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New Perspectives on German-American Educational History: An Introduction

When a professional preoccupation with the history of education became a well-respected pursuit and a prolific sub-discipline of pedagogical and educational studies – arguably around the 1960s and early 1970s¹ – it was clear from the outset that this new field of research would only flourish and yield satisfactory results if regarded and treated as a truly international enterprise. In Europe as well as in America (and also later in Australia, Asia and Africa), the newly formed academic institutions, libraries or periodicals dedicated to the history of pedagogy and education were thus based on the widely shared assumption that historians of education would necessarily have to contribute to a transnational dialogue. Accordingly, one of the leading journals in the field, the trilingual *Paedagogica Historica* – first issued in 1961 – was subtitled an “international journal of the history of education”, and published papers in English, French and German.

The transnational perspective on the history of education bore rich fruit indeed. Today, in the age of globalization, we are used to a constant outpouring of comparative studies on the development of different educational systems and their mutual influences. A recent collection of essays on the history of education yields ample proof of this impressive state of the art. The peculiarities of the diverse educational traditions of the USA, China, Switzerland, Portugal and Mexico are almost self-evidently compared with each other² and it even seems entirely natural to scrutinize the “intertwined and parallel stories of educational history”³ of such different and distant countries as “Brazil and Turkey in the early twentieth century”⁴. Historians from a wide variety of countries around the globe have created and shaped the standards of an internationalized study of the history of education, together and in close cooperation.

However, looking back over half a century of intense international research on the history of education, it is notable that analyses of the remarkable influences of the

1 Cf. Manfred Heinemann, ed., *Die historische Pädagogik in Europa und in den USA*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett: 1985).

2 Cf. Thomas Popkewitz, ed., *Rethinking the History of Education. Transnational Perspectives on Its Questions, Methods, and Knowledge* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 51–199.

3 *Ibid.*, 109.

4 Mirian Jorge Warde, “Brazil and Turkey in the Early Twentieth Century: Intertwined and Parallel Stories of Educational History,” in *Rethinking the History of Education*, ed. Popkewitz, 109–131.

educational systems of Germany and the United States of America on one another play a particularly prominent role. They seem to have attracted a privileged and disproportionately large interest. Leading scholars from both sides of the Atlantic have regularly and repeatedly attempted to arrive at a richer and deeper understanding of the entangled and intertwined paths of German and American educational history. In order to illustrate this fascinating point, it is quite sufficient to list and name only the milestones of research on that special subject matter.

The primary results of the initial two decades of solid and painstaking research on German-American educational history were first incorporated and discussed in Dietrich Goldschmidt's pioneering and rather lengthy 1983 essay "Transatlantic Influences: History of Mutual Interactions between American and German Education"⁵. Goldschmidt, who was at the time professor of educational sociology at Berlin, described the mutual influences of the educational systems of Germany and the USA quite trenchantly as a singular and century-old "historical process"⁶, dating back to pre-revolutionary times. In spite of the gradual emancipation of the United States from Europe, American pedagogical thought and practice could not do without the reception and appropriate integration of ongoing impulses from the Old World, and these impulses "came not least of all", but "especially" from "Germany"⁷. Most notably, the quality and exemplary structure of German universities in the nineteenth century left an indelible mark on the development of American science and scholarship. On the other hand, a century later, in the post-1945 period, the United States played a major role in reorganizing the German educational system. All in all, as Goldschmidt concluded, the reciprocal influences of the United States and Germany on each other in educational matters were extensive, considerable and substantial, "both general, and specific"⁸, throughout the centuries.

Then, in 1995, the German Historical Institute at Washington, D. C., and Cambridge University Press joined forces in publishing a collection of articles capturing and depicting the latest state of research on German-American educational history, which had reached a new height and dimension by the mid-1990s. Jürgen Heideking, Professor of History at the University of Cologne, and Jürgen Herbst, Professor of educational policy studies at the University of Wisconsin – back then the foremost academics writing on the history of education, focusing on both the United States and Germany – acted together with Henry Geitz, Director of

5 Dietrich Goldschmidt, "Transatlantic Influences: History of Mutual Interactions between American and German Education," in *Between Elite and Mass Education. Education in the Federal Republic of Germany*, ed. Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung (New York, NY: State University of New York Press), 1–65.

6 *Ibid.*, 1.

7 *Ibid.*, 2.

