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The history of education today / Antoine Léon. Paris, France: Unesco, c1985. 117 p. (Series: Educational sciences)

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Preface

By devoting a monograph in its 'Educational sciences' series to the history of education, the International Bureau of Education has sought to draw the attention of teachers, research specialists and educational policy makers to the evolution of this field in the context of the development of the various educational sciences. Moving from the history of events to the comparative history of educational doctrines, institutions, practices and techniques, this discipline enables us both to assess the progress achieved by the various educational sciences and to see how they have become interlinked in the course of their development. At the same time, it highlights a trend toward the universalization of problems, and this leads at least to common questions about them, though not perhaps to a uniformity of solutions to them. These common questions, while they are justified by the growing impact of scientific and technological progress on all aspects of peoples' life, introduce a new manner of perceiving and apprehending interdependencies - horizontal as well as vertical - between the various education systems throughout the world and throughout periods of time. What other discipline could better train minds, as the century draws to a close, to grasp the notion of relativity between situations and that of solidarity between generations and peoples, while establishing a rational basis for their cultural identity? And what other discipline could provide a better foundation for philosophical reflection or for a futurological approach to education, by establishing the primacy of the universal over the singular since the remotest past, and perhaps never more than today when frontiers are giving way, whether they be frontiers in time and space retreating before the development of modern communication media or cultural and linguistic frontiers which are also rapidly disappearing as a result of educational progress? While the importance of this discipline as well as its place among the educational sciences is abundantly clear, the difficulty of presenting all its facets within the necessarily constraining dimensions of a monograph such as the present one is in the nature of a challenge; and it is indeed no small merit on the part of Professor A. Léon not only to have overcome this difficulty but to have extended to us such an eminently readable invitation to reflect effectively on the questions raised by a discipline which is so often, and mistakenly, considered as being thoroughly conventional and oriented towards the past.

While reiterating our thanks to Professor Antoine Léon for his valuable contribution to this new series of monographs, we would remind our readers that the ideas and opinions expressed in this work are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of Unesco. Moreover, the designations employed and the presentation of the material throughout the publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Unesco concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitations of its frontiers or boundaries.

Introduction

One outcome of the substantial increase in studies on the history of education over the past two decades has been the founding of the International Association for the History of Education. Under its 1979 by-laws, one of its main objectives is to sponsor the development of research, encourage exchanges between researchers and bring out the proper place that should be assigned to the history of education in training programmes.

The study and application of this broad discipline is not the sole preserve of research specialists: a number of 'outsiders' are quite rightly, but with varying degrees of success, trying to set subjects they study or teach in their historical context.

Different people assign different individual or social functions to the history of education. What these functions are and, more concretely, how interesting and useful they rate studying the history of education depend on the image they have of this discipline, how they represent its purpose and scope and the themes and approaches it features and, in a more general way, how they conceive of the relationship between past and present.

Accordingly, before setting out to define the functions of the history of education, it seems necessary to reflect on the nature of the history referred to.

One aim of the present study is to draw from the analysis of recent works and compile elements of information, reflections and discussion related to the current state of the history of education.

In this respect the richness, diversity and in many cases novelty of the themes covered have come together to make a whole that is apt to meet the expectations of all those involved in teaching. Further, to the extent that they focus on the analysis of the connection between education and social change, historians shed new light on the matter and elicit fresh questioning on how the education system actually works and how it is responding to the various crises it is undergoing.

In other words, studies on the history of education will be consistently more apposite in providing answers to the questions raised by teachers, administrators, researchers and students about what will become of the school as an institution and about the meaningfulness of their own work.

These preliminary remarks give some indication of the arrangement of this book by subject-matter.

Part One will take stock of 'the history of education today', presenting its scope and orientations. It will be introduced by a brief review of how the discipline has evolved and will be concluded by some reflections on its place among the human sciences.

Part Two deals with the factors and mechanisms of change in education. This fundamental question will be broached through analysing more concrete themes such as the history of literacy and of folk culture, and the development of technical education.

The more direct study, in Part Three, of the functions of the history of education will lead on to the outlining of a few principles related to teacher training and the teaching of history to students.

A final section contains some thoughts on what the history of education can mean to us.

To conclude this introduction, we should like to define the bounds of this study. They are of two types: the first has to do with the choice of themes, the examples submitted and the conceptions which are analysed or criticized; the second relates to the amount and geographical spread of the underlying documentation.

It was out of the question for us to put together a comprehensive survey of all the subjects to which specialists of all countries are addressing themselves in their study of the history of education.

