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CLASSIC FIGURES AND CONSTRUCTION OF CANONS IN HUNGARIAN TEXTBOOKS ON HISTORY OF
EDUCATION
(1867 – 1956)

THESES OF A PhD DISSERTATION

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INTRODUCTION

It is an agreement in international literature that there has been a vigorous upswing since the 1960s in the researches made in the field of history of education. The main steps of the changes in international history of education are described as following by Marc Depaepe: “there has been a preference since the ‘nineties for the »new cultural history of education«, which has displaced the »new social history of education« of the ‘sixties, while that same »new social history of education« was put forward to oust the old »history of educational thought« dating from the ‘fifties.” (*Depaepe*, 2004, p. 334.).

Heinz-Elmar Tenorth describes the common motive and the consistent strategy, as the two main reasons of the success in the research in the history of education. According to him the common motive is: „the historiography of education – if we want it or not, forced in partly polemical debates initially - decided that it considers his own work a consciously, methodologically organized historiography i.e. it moves away the self-description of instruction and education that the national cultures and the pedagogic elite wrote and passed on in the tradition of educational systems.” (*Tenorth*, 1997. p. 112.)

The changes in the researches on history of education was due to the changes in the historic researches. Because of the general scepticism of the traditional historiography the historians of education were motivated to review the theory and the practice of the traditional history of education. Debates in the international literature were not just on the methodological challenges, but mainly on the changing role of the history of education and the historians of education. These debates were intensive from the mid- 1990s to the first years of 2000s While the last decades are regarded successful for the researches, the importance of the subject in the teacher training has been devaluated (*Lowe*, 2002; *Tröhler*, 2006).

The Hungarian history of education, with some exceptions, was hardly influenced by the debates on the challenges of the post-modern historiography and the different role of the history of education and the historians of education. These debates were ongoing in the history of education in the last 15 years. However, there has been a topic and methodological development in the researches of the Hungarian history of education in the last two decades.

The enrichment of the topics resulted in the appearance of new fields of research such as the history of childhood (*Hegedűs*, 2004), the analysis of the social history of education (ex. *Nagy*, 1992, 2000, 2002), the alteration of reform pedagogy’s interpretation (ex. *Németh*, *Mikonya and Skiera*, 2005, *Németh*, 2002b., 2005b; *Mikonya*, 2005; *Pukánszky*, 2005b, 2005c; *Mikonya and Pirka*, 2010), the history of educational sciences (ex. *Németh*, *Pukánszky*, *Horn and Tenorth*, 2001; *Németh*, 2002a, 2005a; *Szabolcs*, 2006), history of women (ex. *Kéri*, 2008; *Pukánszky*, 2006, 2007) and the history of education of people outside Europe (ex. *Kéri*, 2001a, 2004a, 2004b).

On the field of methodology it was, first of all, the appearance of the content-analysis (*Szabolcs*, 1999) and the iconography (*Baska*, *Nagy and Szabolcs*, 2001; *Kéri*, 2003; *Géczi*, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008) that provided the possibility of expansion of methodology. The theoretical and methodological discussions played only marginal role in the questions of historiography.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The dissertation interprets the evolution of the modern history of education as a partial process of modernization. During the process of modernization the European people’s living

conditions, the habits, the explanation of the world, the relationship towards the environment and themselves have changed. The main features of modernization are – without the claim of the completeness – the development of scientific thinking, secularization and the formation of modern states.

The modern state, which from the beginning of the Modern Age gradually builds the executive power dispersed earlier, now runs professional bureaucracy with a huge staff number, which is capable of the subtle control of the citizens' life. The enlightened absolutist states, which imagined modernization from above, with controlled reforms, played an important role in the development of modern pedagogy and school system. These states during the modernization laid a bigger emphasis on the utilization of the opportunities of the educational system than before.

The development of historiography of education is linked to the formation of the modern pedagogy and the modern history. In the development of the modern pedagogy the common role of more factors can be emphasized: the establishment and development of modern sciences, the formation of modern national school systems, the appearance of professional educators, and the change in the children's position (*Németh, 2002a, 2005a*).