8 *Ibid.*

the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, as the coeditors of this important venture.⁹ In his introduction to the new volume, Herbst confirmed that “throughout the last three decades”, that is, since the 1960s and 1970s, the “history of education” had “undergone a renaissance” or “revival” at a new methodological level and a grand international scale.¹⁰ Intriguingly, during that time, a great number of educational historians had placed a “special interest in the German influence on American education”¹¹ and shown an equally great regard for the mutual accommodations between Germany and the USA in educational matters. Glancing back at history, one could clearly observe that “the most significant interaction between Germany and the United States occurred in education, science and scholarship”¹².

Again it was stipulated, that this special German-American relationship had obviously begun in colonial times. One of the most distinguished contributors to the volume, the historian A. Gregg Roeber, could give convincing proof that “a comprehensive system of German education”¹³ – ranging from parish elementary schooling to university courses at the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia – was to be found in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania as early as the second half of the eighteenth century. And Pennsylvania, as one should not forget, was the Mid-Atlantic colony later dubbed the “keystone state” of the USA. Konrad Jarausch, Professor of European Civilization at the University of North Carolina, then pointed out in one of the lengthier essays of the volume that thousands of American students had left the USA between 1815 and 1914 for Germany to take up their studies there.¹⁴ Consequently, and especially during the second half of the nineteenth century, it was “German models” more than other European ones that had exercised the “greatest impact” on the United States in stimulating an “American academic development”.¹⁵

In 1997, Herbst and Heideking went on to analyse German-American historical relations in the field of education, this time with a deliberate focus on the twentieth century. Together with Marc Depaepe, Professor of the history of educational psychology at the Belgian University of Leuven and chief-editor of *Paedagogica*

9 Cf. Henry Geitz, Jürgen Heideking, and Jürgen Herbst, eds., *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

10 Jürgen Herbst, “Introduction,” in *German Influences*, ed. Geitz, Heideking, and Herbst, 2.

11 *Ibid.*, 17.

12 *Ibid.*

13 A. Gregg Roeber, “The von Mosheim Society and the Preservation of German Education and Culture in the New Republic, 1789–1813,” in *German Influences*, ed. Geitz, Heideking, and Herbst, 157–176, here 157.

14 Konrad Jarausch, “American Students in Germany, 1815–1914: The Structure of German and U.S. Matriculants at Göttingen University,” in *German Influences*, ed. Geitz, Heideking, and Herbst, 195–211.

15 *Ibid.*, 211.

Historica, they dedicated a multilingual volume of that international journal of the history of education to the topic of “Mutual Influences on Education: Germany and the United States from World War I to the Cold War”.¹⁶ For Heideking, the unique quality and remarkable growth of “German-American relations in the field of education”¹⁷ – evident throughout the course of the twentieth century – reflected a sudden and dramatic change of the power structure in the Atlantic world, a change that first occurred around 1900.

Whereas, at the end of the nineteenth century, Germany was widely recognized as an educational, cultural, technological and scientific giant among the nations of Europe and beyond, the United States, despite rapid industrial expansion in the so-called Gilded Age, remained at the periphery of a political power system dominated by Europe. But slowly, just a few years after the turn of the century, the perception of the United States as an immature newcomer – in urgent need of being tutored by the culturally advanced and experienced Germans – gave way to a rapidly developing sense of American assertiveness and self-confidence, a new and strong belief in the almost limitless potential of a young and striving nation. German and American scholars conversed on equal terms. Yet this peaceful exchange of ideas grew into open confrontation as Germany and the USA became fierce rivals, first culturally, then on the military battlefield.

After the American victory over the Wilhelmine Empire, the US-government paved the way for the reintegration of German scholars into the international scientific community. And when Germany was defeated for a second time after the catastrophe of the “Third Reich” and World War II, Americans had an enormous impact on the institutions of the new democratic educational system of West Germany. In the concluding article of Heideking’s second volume on German-American educational history, the political scientist Paul-Ludwig Weinacht even built a bridge from the American influence of the post-World War period to the revolutionary changes that occurred in Eastern Europe and East Germany since 1989. He also described the repeated American attempts to reorganize the German educational system as a process of “Westernization”.¹⁸

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Frank Trommler and Elliott Shore – two distinguished Professors of German Studies and History, teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylva-

16 Jürgen Heideking, “Introduction. Mutual Influences on Education: Germany and the United States from World War I to the Cold War,” *Paedagogica Historica* 33/1 (1997): 9.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Paul-Ludwig Weinacht, “Steps Toward Westernization in the German Educational System 1945 and 1989,” *Paedagogica Historica* 33/1 (1997): 351–367. The concept of “Westernization” was further developed and defined by Anselm Doering-Manteuffel. Cf. Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Wie westlich sind die Deutschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

nia – looked back over two hundred years of an intense and continuous “German-American Encounter” marked by both “conflict and cooperation”.¹⁹ In their representative collection of almost two dozen essays on that topic, they emphasized the important role of education. Trommler pointed to the fact that “Germans, the largest immigrant group in the United States”, contributed to shaping American society in a decisive way, as they left their mark especially on the area of “education”, whereas Americans had been instrumental in shaping the German democratic educational system “after World War II”.²⁰