True, the bulk of examples given, in particular in the second section (Chapters V and VI) are drawn from the history of education in France, but as far as possible we have referred to available documentation in our discussion of the situation in other countries. Whatever the case, whether it be a matter of France, the other industrialized countries or the Third

World, the examples are only intended to illustrate conceptions, trends, mechanisms or fairly general factors. More specifically, the similarity or convergence of research content allows us to feel that the pertinence of the information and reflections contained in this book will extend beyond the individual works and countries it covers.

In this respect, we wish to thank all those who were so good as to reply to the requests for information we sent out to them. We also extend out thanks to the various colleagues who gave us the benefit of their remarks and suggestions at meetings organized by the International Bureau of Education.

PART ONE The history of education today

CHAPTER I The growth of the history of education

The 1960s: a turning-point

The experts of many countries agree that the beginning of the 1960s was a key period in the evolution of the history of education.

In the United States, according to W.W. Brickman, this period began with the recognition of two phenomena: a reduction in the number of theses on the history of education, and the lesser importance given to this discipline in teacher training programmes. The period was also characterized by the emergence of the revisionist or radical movement[1]. In the view of this movement's proponents, the development of public education in the course of the nineteenth century, far from having helped to build up American democracy, had primarily served as an instrument of domination and control to the benefit of the middle and upper classes.

In order to show how rapidly ideas relating to the history of education have evolved in the course of the last two decades, J.D. Wilson compares three books published respectively in 1957, 1970 and 1975. The first, entitled *The development of education in Canada* by C.E. Phillips, and written in a democratic and egalitarian spirit, favours the growth of the public education system and contrasts the action of the 'good' reformers, in other words those of the liberal tradition, to the resistance put up by the 'evil' conservatives. In addition, the author tends to play down disputes over educational matters except in the case of tension between the State and the various churches. Thirteen years later, a work edited by J.D. Wilson and entitled *Canadian education: the history*, cited recent research as its authority in linking the history of education to social history and in advancing theories similar to those of the American revisionists. Finally, the third work, *Education and social change: themes from Ontario's past* by M.B. Katz and P.H. Mattingly, was openly revisionist [2].

In France, according to R. Chartier, the advent of the 'new history' of education marks the passage from institutional, ideological or monographic history to a new approach based on the joint efforts of historians and sociologists [3]. To take an example, the latter set out to analyse the complex relations linking scholastic institutions to the structures of society, thus at the same time giving substance to new concepts such as the cultural inheritance or the equalization of opportunity, and new themes such as the influence of students' origin on the length of studies, on the rate of success in qualifying for diplomas, or on social mobility. How are we to account for this rather rapid change of orientations and programme areas in the history of education?

The misadventures of historiography

The writing of history has its own history. Since we lack space here to consider the contributions of the pioneers such as Herodotes, Thucydides or, nearer to our own time,

Ibn Khaldun, or the contributions of various philosophic doctrines to the formulation of historiography, we will confine ourselves to the changes which took place during the Renaissance in the approach of historians to the past.

The contribution of Herodotes and Thucydides is discussed in Chapter VIII. As regards Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), his fundamental contribution to the development of scientific history (i.e. one in which all sources are checked and several series of factors are taken into account) in no way obscures the value of his reflections on educational problems, such as those relating to regional disparities, the origin of intellectual inequalities, or the professionalization of the teaching function [4].

A century later two historians, G. Monod[5] and K. Pomian[6], considered these changes to be due to the rapid transformations characteristic of this period, the acceleration of history making possible a new interest and new attitudes with regard to the past. 'If the historical sense was to develop,' Monod wrote in this respect, 'the past had to appear quite distinct from the present, so that it could be studied objectively and as it were from a distance. [In the course of the Renaissance] the difference between the Middle Ages and the present was obvious to all, so that people took a completely fresh interest in the study of the past'[7]. Pomian, for his part, analysing changes in the approach to historiography, emphasizes the passage from immediate knowledge, in which the historian is simply a recorder accepting the testimony of eye-witnesses or the repositories of tradition, to mediate knowledge in which the historian's point of view tends to become independent of that of persons who lived during the period under examination. In other words, the intelligible is not the immediately visible. 'Faith,' states Pomian, 'is the only road that reason has found to arrive at knowledge of invisible and partly unknowable things. To make an act of faith is to admit the authority of someone who has seen something that I have not seen myself. It is to give him my confidence and accept his account literally'[8].

