

Book Reviews by Hein Retter

Timo Jacobs & Susanne Herker (Hrsg.) (2018). *Jenaplan-Pädagogik in Konzeption und Praxis. Perspektiven für eine moderne Schule. Ein Werkbuch*. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren. 556 pages, ISBN 978-3-8340-1716-1; 36 €.

Germany is one of those countries of the western world where the public (state) education system is strongly dominant. On the other hand, a larger number of schools exists with a special concept of teaching and learning - a pedagogical alternative to public education. This does not exclude that some reform concepts also found their way into the public education system. Emerging from the international movement of so-called "New Education" in the first three decades of the 20th century, such schools work, for example, according to the pedagogical concept of Maria Montessori (1870-1952), Rudolf Steiner (1856-1925), Célestin Freinet (1896-1966), Hermann Lietz (1868-1919), Helen Parkhurst (1887-1973). Emerging from the school reform movement 100 years ago, such schools today, certainly have an increase of pupils. The concepts have been further developed pedagogically, but are still significantly linked to the basic idea of their historical starting point.

This applies in particular to the practical pedagogy of Peter Petersen (1884-1952), the reform educator who taught educational science at the University of Jena from 1923 to 1950. As a successor to the famous Herbartian Wilhelm Rein (1847-1929), he developed a new concept of school at the University of Jena, which soon found international interest, in which - as Petersen repeatedly emphasized - international experiences of "New Education" played a special role, not least reform schools from the USA.

Since the 4th World Congress of the New Education Fellowship in Locarno (Switzerland) in 1927, Petersen's model is named the Jena Plan. In the decades following the Second World War, Petersen's school model spread mainly in West Germany and the Netherlands. After the German reunification in 1990, the Jena Plan pedagogy found lively interest in the former GDR, which had banned all "bourgeois" reform schools under socialistic rule. Reform schools exist in the new federal states partly also as public (state) school with a special, experimental status.

The main features of the Jena Plan are:

It is not the age group, but the mixed-age group that forms the starting point of learning, which combines learning with social learning; there is no "sit-down": the traditional classroom is replaced by various activity areas and job offers, which can also extend to the adjoining corridor. This practice has a lot in common with the historic English Open Plan Schools of the seventies and today "open plan teaching".

The basic situations of educational teaching are work and conversation, play and celebration. A system of flexible introductory and advanced courses enables the promotion of the talents and special interests of children; In addition to teachers and students, the parents are also involved in school activities, whose interest in founding a Jenaplan school often formed the starting signal for their continued existence. Petersen had in fact called his school a family school. Children with special needs, disabled children, are taught together with non-disabled children (now referred to as inclusion).

The present book, published by the educator and current president of the Society for Jenaplan Education in Germany, Timo Jacobs (teacher at a German Jena Plan school), and the Professor of Educational Science at the Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Graz (Austria), Susanne Herker, has long been the first major attempt to address aspects of school practice of today's Jena Plan schools - from different points of view but in the multiplicity, forming a unity. Today Jenaplan schools work mainly in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. The book contains contributions from nearly 60

authors who work in the majority as practical pedagogues in Jena Plan schools, complemented by contributions from scientists and university teachers, some of them well-acquainted with the Jenaplan or concepts of reform education in general, and some of them working in the field of school development and the arts of educational research.

In any case, this volume proves that a young generation of educators are following the concept of the Jena Plan and - as the individual contributions show - doing creative work. The striking feature is the diversity of the various contributions, which are not all "typical Jena Plan", but an expression of an open form of teaching, which makes clear the self-determination of learning, the variety of forms of learning, in group work, projects, individual work, but at the same time a review of the development of the pedagogical concept, which always lives on the communication with other schools working in the same direction.

The authors contributions are assigned to the following chapters:

Jenaplan as a reform concept - ..., as a school concept - ..., as a didactic orientation - ..., as a concept of a pedagogically oriented school development - ..., practice, giving glimpses in present situation and future development.

The appendix provides information on organizational structures and sources of information on the Jena Plan today. The experience of the Jena Plan schools in the Netherlands plays an important role for a new generation of teachers who founded new Jena Plan schools only in the 1990s. One can wish the volume many readers interested in progressive education.

H.G. Callaway (2017). *Pluralism, Pragmatism and American Democracy. A Minority Report*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Hardback ISBN 978-1-4438-8922-3. Date of Publication: 01/07/2017; 320 pages; Price: £64.99

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Joyce E. King & Ellen E. Swartz (2018). *Heritage Knowledge in the Curriculum. Retrieving an African Episteme*. Routledge. New York and London: Taylor & Francis Group. – Paperback: 230 pages; 37,73 €. ISBN: 978-0-815-38043-6. – Hardcover: 230 pages, 120,47 €. ISBN: 978-0-815-38042-9 – E-book: 216 pages, 29.16 €. ISBN: 978-1-351-21323-3; [reviewed is the e-book version of kindle; 216 pages;]

Both books have a common point of intersection: the question of race in its - different - meaning for white thinking and African American thinking in the USA of the last 100 years: Thus in the time of Progressivism after 1900, the time of Social Constructivism from 1930 and the time of the Civil Rights Movement from the sixties until today. First, the volume of H.G. Callaway.