Trommler’s co-editor Shore even went so far as to say that “no people” in the world had “more readily posed the question of what America is and how it acts in the world”, nor had a more difficult time finding a workable answer, “than Germans”.²¹ He also suggested that the German contribution to American history was more than just random, as it seemed deeply “woven into the fabric of America”.²² On the other hand, in the first half of the twentieth century, it was the American nation that brought down an eager and ever more aggressive Germany in war, “not once, but twice”²³, with the result that, in the post-1945 period, American cultural and educational values influenced the development of German cultural institutions, schools and universities to a hitherto inconceivable degree.

The most recent description of the educational history of Germany and America as a closely interwoven and important part of modern history was put forward in 2014 by Mark Roche – currently professor of German Language and Literature at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana – in his book on the history of the reciprocal influences of German and American universities.²⁴ Before Roche took up his position at Notre Dame, he had received several degrees from different universities in both the United States and in Germany. He then taught and researched regularly on both sides of the Atlantic. As an outstanding academic and expert in the German and American educational systems, he attempted to convey his deep conviction that the modern educational ideal of “academic freedom”²⁵ had its most devoted followers in Germany and America. This concept of academic freedom began to flourish at German universities during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. American colleges and universities then came to be

19 Frank Trommler and Elliott Shore, eds., *The German-American Encounter: Conflict and Cooperation between Two Cultures, 1800–2000* (New York: Berghahn, 2001).

20 Frank Trommler, “Introduction,” in *The German-American Encounter*, ed. Trommler and Shore, x.

21 Elliott Shore, “Introduction. A New View of the Nineteenth Century,” in *The German-American Encounter*, ed. Trommler and Shore, 4.

22 *Ibid.*, 5.

23 *Ibid.*, 17.

24 Mark Roche, *Was die deutschen Universitäten von den amerikanischen lernen können und was sie vermeiden sollten* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2014).

25 *Ibid.*, 30.

deeply impressed by it in the second half of the nineteenth century. Only because the two nations had been increasingly looking at each other's educational system with a steadily growing interest and mutual appreciation, was the newly founded elite university of Stanford so impressed with the German academic freedom that, at the turn of the twentieth century, it chose the German motto "Die Luft der Freiheit weht", which translates generally as "The Wind of Freedom Blows".²⁶ The motto is preserved in the seal of Stanford University, in its original German wording, up to this day. And according to Roche, German and American universities can still learn from each other's development and structures far more than from any other university system in the world.²⁷

It should have become clear by now that, since the 1960s and 1970s, generations of educational historians have felt attracted by and guided in their research by the complexity and quality of the mutual influences of the United States and Germany in the fields of education and schooling. For most of these scholars, it suffices to state that there was a special German-American relationship, but only few of these scholars tried to find out why German-American interaction in the sphere of education remained such a special affair for over three centuries – and why the analysis of German-American educational history ought to be regarded as of particular relevance for an international community of scholars and academics. It is not adequate simply to say that German mass migration to the United States heavily influenced the American educational system, or that American victory in two World Wars paved the way for the Americanization (or Westernization) of German schools and universities in the twentieth century. Important as these factors obviously are, they do not account for the whole story.

A helpful device for understanding the intensity and uniqueness of the unparalleled interaction between Germany and the United States in educational matters is to consider the suggestion – first proposed in 2000 by Daniel Fallon, the former chair of the Education Division at the Carnegie Corporation of New York – that it was the pedagogical theories and educational precepts of the age of "enlightenment"²⁸ that provided "a fertile seedbed"²⁹ and a constant point of reference for the educational systems of both Germany and America, at least during long and important stretches of their entangled history. In other words, there was "a genuine affinity of intellectual premise"³⁰ between German and American edu-

26 Cf. Gerhard Casper, "Die Luft der Freiheit weht – On and Off," (on the Origins and History of the Stanford Motto on October 5, 1995), accessed July 12, 2016. <http://web.stanford.edu/dept/pres-provost/president/speeches/951005dieluft.html>.

27 Roche, *Was die deutschen Universitäten*, 272.

28 Daniel Fallon, "German Influences on American Education," in *The German-American Encounter*, ed. Trommler and Shore, 77.