This change from immediate to mediate knowledge is associated with a transformation of the representation of time. The former cyclical conception of time was not such as to provoke any new approach, inasmuch as it led the historian to seek in the past patterns similar to those of the present. By contrast, the new rectilinear and cumulative conception of time confronts the historian with entirely novel problems, forcing him to find appropriate methods and techniques to construct his theory. The cyclical notion of time appears as a source of intellectual laziness. The rectilinear notion, which is more demanding, implies the idea of progress. The spread of this idea to all aspects of human activity occurred in the eighteenth century.

It goes without saying that this change of historiographical approach is far from being absolute in so far as the study of certain cultures obliges the historian to make use of the oral testimony of those who act as depositories of tradition or of collective memory; but this necessity in no way excuses the historian from preserving a critical attitude to such testimony or from attempting an intelligible reconstruction of the past.

In the course of recent decades, the rapid transformation of all the conditions of life has made it necessary to take a new look at the past. The decline of Europe, from a demographic, cultural (stemming from a general recognition of the diversity of civilizations) and political (as a result of decolonization) standpoint, has called the products of traditional historiography, centred as they are on the past of the Western nations, into question[9]. In addition, the importance attributed to economic factors or the action of the masses, and the development of sciences relating to human beings and society, have enlarged the field of historiography and caused new research instruments to emerge. Among these may be mentioned the use of fiscal documents, school registries and manuals, and the employment of statistical techniques [10].

As regards the evolution of the history of education, American specialists consider that the break which occurred in the 1960s was due less to an increase in curiosity with regard to the past than to a development of interest in present problems. In other words, in the

climate of international competition which existed at the end of the 1950s - when the usual forms of international competition (i.e. economic, military and ideological) were sharpened by new rivalries arising from the launching of the first satellites - and on the basis of research into the teaching given at that time, the need to work out a national education policy led to the development of faulty theories of historical approach[11]. This tendency to 'presentism', in other words the projection of present-day problems on to the past, may be ascribed to the meeting or collaboration - from which the revisionist movement sprang - between historians of education and social scientists [12].

What are the main contributions of this new version of the history of education?

The 'new history' and criticism of the school as an institution

In taking up new subjects and changing orientations, the historiography of education displays a trend which started well before the beginning of the 1960s. In this respect, one may recall the works of the Belgian Henri Pirenne, a specialist in the economic, social and demographic history of the Middle Ages; of Huizinga, the Dutch historian of mentalities; and of the Polish historian Znaniecki, who drew upon popular autobiographical accounts. Most frequently, however, the principal source of the renewal of historiography[13] is seen as the *Ecole des Annales*, founded in 1929 by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch.

In the course of the 1970s, various French historians claiming to take their inspiration from the *Ecole des Annales* movement or, more generally, that of the 'new history', took up and systematized some of the tendencies which had surfaced during the preceding decades. These trends, which have undoubtedly influenced the work of educational historians [14], may be summed up as follows:

— The enlargement of the historian's field of interest. 'Total history', advocated by Febvre, takes account of different streams such as economic, social and psychological history, and concerns itself equally with the most distant past and with the present.

— The tendency for narrative history to be replaced by 'theme history'. According to this new approach, one should study the object before beginning to collect or analyse the texts. 'It is the problem area which gives rise to the sources, which are practically inexhaustible'[15].

— The break-up and expansion of the purely documentary approach. To written, iconographical or archaeological testimony are added the oral accounts of the last witnesses of vanished customs or, in the case of recent history, visual or auditive recording. In addition, the historian nowadays takes an interest in 'imaginary documents', by which we mean the idea which people in the past had of reality, and in 'the silences of history'. In this respect, is it not true that the peoples said to be without any history are rather those peoples about whose history we are ignorant[16]?

— A certain desire to escape from the apparent one-dimensional approach to the evolution of events and to place more emphasis on conflict and on the phenomena of anticipation and persistence which punctuate or form a structure with their evolution.

— The simultaneous taking into account of short- and long-term phenomena. This makes it possible to make an inventory of the various effects (the productive and repetitively productive function) which can be ascribed to education [17], and to accede to a certain kind of wisdom (see the conclusion to this book).

— The tendency to accord as much weight to the personality of the witness or to the conditions in which the testimony was produced as to its content.

— The realization that the work of the historian and the products of historiography are relative.