The review applied a volume of particular interest, the title of which already illustrates America's central political values as the points of orientation of its philosophers: pluralism, pragmatism, democracy. Dr. H.G. Callaway (Temple University, Philadelphia) presented contributions on this topic in 19 essays. Such a volume deserves our attention at a time when America's current policies are creating uncertainty worldwide, and democratic perspectives are being put to the test. It is not a systematic theory that is presented here. These are texts that have been written for various occasions, and most of them have already been published; five are first publications, all other essays, first written in the nineties, have been checked by the author for this issue. Most of them are

extended reviews of books that revolve around the subject area defined in this volume. It is remarkable that the author reflects the American experience with pluralism, pragmatism and democracy by removing it from the already existing theoretical approaches of other authors and creating new contexts for the reader. In this way, in the light of a liberal interpretation, a - loose - theory emerges in the reflection of already existing conceptions of American Philosophy, in the visible endeavour not to put these concepts at risk, but to renew their understanding. If pluralism, pragmatism, democracy are at the top of the list, then a second group of terms should be mentioned that supports this crux, but also highlights areas of tension: concepts such as experience, values, community, interest-groups, reconstruction, liberalism, individualism, social theory, and also religion and science, nature and naturalism, utilitarianism, the moral universe.

John Dewey (1859-1952), whose thinking decisively shaped America's intellectual culture in the first half of the 20th century, has, almost inevitably, repeatedly moved into the centre of attention, but with different contexts in each case. This applies to the essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson and 19th century New English Transcendentalism (with a review of the English philosopher of Romanticism, S.T. Coleridge). This also applies to Dewey's adversary George Santayana (whose concept of imagination the author compares with that of Emerson). Sidney Hook, perhaps Dewey's most important pupil, whose reprint (1996) about the metaphysics of pragmatism becomes for Callaway motivation to investigate the contradictory statements about the deeper dimensions of American philosophy.

We find in Callaway's volume reviews of books about Dewey's philosophy and its aspects, as written by Larry Hickman, James Campbell and Raymond Boisvert. Special attention should be paid to the fact that reviews of German authors are also mentioned, who play a decisive role in the transformation of American philosophy and its main proponents. Callaway reviewed two books by political scientist Walter Reese-Schäfer (University of Göttingen) on the two Frankfurt philosophers Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas. Another review he dedicated to the social philosopher Hans Joas, whose book "Pragmatismus und Gesellschaftstheorie" (1992) was a landmark for a new interest in pragmatism in German-speaking countries.

The reviewer is allowed a short excursion. The central chapter of Joas' book concerned the negative attitude of German philosophers towards new American philosophy at the Third International Congress of Philosophy at Heidelberg, 1908. This negative view about the so called stupid Germans who didn't acknowledge the good American pragmatism determined the view of some German and Swiss educationalists until today. Callaway correctly reproduces the critical representation of Joas. Scepticism about the pragmatism of the USA however was not only a German reaction, but a European one, and it had objective reasons.

In pragmatism truth is no longer understood as the correspondence of consciousness and being, thinking and (separated) reality. Truth primarily is that which has proven itself in the real world, and thus becomes conscious as experience. Effective experience is the basic concept of all pragmatic philosophy. Terms no longer stand for the essence of a thing, but only have value if they have practical effectiveness – that's the claim. The method to make things clear is to avoid philosophical aporias, contradictions, dilemmas, because their discussion does not produce successful results. Known opposites such as thinking and acting, should be and factual being, phenomenon and essence of a thing are levelled by Dewey's naturalism. Any dualism in philosophy, especially Kant's philosophy, belongs in the dustbin of history. That makes philosophy easy. It proclaims the message that philosophers have so far only created problems without solving them. Finally, if problems do indeed arise in society, then democratic growth in the future will solve them.

An optimistic message. It has just made the mistake that it was wrong – in particular for African Americans, who dreamed the unfulfilled dream of democratic justice. If one thinks of the effort for "Social Reconstruction" in the time of Great Depression in the US, created 1933 by Dewey and some

of his colleagues of the Teachers College of Columbia University, New York, then mainly it was content with academic rhetoric that hardly touched the misery of African Americans. As chairman of LIPA, a small party that only existed for a few years, he did, however, use a greeting at the annual meeting of the NAACP in 1932 to campaign for votes for the upcoming presidential election. This was unsuccessful because the candidate supported by LIPA received hardly any votes in an election, that Franklin D. Roosevelt won.