29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.*

ational thought since the groundbreaking eighteenth century, an epoch which was already styled by its contemporaries “the pedagogical century”³¹.

Germans and Americans both cherished and practiced the enlightenment ideals of progress through science and self-improvement by learning and education, because they found themselves to be members – citizens or subjects – of the same rare kind of political order, namely a multi-confessional federal system with a highly diverse array of competing universities and schools. No other country in the eighteenth century had more universities (over 40) than the union of German states called the Holy Roman Empire³² – and the thirteen North American colonies did not fall far behind, as they all sought to establish their own colleges or universities. Already in 1793 and 1794, the renowned German professor of constitutional law, Carl Friedrich Häberlin, argued that the German Empire and the United States of America were comparable federal systems³³. Because of the enthusiastic “competition [Wetteifer]”³⁴ between the different states of a political union, especially in the field of education, Häberlin held that federal systems like Germany or the USA generated “more and better institutions of learning [mehrere und bessere Lehranstalten]”³⁵ than centralized states such as England or France. The literary historian Steffen Martus therefore recently emphasized, in his masterly study of the age of enlightenment, that the federal systems of the German Empire and the United States – with their remarkable measure of political³⁶

31 Johann Gottlieb Schummel, *Spitzbart, eine komisch-tragische Geschichte für unser pädagogisches Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Weygand, 1779).

32 An up-to-date interpretation of the Holy Roman Empire as a functioning union of states – with a wide variety of excellent universities – is provided by Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, vol. 2: *The Peace of Westphalia to the dissolution of the Reich, 1648–1806* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 522.

33 Carl Friedrich Häberlin, *Handbuch des Teutschen Staatsrechts nach dem System des Herrn Geheimen Justizrath Pütter* (Berlin: Friedrich Vieweg, 1794), 123.

34 Carl Friedrich Häberlin, “Über die Güte der deutschen Staatsverfassung,” *Deutsche Monatsschrift* (January 1793): 32.

35 *Ibid.*, 31.

36 Since the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, Germany’s political constitution was securely established as a federal system, cf. Johannes Burkhardt, *Deutsche Geschichte in der Frühen Neuzeit* (München: C. H. Beck, 2009), esp. chapter VI “Der Westfälische Friede – die Vollendung der föderalen Reichsverfassung,” 67–78. The colonies of British North America also emerged in the course of the seventeenth century as a system of fairly independent entities, bound together by the overarching structure of the British Empire, cf. David Armitage, “The British Conception of Empire in the Eighteenth Century”, in *Imperium/Empire/Reich: Ein Konzept politischer Herrschaft im Deutsch-Britischen Vergleich*, ed. Franz Bosbach and Hermann Hiery (München: de Gruyter 1999), 94.

and religious³⁷ diversity – offered enlightenment thought a congenial and stimulating setting.³⁸

Fallon and Martus have argued to the point and their premises are aptly illustrated by an anecdote. In 1766, Benjamin Franklin, the founder of the University of Pennsylvania, went on an extended trip to Germany³⁹ to take a close look at the academic proceedings and courses of study at the Georgia Augusta of Göttingen, then one of the leading universities of Europe. The University of Göttingen was situated in the electorate of Hanover and had been founded in 1734 by the Hanoverian prime minister Gerlach Adolph von Münchhausen whom Franklin met. The American guest also talked to Johann Stephan Pütter, professor of constitutional law (and one of the teachers of Carl Friedrich Häberlin), and to Gottfried Achenwall, professor of European and American history, who wrote and published a rather lengthy report of their conversation.⁴⁰ Achenwall's report reveals that Franklin and the German professors talked in Göttingen (in the house of the Lutheran professor Johann David Michaelis) about federalism, enlightenment thought and the particular qualities and standards of German and American universities and colleges.

It is perhaps not surprising to note that a somewhat biased Franklin preferred his university in Pennsylvania to the colleges of Harvard, Massachusetts, or Yale, Connecticut, and that Pütter and Achenwall liked the Georgia Augusta better than the universities of Leipzig in the electorate of Saxony, or Halle in Brandenburg-Prussia. But what is really striking is Franklin's, Pütter's and Achenwall's common perception of German and American universities as the most challenging and progressive institutions of higher education in the eighteenth century⁴¹. When

37 That the religious diversity of a multi-confessional Germany caused competition in the field of education has been emphasized by Wolfgang Schmale, "Die Schule in Deutschland im 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert," in *Revolution des Wissens? Europa und seine Schulen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung (1750–1825)*, ed. Wolfgang Schmale and Nan L. Dodde (Bochum: Dieter Winkler, 1991), 646.