'Yes,' writes Paul Veyne in this connection, 'history is no more than a reply to our questions because we are not able to ask all the possible questions or to describe the whole process of evolution, and because the progress of historical enquiry is placed in

time and is as slow as that of any science. Yes, history is subjective because one cannot deny that the choice of subjects for a history book is free' [18]. No doubt it is true that the work of the historian is to a considerable extent subjective, whether in the choice of subjects or in the manner of interrogating in the past. In such choice and such interrogation, the general and specific culture of the historian, his opinions and his personality play an important part. But surely the requirements of objectivity are or should be satisfied when it is no longer a matter of asking questions but of replying in the most precise and rigorous way possible on the basis of a systematic exploitation of available resources.

In the United States, the notion of the 'new history' is assimilated to the revisionist movement which considers teaching as a substitute for the family, the church and the community, traditional institutions whose authority is in constant decline. Put another way, the school thus becomes responsible for the maintenance of national cohesion and the inculcation of codes and values calculated to ensure stability and social order [19]. While calling into question what Lawrence Cremin calls 'the narrowly institutional approach', the revisionists, in view of the unfavourable situation in which immigrants and ethnic minorities are currently placed, condemn the conservative nature of school reforms and emphasize the closeness of the links between education, political relations and social structures [20]. Analysis of the functions of the school also leads them to raise precise questions concerning recruitment (for example the sex, age, ethnic origin and social level of pupils), the number of years of education, the school or university routes followed, and the individual or social effects of education. Revisionists' interest in the problems of literacy extends beyond the frontiers of the United States. It also leads them to raise questions regarding the aims of the school policy of the Western powers in their former colonies, and whether it was oriented towards liberation or integration.

One of the significant contributions of the 'new history', whether European or American, is the overthrow of the chronological framework normally used by historians and, by the same token, the recognition of the importance of hitherto neglected periods. For example, far from being limited to the nineteenth century, the process of conveying literacy to the lower classes of the population goes back to the sixteenth century. Throughout the intervening period, the teaching of reading and writing was mainly carried on outside the school by the church and the local community.

All this calling into question, however, has not failed to provoke reactions.

Not all the harm comes from the school

The dominant preoccupations of contemporary historiography in no way obscure the persistence of apparently traditional themes of an institutional or doctrinal kind, which are still able to inspire fresh views of the past.

However that may be, any aspect of the history of education currently in vogue cannot be an entirely new discovery. Thus, in his *Histoire de la pedagogie*, published in 1886, Gabriel Compayre considered that this discipline 'in its vast scope, should embrace the entire field of intellectual and moral culture of all ages and all countries'[21]. He went on to add that, in addition to formal education, there exists 'a natural education that one receives unawares, without volition, through the influence of the social surroundings in which one lives. There exists what a contemporary philosopher has cleverly called the occult co-workers in education, i.e. climate, race, customs, social condition, political institutions and religious beliefs.' Further on, under the name of auxiliary agents of education, he mentions the influence of books, 'both bad and good', which, in his view, are dangerous rivals to what he considers the indispensable role of the school.

This role, contested by the revisionists and by the most obdurate defenders of the 'new history', has been the object of a critical re-examination on the part of what are called the 'post-revisionists'. In this connection, C.J. Lucas proposes the adoption of a position half-

way between the 'cynicism' of the revisionists and the optimism of those who see in the school the irreplaceable instrument of the development of American democracy. He backs up this point of view with an analysis of well-defined socio-cultural themes such as autonomy, job mobility or the integration of ethnic minorities. In his opinion, in each of these cases there is a need to underline the ambiguity of the role of the school and to draw a distinction between the intentions behind certain measures and their real effects. Thus, 'to admit that the school may have been able to play a role in the control of thought does not mean that it has destroyed individual independence of the freedom of thought'[22].

Elsewhere, Lucas, like C. Webster, denounces the abuse of 'presentism' in the work of the revisionists. In his view, this abuse leads them, on the one hand, to exaggerate the similarities relative to the differences between periods which are far removed from one another and, on the other, to use the past in the defence of a modern cause[23]. For his part, M. Greene considers exaggerated the picture which the revisionists draw of a social control invariably exercised in a negative sense on individuals portrayed as passive and malleable. In this connection he emphasizes one of the paradoxes underlying all educational action, namely that in order to acquire or preserve a sense of identity a person needs a framework, an outline and a form that social control makes it easier to define. In other words, situated as it is at the meeting point of the demands of society and the search for independence, the only way forward for education is to embrace the very conflict which simultaneously opposes and links these two forces [24].