William James had always pointed out that the term pragmatism and its basic idea did not come from himself, but from Charles S. Peirce, his long-standing impoverished friend, who had long lived outside the academic world. Despite all his friendship with James, who at times supported him materially, Peirce saw the core of his philosophy endangered by the popularization begun by James. From 1905 Peirce used the term "Pragmatism" for his own philosophy. Outside of professional philosophers, Peirce's scientific achievements remained largely unknown to the American public even after his death (1914). Peirce's "Collected Papers" - apart from an edition of Peirce's writings by Morris Cohen - were not published until 20 years after his death. John Dewey, however, who is considered to be the third founding father of American pragmatism after Peirce and James, was careful not to subsume his own philosophy under the term pragmatism. In the years after 1900 "pragmatism" had become too much of an ambivalent topic of discussion. Everyone who wanted to create a new philosophy understood it differently. In early 1908, the American historian Arthur O. Lovejoy distinguished 13 different types of pragmatism with James' who described himself as radical empiricist. Critically seen, the new was not at all uniformly tangible among American philosophers in the first decade of 20th century. On the other hand, criticism of traditional philosophy, the classical idealism of Kant, Hegel, Schelling, clearly emerged.

Among the leading philosophers of the USA after 1900 it was only Josiah Royce (1855-1916) who did not take part in this criticism of idealism. He remained loyal to idealism, but at the same time he also represented an "absolute pragmatism" that was now completely contrary to Dewey's instrumentalism and the new logic, which he published in an expanded form in 1903; Bertrand Russell in turn asserted critically: that what Dewey presented to the professional world in 1916 as "Essays in Experimental Logic" has nothing to do with logic.

The prerequisites for an American philosopher to report on the new American philosophy to the philosophers of Europe, gathered in Heidelberg, were therefore extremely poor in the autumn of 1908. William James, friend of a series of German philosophers, would probably have managed, with wit and rhetoric, at the Heidelberg Congress of 1908 to create a climate of acceptance of the new. But James had cancelled. The grand opening speech at the Third International Philosophers' Congress was given by Royce. He spoke about the concept of truth and expressed himself critically on instrumentalism - as Dewey represented it. That's why after the publication of the Congress Report (which is available online today) Dewey later criticized Royce's presentation quite sharply. But after the First World War it was Dewey who represented the cause of American philosophy without the competition of others, and he did so as radically as he did successfully. Only after the Second World War, did the philosophical era of Dewey collapse.

Nevertheless, pragmatism has lost none of its importance. Willard Quine, Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam - and Charlene Haddock Seigfried (*1943) - reconstructed pragmatism. Callaway rightly refers to the latter, because Seigfried made the importance of pragmatism fruitful for the feminist view. And not only in her commitment to Jane Addams and John Dewey, but also to the African American philosopher Alain L. Locke, one of the most important voices of the Harlem Renaissance in New York in the 1920s, when African American culture won the identity as a well-known movement for the first time.

Coming back to our review: It is Callaway's concern to (re)find the right balance of political philosophy in the basic tensions of democracy, which becomes clear in pragmatism as a unity in the multiplicity of its themes and authors. Understanding democracy in all its diversity was certainly a

concern of James, but not of Dewey, who rightly received criticism from Callaway on this point. This view stressed democracy as the good, self-ruled community, with the concept of pluralism in his main political work, "The Public and Its Problems" (1927). Despite his friendly relationship with Horace Kallen, Dewey has basically never managed to reconcile this central concept of his vision of democracy.

In contrast to the overwhelming majority of intellectual heirs of classical pragmatism who ignored the problem of the Color Line (W.E.B. Du Bois) and suppressed the existence of African American pragmatism, Callaway devotes himself in detail to Martin Luther King (1929-1968), the murdered African American pastor and leader of the Civil Rights movement. Callaway defends the "King Dictum": *The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice*. Until today the hopeful sentence waits for its fulfilment. The essay about Martin Luther King is the most impressive chapter in the book. Not in recourse to Dewey, but to Abraham Lincoln, Callaway makes clear how much the "King Dictum" is dependent on a horizon of values that precedes reality and gives hope for justice in the face of reality. A recommendable book.