38 Cf. Steffen Martus, *Aufklärung. Das deutsche 18. Jahrhundert. Ein Epochenbild* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2015), 403. On the comparison between Germany and the United States cf. *ibid.*, 726–727.

39 Cf. Jürgen Overhoff, "Benjamin Franklin, Student of the Holy Roman Empire: His Summer Journey to Germany in 1766 and His Interest in the Empire's Federal Constitution," in *German Studies Review* 34/2 (May 2011): 277–286.

40 The report was first published in *Hannoversches Magazin* 5, 17tes, 18tes, 19tes, 31tes, 32tes Stück (February 27, March 2, March 6, April 17, April 20, 1767), 257–96; 482–508. In 1769 and 1777, two further versions of the text appeared in print. In this article I quote from: Gottfried Achenwall, *Einige Anmerkungen über Nord-Amerika und über dasige Grosbritannische Colonien* (Helmstedt: Kühnlin, 1777).

41 Cf. Jürgen Overhoff, "Goththilf August Francke, Friedrich Michael Ziegenhagen and Benjamin Franklin: On the importance of the Paedagogium Regium in Halle for the Philadelphia Academy," in *Babel of the Atlantic: University Park*, ed. Bethany Wiggan, forthcoming.

Franklin visited the library of the University of Göttingen, he was impressed with its advanced cataloguing and lending system, the most modern of its kind⁴². The German professors, on the other hand, were stunned to learn from Franklin that in Philadelphia, there were no professors of theology. As there were many religious faiths in Pennsylvania, all enjoying equal rights and none dominating, theology was excluded from the syllabus.⁴³ Inasmuch as these “ideas from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment” obviously “penetrated” the curriculum of Franklin’s institution in Philadelphia,⁴⁴ that model institution – as Arthur Cohen recently argued – seems to have “presaged” the institution that eventually “epitomized” the American University in the nineteenth century.⁴⁵



Fig. 1: Plaque at the Michaelishaus in Göttingen, commemorating Franklin’s visit in 1766.

Franklin, Pütter and Achenwall agreed that federalism was the political system most likely to further academic excellence, scientific progress and enlightenment values. Decades before he became one of the founders of the United States of America, Franklin’s vision of North America was already that of a union of colonies within a British Empire conceived as a global federation of states, republics or commonwealths.⁴⁶ Pütter defined the German Empire as a “Staat, dessen einzelne Glieder wieder förmliche Staaten sind”⁴⁷, thus as a state composed of states. He

42 Cf. *Ibid.* Because of its pioneering cataloging systems and its large and regular financial income fixed by a generous state budget, the university library of Göttingen was soon considered one of the leading research libraries in Europe. Franklin’s visit to the library coincided with efforts in Philadelphia to raise additional funds in England, so as to increase the collection of their own library beyond its modest origins.

43 Overhoff, Franklin, Student of the Holy Roman Empire, 277–286.

44 Arthur M. Cohen and Carrie B. Kisker, eds., *The Shaping of American Higher Education. Emergence and Growth of the Contemporary System*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 38.

45 Cohen and Kisker, *American Higher Education*, 25–26.

46 Cf. Carla Mulford, *Benjamin Franklin and the Ends of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 344: “By the 1750s, Franklin recognized that the British colonies of North America could become a separate, powerful, confederated set of states within a network of similar colonial entities, all still part of the British Empire.”

47 Johann Stephan Pütter, *Historisch-politisches Handbuch von den besonderen Teutschen Staaten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1758), IV.

emphasized that the various political units of the Holy Roman Empire – Saxony, Hanover, Hesse, Bavaria or Brandenburg – were not to be called provinces, but “förmlich [formally]” and really “Staaten [states],”⁴⁸ as their rank was perfectly equivalent to the status of the smaller European realms or republics. No other European body politic could be compared with the German States.⁴⁹

In 1813, one of Pütter’s most distinguished students famously repeated his teacher’s (and Franklin’s) assumptions concerning the correlation of federalism, enlightenment thought and good education. Wilhelm von Humboldt, who attended Pütter’s seminars and lectures in Göttingen between 1788 and 1790, emphasized that a federal system, a “union of states [Staatenverein]”⁵⁰, was preferable to a centralized state, because such a “division [Zerstückelung]” of one large state into several smaller ones was likely to promote the highest standards of learning, a great diversity of schools and a “plurality of education [Mannigfaltigkeit der Bildung]”.⁵¹ Already in 1792, Humboldt had noted that a “plurality” or variety of “situations” was the necessary precondition for “the highest and most harmonious development” of one’s faculties and powers “to a complete and considerable whole” as the true end of education⁵². Very rarely was the enlightenment educational ideal expressed in more vivid terms.⁵³