Brickman's criticisms are aimed more particularly at the methodological weaknesses in the work of the revisionist historians. In his view, they underestimate the place of erudition, lack rigour in their application of the rules of historiography and are guilty of hasty generalizations[^]. This criticism seems the more worthy of attention in that many pseudo-historians, ignoring the requirements of documentary research, do not take much trouble to distinguish, in their conclusions, between what stems from carefully checked sources of information and what is in effect interpretation or mere imagination.

Without explicitly attacking the revisionist movement, M. Agulhon examines the criticisms frequently expressed regarding the primary school of Jules Ferry. These criticisms can be gathered under four headings: under the Third Republic, the primary school was simultaneously the school of social docility and conformity; the school of the class system, reproducing social partitions; the school of chauvinism, nationalism and colonial imperialism; and, finally, the school of national uniformity via the 'cultural genocide' of the 'less French' regions[26].

This is how Agulhon puts the nature and scope of the last of the above-mentioned criticisms into a different perspective.

In the first place, 'the State in its present form had already existed for one or two centuries when the Third Republic inherited it, and this inheritance already comprised common institutions and the use of one language of public communication. If there is something wrong with that, it would be fairer to blame the far-off monarchist founders of the system . . .' Furthermore, it is by no means proved that this republican urge to make the French language universally known was in fact accompanied by any desire to eliminate the other languages or dialects ... In the last resort, the decline of regional languages and cultures stems from causes which have no direct relation with educational policy. In effect, 'regional cultures, unless they are deliberately and militantly kept up, fade away with the destruction of traditional rural life . . ., with the complete opening up of agriculture to the national and international market, with the advent of the modern mass media of which the standardizing power, or let us say quite simply the power, is much greater than that of the education system.' In a word, 'Jules Ferry cannot simultaneously be the scapegoat for all the sins of the Capetians and those of the television companies. He is too recent for the first and too ancient for the second ... He should be judged in relation to his own time and to the intention behind his work'[27].

It is commonplace to blame the present crisis of French education on the difficulties experienced by the system in embodying the functions and values (the reinforcement of national unity and the reduction of social inequality) formerly advocated by the associates of Jules Ferry.

However, one cannot blame the system for calling these functions and values into question, or for their decline. In this connection, Rene Remond claims that the education crisis 'has its origin and its roots anywhere other than in education: it is essentially a reflection of the crisis of society itself, calling into question our civilization and its values, and our political system'. Thus he considers that it will only find 'its solution and its outcome within a general framework involving society, culture and democracy as a whole'[28].

Needless to say, the worsening of this crisis casts light on certain attitudes of the architects of the 'new history' and reveals the emergence of new themes in the field of the history of education.

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CHAPTER II The scope of the history of education

An unfinished and unfinishable inventory

To determine the limits of the scope of history is no easy task. One might even go so far as to say, like P. Veyne[1], that this scope 'is completely indeterminate' inasmuch as 'everything is historical', every event is worth recording, and the writing of history, which now aims at becoming total, is now taking over different fields of knowledge such as economics, society, demography, or the attitudes of people.

However, if we keep strictly to the history of education, it is possible, like Brickman, to distinguish between two definitions of the scope of the subject, one narrow, the other broad[2]. The first is only concerned with certain institutional forms of conveying technology or knowledge, whereas the second embraces all types of influence, whether formal or informal, on individuals or groups. It takes into account not only the school, but also the family, the churches, means of communication, youth clubs, etc. In addition, it takes in all the factors and results of the process of the development of people in society: ideology, administration, finance, organization, the methods and content of education, the effects of educative action, etc.

Over and above these categories, the scope of the history of education could extend to all countries and all periods, including the present. The recently published *Histoire mondiale de l'éducation* seems to belong to this 'extensive' school of thought[3].

It is out of the question in this short chapter to draw up a systematic inventory of contemporary research into the history of education. Our more modest design is to show the diversity of subjects in which research workers in the history of education interest themselves. This will take two forms. First of all we shall mention the themes of recent international meetings and the research programmes of institutions specializing in the subject. To this end, we shall use the *International newsletter for the history of education*[4] and the results of an enquiry among the directors of research centres [5]. Second, we shall present some of the apparently dominant themes in the present field of the history of education, namely the organization and functioning of the school; educational instruments and aids; the recipients and the agents of education (among others women and teachers); and international comparisons and school policy in Third World countries during the colonial era.

Further themes, notably literacy, popular culture and technical education, will be considered in Part Two of the present publication which deals with the factors and mechanisms of change, and in Part Three, in relation to the functions of the teaching of history.