The volume of Joyce E. King (Professor for Urban Teaching, Learning and Leadership at Georgia State University) and Ellen E. Swartz (American educational consultant, independent researcher) is a very encouraging for all those who continue to suffer from everyday racism in the United States. African Americans for long have given up hope that the Civil Right Movement, which began after 1900 and peaked in the 1960s, will change the existing disadvantages in the long run. They make the bitter experience that the "arc of the moral universe" is very long, maybe too long: White American moral "bends towards justice"? By no means! To quote such a statement today with a mitigating intention, half a century after Martin Luther King's murder, 1967, has a hint of ideology. King & Swartz make clear that the time is ripe for a new start of reflection on African American identity in historical retrospect, both on the originals of the past of American Slavery and the African part in the historic roots of African American identity. The aim is to gain distance from the too official view of American culture which textbooks spread, written by white American historians. The continuation of white supremacy on the African American since the time of slavery, the following era of "Black Codes" and the discriminating "Separate but equal-doctrine" of the Supreme Court, ruling the American Nation from 1896 to 1954, must be taught to the young generation as part of the curriculum of public education.

The white majority society of America has hardly been interested in the question. White historians have written white contemporary history perhaps with a sideways look mentioning in few lines on the fate of colored people; in educational science of the 20th century for white left-wing liberals who are close to progressivism, this book should be a must read. Because they receive the criticism they deserve, and no one before dared to speak as clearly as King & Swartz did in all objectivity.

The chapter on American Democracy in this book is opened with a letter from the African American Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806) to Thomas Jefferson, the "Father of American Democracy", who wrote the American Declaration of Independence, 1776. In this letter Banneker – the rare issue of a free man, with reason – indicted the great Jefferson, a rich planter with many slaves, "how pitiable is it to reflect, that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of Mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of those rights and privileges, which he had conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren, under groaning captivity and cruel oppression, that you should at the same time be found guilty of that most criminal act, which you professedly detested in others, with respect to yourselves" (p. 25).

My comment: I learned about American democracy by reading the Works of John Dewey, but America's most famous philosopher, as he was called, did not mention Banneker nor any other central figure of African Americans' fight for equality in his collected writings of 37 volumes. I think now, it's a shame, that the different faces of America, in a cultural view, are suppressed by famous white intellectuals. Only this "white" dominated image of American democracy which is damaged by suppressing the racial aspects, has determined the Dewey renaissance in Switzerland and Germany for a quarter of a century.

The spiritual centre of this volume of King & Swartz is the reconstruction of African American identity based on the works of the leaders of the early African American Civil Right Movement, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1886-1963) and Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950), to present the rich cultural heritage of black history and living for the current generation. A second step, which is actually new, is the connection of Afro-American culture with its origins in Africa, the connections that existed in pre-Columbian times between Africa and America (according to the latest research) and to expose the roots for Afro-American identity here. This concerns the knowledge of the symbolic world of Africa and the knowledge of African languages, and is also supported by the co-author of this chapter, Hassimi O. Maïga (Emeritus Professor for Education, Medgar Evers College, New York City, with biographical roots from Mali, West Africa). The third step is to discuss and to show ways to transform the knowledge in a curriculum so that the younger generation of public schools can once again become aware of and strengthen their African-American identity.

As a reader one naturally asks oneself: Should young African Americans be educated nationally and against the principles of American democracies? No, not at all. What's surprising is that the basic values of Africa's diverse cultures, especially West Africa's pre-colonial period, are surprisingly close to the ideal of American democracy, "sharing responsibility for communal well-being and belonging; pursuing knowledge as inseparable from pursuing wisdom; knowledge as a communal experience in which everyone has something to contribute; exhibiting self-determination that considers the needs of the collective; love, dignity, and decency as shared by all; knowing that cultural sovereignty is a common right of all peoples; pursuing freedom and justice as communal responsibilities; and protecting childhood as a collective responsibility" (p. 82). Here, every Dewey connoisseur is surprised: these values coincide with the ideals of American democracy proclaimed by Dewey.

Of course, King & Schwartz' book sharply criticized the progressive education movement of the 20th century (chapter 4 and 5), and John Dewey, America's world-renowned educational philosopher, belonged to the progressive movement (although we know that leading Dewey experts, such as Robert E. Westbrook, tried in vain to portrait him as an opponent of progressivism). But King & Swartz say quite rightly that Dewey wished for a slow change to the gradual equal rights of the races, but he remained silent to the injustices of his time. And, indeed, we know that the Dewey very associated educational historian Lawrence A. Cremin had written a history of progressive education only as a "white" movement; the African Americans didn't exist. Even an author like Ronald K. Goodenow, who denounced such kinds of hidden indirect racism of the progressive movement (the language of which was filled with terms such as tolerance, social understanding etc.) saw the African Americans only as victims of white school politics, and could not appreciate the achievements of African Americans for democracy (King & Swartz, p. 81).

For Dewey's European interpretation and the assessment of educational movements in America, these are completely new approaches to interpretation. Also a rich literature documentation and the foreword and epilogue by esteemed US scientists (Gloria Ladson-Billings; Vera L. Nobles and Wade W. Nobles) encourage further international research.

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