Humboldt’s ideal of an almost limitless process of learning – through students partaking in the most open-minded projects of research, conversing freely and sociably with their encouraging and well-meaning university teachers – soon became the educational goal of the university he founded in Berlin in 1810, an institution that came to be regarded as “a cornerstone of the modern era”.⁵⁴ Because Humboldt’s ideals were “steeped in the same philosophy of the Enlightenment” that had informed the political leaders of the early American republic such as “Benjamin Franklin” and the federalists “Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson

48 Ibid.

49 Cf. Ibid.

50 Wilhelm von Humboldt, “Denkschrift über die deutsche Verfassung. Dezember 1813,” in Wilhelm von Humboldts Politische Denkschriften, ed. Bruno Gebhardt, vol. 2 (1810–1813) (Berlin: Behr’s, 1903), 101.

51 Ibid.

52 Cf.: Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen* [1792]. Mit einem Nachwort von Robert Haerdter (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1967), 22: “Der wahre Zweck des Menschen – nicht der, welchen die wechselnde Neigung, sondern, welchen die ewig unveränderliche Vernunft ihm vorschreibt – ist die höchste und proportionierlichste Bildung seiner Kräfte zu einem Ganzen. Zu dieser Bildung ist Freiheit die erste und unerläßliche Bedingung. Allein außer der Freiheit erfordert die Entwicklung der menschlichen Kräfte noch etwas andres, obgleich mit der Freiheit eng Verbundenes: Mannigfaltigkeit der Situationen.”

53 Humboldt has been convincingly depicted as a true enlightenment thinker in Manfred Geier, ed., *Aufklärung. Das europäische Projekt* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2012), 364.

54 Fallon, “German Influences on American Education,” 78.

and James Madison”, Fallon argued that American scholars and university officials in the nineteenth century “developed an idealized model of the German university that they felt could readily be transplanted to American soil”.⁵⁵ Ironically – yet on the basis of available evidence – “no German university ever succeeded in adhering so faithfully to Humboldt’s ideals as the typical American research university”.⁵⁶ At the same time, the American university distanced itself from the old ideal of the British gentleman – a playful dilettantism of the upper class still cultivated at Oxford and Cambridge – leaning instead towards a much more professional and even “plebeian”⁵⁷ understanding of education for all through science.

Thus, with the exception of the first half of the twentieth century, when Germany entirely betrayed the enlightenment principles of education in the catastrophic years of the “Third Reich”⁵⁸, Americans and Germans often entertained similar educational ideals. These ideals date back to the eighteenth century when progress through self-improvement by learning and education seemed to be served best by competitive federal constitutions. Whoever therefore seeks to investigate the age of enlightenment, the time when the foundations of modernity were laid – and whoever wishes to understand and discuss the reception of enlightenment principles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – will certainly profit from a thorough knowledge of the intertwined educational histories of Germany and the United States. Accordingly, German-American educational history is an academic discipline of international eminence and importance, which is why so many excellent monographs and articles on that subject have appeared since the 1960s – when the history of education re-emerged as a modernized sub-discipline of international pedagogical and historical research.

Despite the availability of a great number of books, articles and other sound studies on this topic, further research – inviting us to look at German-American educational history from new and unusual perspectives – is ever evolving and new questions constantly need to be raised and addressed. The present volume therefore assembles original contributions by some of the leading scholars in the field. They cover three centuries of an intense German-American encounter, starting with the description of important aspects of German schools and educational ideals in colonial Pennsylvania, and summing the story up with a reflection on the preparations for the quincentennial commemoration of the Protestant Reformation on both sides of the Atlantic in 2017. The authors are affiliated with academic

55 *Ibid.*, 83.

56 *Ibid.*, 85.

57 Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), 145.