Side by side with the exploration or thorough investigation of these relatively recent themes, the study of more classical themes such as the history of an institution, the analysis of an educational movement or the interpretation of texts from earlier ages continues. There can be no question of establishing any kind of a hierarchy among these various studies. For example, the in-depth study of an educational work may call for the most refined forms of linguistic analysis or statistical treatment.

Diversity of themes and approaches

The general themes of the most recent conferences of the International Association for the History of Education serve to convey an idea of the scientific interests of educational

historians in different countries: 'Teacher training' (Louvain, 1979); 'Educational innovations in a historical context' (Warsaw, 1980); 'Educational policies in their historical context: social, economic, political and cultural factors' (Paris, 1981); 'The history of pre-school education and its relations with the history of education in general' (Budapest, 1982); 'Science, technology and education' (Oxford, 1983).

In addition, national lists of current research projects and the programmes of meetings organized by national associations of the history of education reveal the diversity of the chosen themes in the different countries.

For its 1980 Annual Conference, the United States Society for the History of Education included the following topics, among others, in its programme:

- the comparative history of literacy;
- the origin and evolution of social services for youth (1880-1980);
- American political education in the Federal Republic of Germany in the post-war period;
- iconographical aspects of the history of education;
- historical approaches to leadership in the field of school administration, etc.

It would seem that the major contributions of research workers in the United States in this field appear in the review *History of education quarterly*, founded in 1961.

In France, the History of Education Service of the Institut national de recherche pédagogique has been publishing the review *Histoire de l'éducation* since 1978. In its programme for the year 1981-82, the service recognizes three main fields of research[7].

Projects in the first category deal with the development of fundamental instruments of research such as a bibliography of the history of French education, a guide to sources (information of an archival type concerning technical education in particular) and an inventory of the educational patrimony (an enquiry into the schoolhouse in the nineteenth century). Projects in the second category are concerned with the compiling of two major lists, the first of schoolbooks and the second of the educational press. The latter, which has been published in part, constitutes an original working tool for all research workers. According to the authors, it may also, as a result of the study by series of thousands of journals, provide food for thought on the nature and evolution of the educational phenomenon [8]. Finally, the third research category covers the following three themes:

- colleges of the ancien regime (construction of the school network; social functioning of establishments; the diversification of educational networks);
- the history of the centralized administration of public education and of the general inspectorate;
- the history of academic disciplines. The function of this last theme is defined as follows: To bring out the factors of this evolution with a view to enabling educational research to take it into account in working out answers to questions raised by the present system of education; to contribute to the training of teachers by leading them to reflect on the historical character of disciplines which they would naturally tend to think of as 'eternal'.

In the United Kingdom, working groups of the History of Education Society are studying the following subjects: post-secondary education; confessional education; curricula; the education of women; physical education; and literacy. The themes of the two meetings organized by this association during 1982 were the place of the history of education in teacher training and the physical condition of the nation and health education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Two journals, entitled *History of education* and *History of Education Society bulletin*, are to be the association's official publications. Another periodical, the *Oxford review of education*, calls for contributions from authors practising different disciplines in order to make possible more thorough treatment of complex themes such as the relationship between literacy and industrialization, or the degree of importance of family education throughout the course of history [9].

At the University of Ghent (Belgium), the Centre pour Vetudes de l'histoire de l'education, directed by K. de Clerck, publishes the review *Paedagogica historica*, founded in 1961 by R.L. Plancke with a view to 'laying the foundation for a general and comparative history of education and contributing to a better knowledge of the history of ideas and of educational institutions in various countries'. Among the research projects being carried out at the centre are the history of education, teaching and educational policy in Belgium since 1830; the history of primary school-teachers and their professional associations in Belgium in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century; and the history of women's education in Belgium since 1830. These projects derive from a general concept of education in teaching as being essentially social phenomena. The authors emphasize the recurrence of forms of behaviour throughout history.

The historical research projects of the Pedagogical Institute of the University of Zürich, under the leadership of F.P. Hager, are largely devoted to educational ideas and theories, and notably to the influence of Plato's ideas on the history of educational thought in Europe, for example on Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Dilthey, and others. Analysis of the texts of these authors relates to philosophical and hermeneutic approaches.

In Warsaw, a group of research workers in the history of education has joined the Institute of the History of Science, Education and Technology, directed by J. Miaso. The group is working primarily on the role of education in the history of the Polish nation, or more specifically the formation of national culture during the periods when Poland was divided up among foreign powers; the social functions of higher education since the eighteenth century; adult education and the popularization of science in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the evolution of professional teaching; changes in the education system since the Second World War, and so on.