The child mortality decreased gradually in the Modern Age and the expectation of lifetime increased. Therefore, efforts for the children's successful socialization got stronger. As a result of this, more and more writings were born about the problems and the opportunities of the schooling and the education. Parallel to this process children became more valuable. Earlier the children had marginal role, but now they have become the center of the interest of the family life and the modern states. The supervision of the children went hand in hand with the appreciation of children. By the 19th century the adults placed children's life under increasingly tighter control: school systems and the scientific pedagogy were established.

The development of the modern educational science created the specific interpretation of a slice of the human existence. The answers to the questions concerning education were explained with the help of a coherent system supported by philosophy and psychology instead of compiling experiments primarily on practical experience and their systematization. The institutional frameworks of the modern pedagogy were created by the university system, which was reformed at the end of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th centuries: the arts faculty became an equal department, the higher education linked up with the public education and the university frameworks of the operation, competition and assessment of modern (arts) sciences appeared. The development of public and higher education in Hungary followed the Prussian examples. The evolving Hungarian pedagogy was part of the so called East European pedagogy, which had a strong German dominance (*Németh, 2005a*).

With the formation of modern educational systems more and more children attended school (*Halász, 2001; Green, 2002*). The legally joined, but actually fairly cut up educational systems, to act upon traditions, created two different roads of the training of the experts. The development of teaching profession is part of the process in which professional expertise groups were formed from the earlier guild-like organizations. The secondary teacher training, similar to the professional intellectuals' training and the primary teacher training, spotlighting the vocational expertise, are the grounds of the appearance and development of the historiography of education. It comes into being to legitimize the pedagogy and school system, and in the initial phase of its development it exists as a subject used in the teacher training (*Németh, 2006*).

The modern historiography is the intellectual product of the Enlightenment, although its roots date back to the Renaissance, and are tightly attached to the development of the

concept of the history. The development of the concept of history is linked to the dismissing of the linear time concept of the Christianity. After the Reformation the role of the religious forecasts was taken over by the political forecasts and the philosophy of history. The the time concept of Christianity or the forecasts was fundamentally static. The philosophy of history, however, discovered the progress as the driving force of the history, and with this put time in motion. The time concept of the Christian history and the modern history was different: the previous one is static, the later one is fundamentally dynamic.

The development of modern history, although it originated from the French Enlightenment, took a turn on German territories. Profession of historians develops in the 19th century, and intents to show – according to Ranke’s words – “how things actually happened” (quotation: *Noiriel*, 2001. p. 74.). The principle of „*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*” was an attempt to substantiate the empiric historical method and to free history from the speculative philosophy of history. The modern history, as the child of the Enlightenment, opposes the Christian historiography. In one way, however it shows similarity: in the eschatological concept of the history. (*Bultmann*, 1994).

The most important mean of the historical research is the source criticism, behind which the two fundamental ideas of the history lie: the history exists, and can be recognized. The historians became the theoreticians of the national progress, the national idea and the historiography took the right of the only correct interpretation of the past. In the last few decades the traditional perception of history is questioned in many points. This can be connected to the postmodern turn in the historiography. The postmodern historiography questions the continuity of the history, the objective existence of the historical facts and emphasizes the role of construction in the historical cognition. (*Gyáni*, 2003).

The theoretical background of the dissertation, and at the same time its new scientific result is the examination of the canons of history of education in conceptual framework of the social representations and of the cultural memory (*László*, 2003, 2005). The social representations are a „sociocognitive metasystems” formed and maintained during the communication of the group’s members (*László*, 1999, p. 15). According to Moscovici „The social representations are the sets of the concepts and explanations deriving from the everyday life and taking shape in communication between the individuals. They are equivalent with the myths of traditional societies or their belief systems; even they can be considered as the modern variants of common sense.” (quotation: *László*, 1999. p. 13). The task of the social representations is to help to recognize, understand and to organize the world for the group.