58 The “Third Reich” was a totalitarian state which also destroyed the traditional federal system of the German States, cf. Albert Funk, *Kleine Geschichte des Föderalismus. Vom Fürstenbund zur Bundesrepublik* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010), 287.

institutions in the United States and in Germany, and teach in the fields of history, educational studies, German and American studies, linguistics and theology. An international and interdisciplinary approach is therefore adopted throughout. Patrick M. Erben describes the educational efforts of the first generation of German immigrants in Pennsylvania during the first half of the eighteenth century. For the most part, they were well educated people with an advanced literacy culture. Like the English immigrants, they tried to pass on high literacy rates to America-born children by teaching them to read and to write in new school houses erected in all parts of the colony for precisely that purpose. Printers like Christoph Saur or Gotthard Armbrüster produced a large quantity of German books that found their readers both in the rural hinterland of the colonies, as well as in the cities and urban centers. But at the same time, as Erben highlights, these German American printers also published handbooks, dictionaries, primers, and glossaries specifically for German residents to acquire the English language and understand English legal and civic concepts of learning. This clearly indicates that many German immigrants sought to align themselves right from the time of their arrival in America with their English-speaking neighbors. Good education and mutual understanding was their common goal.

Bethany Wiggin tells us that in eighteenth century Pennsylvania, popular almanacs played an important role in educating the mass of readers in the striving colony. These almanacs were published in both English and German – by prominent printers such as Christoph Saur or Benjamin Franklin – dealing with a variety of everyday topics, such as literacy and health. But they also provided political education. Wiggin relates the story of a harsh conflict between the German printer Saur and his opponent Franklin, who held different opinions on the use of arms to backland claims against native peoples as well as French rivals. Most Germans were loyal to the pacifist principles of the Quaker William Penn, the colony's founder. It is remarkable to read about Saur styling Franklin as an intruder from Massachusetts who had no idea of how the German immigrants and their English Quaker friends had long established a unique tradition in Pennsylvania. Saur portrayed the Quaker colony as an American educational experiment where the exhortation to pacifism was valued more than the right to self-defense.

In the post-revolutionary period and especially in the nineteenth century, German immigrants to the United States were no longer staunch pacifists, as they were prepared to take up arms to fight for the new republican principles. Many of them supported the European revolutions of 1848 and – disappointed at the failed attempt to bring about democratic reforms in Germany – enlisted in the Union Army during the American Civil War. What did not change, however, was the profound respect for their German eighteenth century heroes such as Goethe and Schiller. As Heike Bungert points out, the efforts of the German Americans to further such highbrow 'Cultur' was rooted in the age of enlightenment – and

helping it evolve in the United States by education and schooling – could also encompass the joyful cultivation of rather down-to earth festivals (Volksfeste), such as beer festivals of a recognizably regional (Swabian or Bavarian) character. Thus, in the second half of the nineteenth century, reading Goethe and drinking beer in a festive mood were two quite different and yet cohesive facets of German-American educational history, nourishing the intellect as well as the soul.

After the Civil War, Germans remained important negotiators of 'Bildung' (a German term with a specific meaning that one cannot completely capture with the translation "education") and 'Cultur'. But additionally, in the late nineteenth century their understanding of science as 'Wissenschaft' became an ever more important and eventually indispensable concept in the process of creating the modern American research university. In his article on American intellectual life between 1870 and 1914 Frank Trommler argues, that a new and intense engagement with scientific thinking was seen in the so-called Gilded Age to be the prerequisite for developing leadership in research and science. It was during this period that Germany and the United States came to their closest intellectual contact in the realm of culture and education.

The climax of this intellectual encounter was the first German-American exchange agreement for professors of the universities of Berlin, Harvard and Columbia in the ten years immediately preceding the First World War. Charlotte Lerg portrays this first German-American professorial exchange program in meticulous detail, arguing that the two sides had different plans and ambitions. While the Germans wanted to exert a certain political influence, the American universities primarily sought international visibility and recognition. With the coming of the First World War, the situation changed rapidly. When war broke out in Europe in August 1914 and Germany invaded neutral Belgium, the academic exchange of the previous years was seen in a very different light. The term 'Kultur', as opposed to 'culture' or 'civilization' was quickly becoming a synonym for German Militarism and everything else that was unpleasant and even shocking about Germany. The recognition of Germany as a leader in scientific progress and educational reforms took a negative turn, and German language and culture, also part of the ethnic pride of German Americans, became the target of American nationalism throughout the United States. German-American culture suffered a dramatic setback from which it never fully recovered.

Anne Overbeck, however, questions the extent to which German-Americans really withdrew from the scene in the United States after 1917/18. While the First World War certainly terminated the blooming of German-American culture in the USA, German-Americans regained a considerable measure of respect and self-esteem in the 1920s. Overbeck traces the changes in the situation of German-Americans in Indianapolis, where a large community of German immigrants and their descendants had flourished and shaped the city's character since the mid-

nineteenth century. One of the prominent German immigrants to Indianapolis was Clemens Vonnegut of Münster, the great-grandfather of the well-known writer Kurt Vonnegut Jr. who famously recalled his ancestor's coming to American shores in his "Autobiographical Collage" of 1981. Overbeck demonstrates that even after the First World War, German remained a widely taught subject in Indiana. The Indianapolis Academy of Music reclaimed its previous name 'Maennerchor' even in 1919 and German newspapers did not cease publication completely. Overbeck thus repudiates the theory of a complete eradication of German culture after 1917/18 as lacking in substance.