In Budapest, where the fourth conference of the International Association for the History of Education was held in 1982, O. Vag is the chairman of an international working group on the history of pre-school education. The members of this group appear to have a predominantly comparative approach.

In the USSR, research in the history of education is carried out partly at the Institute of Scientific Research on General Education of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, and partly in fifteen scientific research institutes grouped under the Union Republics. To these must be added the chairs of education in the universities and teachers' training colleges. Approximately 300 research workers are working in the field of the history of education.

The department of school history and teaching methods, at the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, possesses three historical research units, dealing respectively with the pre-revolutionary period, the Soviet period and foreign countries. These units publish a series of studies on school history and educational thought pertaining to the different peoples who make up the USSR. The peculiarities of education in each Soviet Republic form the object of a historical study. Soviet historians attach value to and popularize the inheritance of great teachers of the past. They also study school history and educational thought in the market economy countries, drawing attention to the contribution of the international labour movement and to that of Marxist educationists in these countries. Finally, they take part in compiling an educational library for the benefit of teachers.

This short review of the activities of a few educational research centres gives no more than an incomplete picture of the extent and diversity of this academic discipline.

In a further exploration of this field, we are obliged to concentrate on some of the more common themes of recent research.

The building, functioning and aims of the school system In this vast sector of the history of education, a number of very different contributions are being made, different by virtue both of their aims and of the time or space frame taken into account.

The inventory of colleges of the ancien regime has inspired M.-M. Compere and D. Julia[10] to a number of observations and reflections on the ways in which secondary

education in France grew up. First of all, it is to be noted that the transition from the mediaeval school to the modern college is characterized by the organization of hierarchically arranged classes, each with a teacher assigned to it, and by the allocation of buildings or premises specifically for the purpose of education. Second, the growing numbers of small provincial colleges, from the middle of the seventeenth century on, was a response to a growing demand for education, parallel to economic development, among the leading citizens of small towns, to family feeling (in the sense of wanting to keep children at home longer), and to local patriotism, the college becoming a means of cultural discrimination. Finally, the authors sketch out a geographical distribution of colleges on a regional basis, and seek reasons for the disparities observed. In Brittany, for example, the inadequate number of colleges is ascribed, among other causes, to administrative shortcomings, to a shortage of tertiary functions and to the fact that writing was rarely used in local rural society.

Analysing the curriculum and orientation of pupils in colleges under the ancien regime, W. Frijhoff and D. Julia[11] would appear to confirm the theories of certain sociologists regarding the school's function of reproducing the class system. However, this function was carried out in a manner specific to the period under examination. While the colleges did admit considerable numbers of children from modest backgrounds, many of the latter dropped out before the end of the educational cycle in order to carry on their father's trade or, at the best, to enter the clergy.

The regulations for the construction of colleges and school architecture in general always express a certain concept of the organization of education and a certain picture of the public concerned[12]. The same applies to the drawing of the school map. Thus the desire frequently expressed during the second half of the eighteenth century to rationalize the drawing of such maps arose, in the opinion of Julia, 'from the desire, based on progress in political arithmetic, to govern people by means of figures'[13]. More precisely, it was a matter of assigning a territory to each university with a view to immobilizing the 'wandering dunces' and of trying to improve the quality of devalued diplomas 'by putting a stop to the fruitful speculations of unscrupulous professors'. It was also a question of 'establishing a school network strictly ranked from top to bottom, laid out on the ground according to the demographic and economic logic of urban distribution'.

The strictly pedagogical organization of nineteenth century primary schools (e.g. as regards teaching methods, use of time, the grouping of pupils and the separation of sexes) has recently been the object of in-depth study [14].

Teacher/pupil relations within the classroom itself have been studied by J. Contou in a thesis on punishment in the nineteenth century secondary schools[15]. In this work, the author investigated, among other things, factors such as the weight and rigidity of the hierarchical system, the relative immobility of poorly qualified staff, and the persistence of an outdated view of the child, which might throw light on the nature of teacher/pupil relations.

Such relations develop through the means of transmitting and testing knowledge. In this connection, teaching methods and the content of education have been the subject of a number of research projects[16], notably as regards the teaching of history. In the case of certain subjects, the evolution of content and form is closely linked to political and economic history. This is the case with the teaching of political economy in the nineteenth century. This discipline was the object of a number of measures tending to reduce its importance. In 1819 it was taught under the name of industrial economics only at the Conservatoire des arts et metiers, in other words well away from all the major establishments of public education. In 1830, the creation of a chair of political economy at the College de France stemmed from the same desire to screen off the subject, inasmuch as this deliberately theoretical course was only intended for a minority of students. Several years earlier, by contrast, an ordinance had laid down that faculties of law, open to a wider

public, should only purvey 'positive and usual knowledge'. Not before the 1860s, with the liberalization of the imperial regime and the triumph of free trade, were genuine courses of political economy to be given in faculties of law[17].

