introducing,” 2011, p. 1)

Obviously, the historiography of education teaches us about the different cultural and national trajectories not only of education systems but also of reflection on education and thus of histories of education. Hence, the actual challenge is not the difference



between ‘real’ historians and historians of education but to recognize the systems of reasonings that make such differences evident in some contexts and irrelevant in other contexts. This triggers the necessity to have an international comparative focus on the history of education. This comparative approach will eventually lead to a program for critically reconstructing the two major pillars of modern education (be it in policy, in schooling, or in research) – namely, religion and nation, in the framework of an ongoing educationalization of the world, which is configuring itself differently in different contexts. The added value is, then, genuinely theoretical, which is nothing to apologize for, since any theory needs to be aware of the assumptions from which it starts. In that sense, history is enlightening. Skinner mentioned once that “... to learn from the past – and we cannot otherwise learn it at all – ... is to learn the key to self-awareness itself” (Skinner, 1969, p. 53), the basis for the emancipation of ourselves as *agents* of morality and nationality and thus as a basis for the transformation of ourselves into *analysts* of these driving forces behind the educationalization of the world. One can bet that teachers, then, would be interested in their cultural (re-)construction of their institution and of the expectations that are connected to the profession, which would give them an alternative to their suffering under the dominant idea(l)s in education policy that is gradually

leading to a de-professionalization of teachers.

Be it as it may with regard to teachers as agents of the educationalization of social problems, it is crucial to realize that ‘social problems’ are dependent on the gaps between the particular visions of the social order and the perceived state of the art. These visions act as normative grids in which the educational requirements are created when facing ‘reality.’ However, the French, the Germans, or the U.S. Americans, for instance, have and had different visions of the ideal social order and accordingly developed different educational theories (Tröhler, 2014). But research reaffirmed the particular configurations of nationally dominant social ideals, and historiography was no exception at all, as can be seen in a comparative formal analysis of the contributions printed in the international journal *Paedagogica Historica* (Depaepe & Simon, 1996). However, rather than actually comparing the different configurations and trajectories across the different times and spaces, education research in general helped to reinforce the nationally dominant visions. The institutions – the universities and the national associations of the respective (sub-)disciplines – helped to cement these national ideologies by particular practices in training and promoting early career scholars and by appeal proceedings.

In gaining the prestige of becoming an academic field, education profited greatly from the powerful marriage



of sociological statistics with nation-building in the nineteenth century that was at the root of the modern *Making Up People* (Hacking, 1986). It created kinds of persons: nationals and foreigners; the upper, middle, and lower classes; the different races; the 'normals' and the disabled; the sane and the certifiable; children as distinct from adolescents and grown-ups, and later, migrants and refugees or straight and homosexuals, currently being expanded to LGBT. As a rule, education reacted to these made-up people by developing particular educational research fields, developing programs of integration, or, in the case of delinquents, re-integration, through special or curative education, later by integrative and then inclusive education, intercultural education studies, and so on. Education research always willingly accepted the dominant social and cultural educational desires and was strikingly less willing to analyze them and their power to promote the cultural aspirations regarding education. It is hardly surprising, then, that within this framework of the silent legitimation of cultural practices, research methods or methodology became more and more important. This development even began – more in Europe than in North America – to infiltrate the weakening genre of the history of education. But again, rather than reflecting on the ideological ingredients of dominant models of research methods (Popkewitz, in press), there was a surprising uncritical

willingness to handle methods almost as a fetish for 'objective' knowledge, data, or facts.

It seems that we have come to a kind of crossroads. Under the current dominant preferences, there is actually no need for a history of education as an educational sub-discipline, unless the bull is taken by the horns. It can, and in fact it should, emancipate itself from those powers that once enabled its emergence – namely, religious idealism and (sacred) nationalism. This would make possible an understanding of the educationalization not only of social problems but also of the modern world and the modern self, as a system of reasoning (Hacking, 1992) or discourse or *langue* that acts as the broad ideological context of perceptions, utterances (*paroles*), and practices. This comparative and analytic approach to historiography would not only stop the decline of the history of education as an educational sub-discipline but would also, in its fundamental reflexive quality, contribute immensely to the foundations of education as an academic research field, a research field that is aware of its vulnerability to service and the way it thereby constantly endangers its academic commitments and responsibilities. This awareness seems to be a sound starting point for intellectually stimulating research questions that do not *reproduce* the normative systems of reasoning but that *discern* them. History will then be something stimulating – and enlightening.



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