Precisely because German remained an important modern language of study in post-war United States, Goethe retained a preeminent place in the advanced American college curriculum. It was against this backdrop of routine curricular dominance that William Alfred Speck – since 1913 curator of Yale's newly acquired collection of Goetheana – set a rather extravagant reception of Goethe in motion at Yale. Simon Richter draws our attention to this extraordinary scholar, a son of German immigrants, who grew up in the small town of Haverstraw on the Hudson in the state of New York. As a boy, Speck attended Hoboken Academy, a school run largely by Germans, who sparked the young William's life-long admiration for Goethe. Shortly after his appointment as curator at Yale, he was also accorded a courtesy appointment as lecturer in the Yale German department. There he taught a course on Goethe's personality right through the 1920s until Speck died in 1928. Under Speck's guidance, Yale's collection of Goetheana grew from 6,000 to 10,000 items and became the largest Goethe collection outside of Germany.

When the Nazis took power and barbarically slandered Goethe's humanist legacy of enlightenment moral principles in his homeland after 1933, it was the US-American Army – with its allies from Britain, France and the Soviet Union – who defeated Nazi-Germany in 1945. Already in April of that year, all German schools were closed down according to the Directive to the Commander-in-Chief of United States Forces of Occupation JCS/1067. The American military authorities then started a program of reeducation which was intended to reintegrate Germany into the democratic and liberal culture it had so cruelly perverted in the period of the "Third Reich". Ewald Terhart emphasizes that US-American reeducation policy in post-1945 (West-)Germany focused on didactics, the theory and practice of teaching and learning at all levels. Even after the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, American models played a crucial role in the modernization and democratization of German didactics for several decades.

Johannes Bellmann then looks at the influence of the American educational reformer John Dewey – one of the leading representatives of the philosophy of pragmatism – and at the German educational debates of recent years. Bellmann examines the claim made by many leading German educational scientists that

Deweyan pragmatism was the philosophy behind the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), the worldwide study of 15-year-old school pupils' scholastic performance in mathematics, science, and reading. PISA was first performed in 2000 and measured problem-solving abilities and cognition in daily life. Bellmann points out that one can indeed detect Deweyan key concepts in the vocabulary of PISA – but then they are mostly used with a very different meaning. For example, PISA refers to 'participation' as the most important goal of education. For Dewey, however, 'participation' is not only a goal, but above all the medium in which education takes place. Bellmann therefore reminds us that the German-American encounter – like all human conversations – knew phases of severe misunderstanding and mistranslation.

Finally, Hartmut Lehmann offers a fascinating analysis of the diverse commemorations of the Protestant Reformation, both in the United States of America and in Germany in the jubilee years of 1817 and 1917, which he then compares with the planned celebrations of the quincentenary of the Reformation in 2017 on both sides of the Atlantic. As both the German and the American educational systems were strongly influenced by Protestant traditions of learning and schooling, it is instructive to learn how Martin Luther's historical achievements were (and still are) interpreted in the United States and in Germany since the early nineteenth century. Lehmann reminds us, that Goethe – the descendant of a prominent, solid and wealthy Lutheran family from the city of Frankfurt am Main – proposed in 1817 international celebrations in an ecumenical spirit, but no one paid attention to his bold proposal. Time will tell whether Goethe's call for ecumenical celebrations will strike a chord in Germany or America in 2017.

What also remains to be seen is whether the present volume, with its collection of diverse articles on German-American educational history, will stimulate further research on this important topic. Although the different contributions have touched upon many important aspects of an ongoing encounter covering more than three centuries, there is still, of course, much remaining to be researched. For example, the relationship between German and American universities between 1933 and 1945 is underexplored. After all, many students from the United States graduated from German universities during the "Third Reich" and it would be both useful and interesting to discover how they conceived their academic role, moral obligations and political responsibilities in these dark years.⁵⁹ Accordingly, more research on this particular aspect and many other facets of German-American educational history ought to be conducted in the near future.

59 Cf. Karl-Heinz Füssl, *Deutsch-amerikanischer Kulturaustausch im 20. Jahrhundert. Bildung – Wissenschaft – Politik* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2004), 77.