These theories give explanations of the operation of the constructs, created and maintained by groups, in the present case the historians of education. In the future these theories may serve as the theoretical bases of the historiographical researches.

HYPOTHESES OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation presents and explains the following questions.

1. How did the historiography of education developed and operated?
2. What kind of canons of the history of education has been accumulated in the textbooks since the development of the Hungarian historography of education?
3. What kind of role did the classic figures play in the canon of the history of education?
4. What kind of story and language was used during the construction of the canon by the authors?

The following hypotheses can be drawn based on the analysis of literature and the history of historiography:

- A strong German influence can be seen on the Hungarian textbooks on the history of education. In the Hungarian historiography of education a common statement is, that the national pedagogy was part of the East European educational science, which can be characterize with the German dominance.

- Two levels of teacher training education developed with well-separable functions, contents and a manner of speech (*Németh*, 2005). Therefore, we may suppose that the university (Ágost Lubrich, Ernő Fináczy, Lajos Prohászka and Béla Tettamanti) and the primary teacher training (Ödön Dölle, Áron Kiss, László Molnár, János Erdődi, Miklós Kóródy, Oszkár Molnár, Imre Németh, Gyula Sebes, Antal Tanay, Mihály Vaszkó, László Felkai and János Ravasz) canon are unambiguously separable within the textbooks.

- Ernő Fináczy's effect on the establishment of the canon has been important.

- With the appearance of the communist textbooks fundamental changes were made in them. This changes the persons and events forming the canon, the manner of the historiography and on the sources of the textbooks.

- In both canons and in all periods the material preceding the Modern Age is constant, and its parts dealing with the modern and contemporary times are continually under construction.

- Authors' story-telling was limited not only by the institutional frameworks, but they had to take into consideration what counted as a „good story” in a given age. In the case of the textbooks the frameworks of the „good story” are developed by the actual state of the school system and the pedagogy.

RESULTS

How the textbooks interpreted the subject and task of the history of education is examined in the dissertation. When defining the subject of the history of education, the concept according to which the history of education is the history of educational ideas and practice was determining. By practice the history of institution is primarily meant. The appearance of the Marxist historiography of education changed the interpretation of the education. The materialistic historiography of education considers the changes in the human culture and in the education, not as the consequences of the cultural conditions, but of the changes in the material conditions.

According to the textbooks, the examination of the history of education has more sense and use than simply the cognition of the past of education itself: the help for the contemporary education and the separation of the wrong methods from the correct ones. In the textbooks written before World War II the preservation of the existing pedagogic methods, in the Marxist textbooks the elimination of them legitimates the history of education.

About the sources of the textbooks on Hungarian history of education can be stated that their chapters about international history of education are mostly not original, independent works, which are based on researches or wide literature knowledge, but translations, adaptations of foreign (primarily German then at the end of the era Soviet) works. In the textbooks of the dualism age beside the German textbooks there were only few Hungarian works used.

Ernő Fináczy used sources from other languages in the largest proportion, though the analyzed example in the dissertation shows that further researches are necessary in order to

decide in what extent and how accurately he relied on original or primary sources.

It is proved that all three Marxist textbooks including universal chapters on the history of education rely on the work of Medinszky „The history of education”. In the book written by Antal Tanay and Mihály Vaszkó all chapters show textual correspondence with this work.

The sectionalization of the curriculum before the appearance of the Marxist historiography of education was linked to Christ's birth and to the Reformation. In the Marxist textbooks the partition of Antiquity – Middle Ages – Modern Age remains, but the later one begins with the English Civil War instead of the Reformation

Features of the topics of the textbooks were examined. There is a strong presence of the modern history of education. Only in two textbooks (Ágost Lubrich and Ernő Fináczy) was it presence less than 50% of the content. In the rest of the textbooks 70 and 80% of the topics deals with the modern history of education. The Renaissance mainly can be found in the university textbooks, but in the textbooks of primary teacher training written before Fináczy it cannot be found. The presence of the Middle Ages and the Antiquity is varying.

