

Call for Papers for the International Symposium

Education and Enlightenment(s)

Ideals and Realities – Periods and Cultures

Universität des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken, Graduate Center, 19-21 March 2019

Organisation: Prof. Dr. Anne Conrad/Dr. Alexander Maier

In every historical period, context and culture, education and formation played a vital role. They served to initiate people into the social and religious context of its time, to maintain the status quo between ranks and groups, shape human coexistence and safeguard ideals and goals of society and religion for the future. A common notion until the dawn of Modern Times understood education and formation mainly as transmission. Just as craft skills were handed down from generation to generation via demonstration, spiritual values as written down in important texts, specifically “holy scriptures”, had to be memorized.

This Conference, in contrast, pretends to review parallel or competing earlier educational models that not only allowed for a wider scope of individual action but, at the same time, demanded a higher degree of personal responsibility, stood for personal and cultural progress and served as forerunners to an “enlightened” formation, as compared to a mainly traditional – safeguarding education: what ideals and educational processes can be identified that are usually attributed to the “Enlightenment” of the 18th century Europe and commonly ascribed to the “educational century”? On the other hand, in what way can educational concepts since the 19th century be interpreted as reception (also critique) of the “enlightened” century? In both eras we research for motives, guiding principles, references and male and female players and ask what role played reason, man, world or future as “enlightening” categories.

“Enlightenment”, understood from a historical-anthropological perspective, is a colourful phenomenon. In the European context (even more so in the French “Enlightenment”) it reveals an emancipatory tendency, critical of church and authority and, on the other hand, utilitarian, paternalistic or philanthropic (e.g., clearly in the German “Volksaufklärung”) and establishes alliances particularly with Protestantism, but also with Catholicism or Judaism. It also led to processes of secularization in terms of a gradual recession of religious structures in social life, so that religion was no longer part of all aspects of life, but retained competence only in certain areas or as responding to certain questions (H. Lübbe). Simultaneously, a reversal sacralising process attempted a return to Christianity, and Hartmut Lehmann went to such extent to call the 19th and 20th century the “most irrational centuries” (H. Lehmann 1997, p. 325) of Modern Times. Nevertheless, “Enlightenment” – at least in European perspective – represents an irrefutable spiritual cosmos of values, not devoid of questionable developments, such as problematic hybris, narrow rationalism or a naïve optimism of progress (Positivism). Here arises the question up to what point these concepts were acknowledged transcending European contexts, or if similar developments took place outside of Europe. In view of current migratory movements a closer look into Islamic contexts might be of interest.

A special interest poses the question if and to what extent, “Enlightenment” could present a topic for research that – across periods and cultures – might offer new insight for educational sciences and thus show how education and formation have always fulfilled an “enlightening” function aiming at knowledge and progress. Thus, the question arises, if it makes sense to call the “Enlightenment” a

genuine moment of educational activity, so that “Enlightenment(s)” can be dealt with as a meaningful anthropological-educational concept that transcends the European 18th century. An analysis of educational contexts in terms of phenomenon of rationalization, differentiation and pluralization could be very promising, particularly for studies of the history of education. (H.-U. Musolff/S. Hellekamps).

Researchers of different areas are invited to investigate the above mentioned topics from different perspectives and are explicitly asked not to limit themselves to the European “Enlightenment” of the 18th century, but to analyse similar developments in earlier and later periods and in non-European cultures as well, and to describe convergences and divergences. The following perspectives are feasible:

- **Education to become “subject” or an “enlightened” human being** (or similar anthropological concepts in other cultural contexts): “Enlightened” education aims particularly at forming the “subject”. Reason, responsibility and usefulness play an important role. A closer look into the importance attributed to each of those aspects and its implications for gender theory, and how the concept of subject performs in transcultural comparison in reference to Judaic or Islamic concepts.
- **Education and concepts of time:** The Christian tradition embossed for Europe a linear concept of time oriented towards the future which, in turn, increased the significance of education and pursued a continuous improvement of man and society – an intention that idealised human progress and became susceptible to religious interpretation and sacralisation. How could or should such concepts (still) be “enlightening” in education?
- **Theory of education and “enlightened” practice:** There is always a tension between theoretical concepts and practical implementation. The issue of how intended “enlightening” effectiveness gets lost on the way, or if – subversively – non-intentional “enlightened” potential might be released in the process of implementing certain educational concepts.
- **Childhood in “enlightened” perspective:** Concepts of education mostly address children and childhood. What role do “enlightened” goals of education play not only since the 18th century, but in the pre-modern period as well? What were its social expectations and consequences?
- **Education and Religion:** In what way did religion encourage educational issues to improve mankind or society? What repercussions have “enlightening” efforts on religion? An especially interesting aspect in terms of Judaism and Islam. Does perhaps European Judaism in particular reveal here a conspicuous interrelation in its understanding of education as genuinely religious task? Does not education in Islam open a specific line of research in terms of a transfer of European values?

The Conference is organised by the Zentrum für Historische Europastudien im Saarland (ZHEUS) in cooperation with the Université du Luxembourg, the Institut für Historische Anthropologie e.V. (AVE) and the Arbeitskreis Vormoderne Erziehungsgeschichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft.

Please submit proposals for Conference contributions until January 15th, 2018 to Prof. Dr. Anne Conrad/Dr. Alexander Maier, Universität des Saarlandes, Philosophische Fakultät, Campus A 4.2, 66123 Saarbrücken, a.conrad@mx.uni-saarland.de or amaier@mx.uni-saarland.de