The statistical examination of the topics did not justify the preliminary expectations related to the authors forming the canon of the university and the primary teacher training. Miklós Kóródy, János Erdődi, Áron Kiss and Ödön Dölle are authors of the traditions of the historiography of primary teacher training education in the age of Dualism (1867-1918). The authors of primary teacher training (Oszkár Molnár and Imre Németh), who lived after World War I, stand closer not to the traditions of Dualism, but to the Marxist canon of education, which developed after World War II. Béla Tettamanti belongs to the latter group, as opposed to the preliminary expectations. Inside the canon of primary teacher training László Molnár and Gyula Sebes are separated fairly much. In the university canon only two authors, Ernő Fináczy and Lajos Prohászka can be found.

The number of the topics of the textbooks shows big variety. The average number of the topics discussed by the university authors is 131. The average number of the topics in the textbooks written for the primary teacher training colleges is 113.7. Consequently, the university textbooks elaborate more topics in general. If only Ernő Fináczy and Lajos Prohászka are included in the university canon according to the result of the cluster analysis and we incorporate Béla Tettamanti in the canon of primary teacher training then the proportions (117:109.3) show more equalized picture. Although the number of the topics shows big variety in some textbooks, it can be declared that in the Marxist textbooks the number of the topics significantly decreased compared to the previous ones.

In the textbooks 570 topics and person were presented altogether. Only 63, which is only 11% can be found at least in half of textbooks. Therefore, we can not talk about a uniform canon of the historiography of education. Consequently, the topics of the university, the primary teacher training, and of the Marxist textbooks were examined.

If all the books written by university authors (Lubrich, Fináczy, Prohászka, Tettamanti) are analyzed, these show 288 topics altogether. Half of all the topics elaborated appear only in textbooks for primary teachers. There are 30 topics dealt with by all the university-authors. If the examination is narrowed to the two authors, Ernő Fináczy and Lajos Prohászka, who can be surely categorized into the university canon, there are 74 topics or persons that can be found in the works of both authors. This is 46.25 % of the topics elaborated by them. In the university canon a clear unification can be seen in the first half of the 20th century.

The textbooks of primary teacher training contain 460 different topics. Only 10 topics can be found in all of the textbooks. This is hardly more than 2% of all the topics. The books in primary teacher training are less uniform than the university ones, so the hypothesis about

the well defined primary teacher training canon did not prove to be true. Half of the topics, which proved to be determining in the textbooks of the primary teacher training is linked to the Modern Age. So in this case, the hypothesis, according to which the topics presenting the period before Modern Age were more constant, is not true. However, in the university canon the topics are more equalized.

The hypothesis that the Marxist textbooks brought a considerable rearrangement of the curriculum is right. Nearly one third of the topics presented by the Marxist authors was not present or had only marginal role in the canon earlier. During the reconstruction of the canon of the historiography of education mostly the heroes of the Marxist pedagogy were introduced into the canon. A double tendency can be observed about the topics in the Marxist textbooks: on the one hand the rearrangement of the curriculum from the Modern Age, on the other hand the reduction of the topics, connected to the Christian Churches.

The international and the national literature highlights that the determining feature of the history of education is the detailed review of the classical figures' biographies. According to Daniel Tröhler the reason of this is that „These heroes of history not only stand for the past; they also frame the intellectual horizon in which research questions are asked today, even in empirical-statistical research. ” (Tröhler, 2006. p. 9). Not primarily the persons themselves are important, but the attributions and features, the pedagogic tasks and the situations represented by them. In the course of the professionalization of the teaching profession the classical figures played an important role in the forming of the identity of a professional community.

In the textbooks, around 70% of the topics were the biographies of classic figures. The research indicates that their ratio shows a decreasing tendency in the whole. The authors of the Marxist textbooks play a big role in this, as they depicted fewer topics than earlier, therefore fewer classic figures were presented by them. The distribution of the classic figures introduced in the textbooks follows the trend that can be determined from the analysis of topics. According to this, persons from Modern Age dominates the majority of the biographies. The proportion of the modern classics is characteristically more than 50%. The Hungarian textbooks did not follow the international trend, they do not use as many national figures as the French or the German textbooks do. As an other typical tendency the ratio of the Hungarian and German authors decreased in the analyzed era, and parallel to this, the material of the history of education become more colorful.

A continuous change can be seen in the interpretation of most of the classic persons. The reconstruction is due to the changes of the view in the history. In different eras different stories were considered as „good stories”, and the figures changed their role according to their distance from the „truth”. Among the classics analyzed in detail in the dissertation some became more and more appreciated (Comenius), some kept his negative role (Rousseau), some lived as a positive figure (Pestalozzi), and there were authors (Herbart), who were rejected then accepted then rejected again.

The actual processes that guided the selection of classic figures and the story-creation, cannot be retraced any more. The reasons of the selection and the development of the „good story” can only be revealed with the examination of the story-creation of the textbooks. The aim of the dualism age textbooks is the presentation of the development of the public-educational system and of methodology, with a great consideration of the development of the church school system. In the history of education all events and all person, all types of school and educational methods fit into this framework. The classic figures were judged upon their contribution to the development, and upon their distance to the contemporary accepted pedagogic standards.

The Marxist textbooks are good examples that there is no radical break with the previous period concerning the topos appearing in self-legitimatization of the system and the historiography of education that could be justifiable unambiguously. There has definitely been a change in the contents and in the philosophy of the history, but in the structure of story telling no changes were made.

In the dissertation the lingual layers that can be separated in the textbooks and the way they contribute to the story creation were also examined. Three layers can be separated: neutral manner, implicit opinions and explicit opinions.

The most commonly used tool in the textbooks is neutral intonation. In this case the author attempts to summarize, to show to the readers the information about the given phenomenon, event, person etc.

The opinions are regarded as implicit when the authors' thoughts do not turn out unambiguously, but from the context or from the expressions used. Two groups of these opinions can be separated. In the first case the whole text itself, its intonation, its wording suggests the author's opinion. In the second case of expressing implicit opinions the characteristic tool is to keep the speaker in shade. With this technique the authors of the textbooks may suggest their pedagogic opinions hiding behind the opinion of a given classical figure.

We can regard opinions as explicit when the authors express them in their own name unambiguously and well identifiably. One technique of the characteristic expressions of the opinion is the usage of the so called „measuring words”, which are able to describe the of the classical figures from the “normal” pedagogy. These are the tools of the normative type of classification.

One of the types of the „measuring words”, indicates the classics' activity. These are applied mostly not onto acts of pedagogic-type, but onto an activity of higher order that aims to search the truth (realises, notices, etc.). The other type of „measuring words” is the attributive adjectives. Initially, these bear the relationship with the educator and pedagogic virtues, and then they become important tools of the classification in the socialist era. These attributives describe the desirable characteristics of the socialist human type: brave, disciplined, conscious, ethically advanced. At the same time these are used for classifying the pedagogic thoughts: advanced and democratic on one side, bourgeois and reactionary on the other side. One of the largest „achievements” of the socialist historiography of education is that they made the language of the textbooks identical with the everyday, political language.

The declared political and ideological expression of opinion can be identified as the other type of the explicit opinions. This appearance can be divided into two considerable periods: Ágost Lubrich's textbooks and the textbooks of the communist era. While Lubrich offers an example for giving open political views voluntarily, in the socialist textbooks about the history of education the controlled, centralized ideology and the appearance of party propaganda can be traced.

The results of the dissertation may serve as a basis to further researches. The extension of the time frames of the research up to the contemporary textbooks and preparing new viewpoints for the examination may provide valuable results. To examine the relationships between the Hungarian historiography and the textbooks would also be useful. Setting out from the results of the dissertation an additional research of the sources of the textbooks and the multidisciplinary (literary and linguistics) analyses of the texts may provide valuable results.

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