Educative action and the transmission of knowledge are carried out by means of aids and instruments, the evolution of which represents a relatively new branch of the history of education[18].

Aids and instruments in education and teaching

We will confine ourselves here to three categories of material: schoolbooks, audio-visual aids and toys. According to the estimates of Alain Choppin, taking all subjects and levels into account[19], there have been about 100,000 different French school-books since the Revolution. The historical study of such manuals is doubly interesting in that, according to this author, they represent not only a structure of knowledge but an instrument of power. As a structure, manuals impose a division and a classification of knowledge, thus helping to construct the pupils' intellectual framework. As an instrument of power, books contribute to a linguistic uniformity, to cultural levelling and to the propagation of the dominant ideas. With its multi-faceted nature, the schoolbook is subject to different historical approaches. In effect, it can be studied as an artefact, as a teaching tool and as a structuring of knowledge. It can also be looked at from a political point of view, in the light of constraining or liberal legislation, thus giving rise to comparative research.

Less well known than that of schoolbooks, the history of audio-visual aids cannot, in the opinion of J. Perriault, be restricted to a simple account of technical devices ranging from the magic lantern and the gramophone to the tape-recorder. It should take into account the social function of these objects and analyse the gap between the logic of the inventor and that of the user[20]. For example, the magic lantern, which was invented around 1640, was seen by its inventors as a means both of instruction and of amusement. In the eighteenth century, however, it was viewed simply as a fairground attraction. It would seem not to have been appreciated as a teaching aid until the nineteenth century, as an answer to needs created by industrialization and as a result of the competition between Church and State for the control of youth.

Over and above its immediate effects as a teaching aid or source of pleasure, 'the magic lantern left its mark on the societies where it became common, the most obvious sign of which is the habit of gathering together in the evening in order to see a show'. It also 'in the long term helped to create that consumer market for the imaginary which is such a dominant feature of the world we live in today'. Thus Perriault proposes 'to cross the history of peddling or of the movement for popular education with that of the sudden appearance of the magic lantern project or the gramophone project'.

The subject of C. Thollon-Pommerol[21] is somewhat different, since the author seeks to consider teaching by means of the image in relation with other factors such as the development of projection apparatus. The history of teaching by visual image reveals, among other things, the weight of certain socio-cultural factors such as religious proscriptions (the role of the Reformation) or the negative influence of fairground hawkers whose use of the magic lantern caused it to be considered unworthy of adoption as a teaching aid.

The time lags observed in the use of audio-visual aids can be noted again in the use of educational games. Although such games have been known since ancient times, their large-scale introduction into school work only goes back, according to M.-M. Rabecq-Maillard, to the beginning of the present century[22]. Traditional games such as le jeu de Vote (somewhat similar to

Snakes and Ladders) often borrow motifs from contemporary political or social events. Thus their history enables us to follow certain aspects of the evolution of society.

Among the traditional toys, the doll has become an object of attention on the part of some historians. Like the schoolbook, the doll can be considered from different angles. In this connection, M. Manson considers that 'to write the history of the doll is equivalent to working out a semiology of the toy as object in its relations with infantile play, with the adult imagination and with the overall socio-economic structure'[23]. For example, the relation between the adult imagination and the doll is interpreted on the basis on the ancient myth of Pygmalion. Among the sources explored in constructing this history are patents, the statutes of corporations of knick-knack and doll sellers, works of literature and folk tales.

The history of educational aids and objects now brings us to the behaviour of the teachers and pupils who use them.

The givers and receivers of education: teacher training and women's education

Certain distinctions, well anchored in the education system, such as separation of the sexes or social discrimination, have led some historians to investigate the groups hitherto considered of lesser importance, for example women, children and adults of the lower classes, or the indigenous pupils of Third World countries during the colonial era.

In this connection, F. Mayeur has written two important works on the education of girls. One of them studies the daily regime of girls from comfortably off families in the nineteenth century with the object of 'finding out how women, as moulded by the customs and trends of a society, really were, without taking any account of edifying speeches'[24]. Thus the matter of education reveals itself as a social and political one: 'for women, can work be anything other than a sign of economic inferiority? Can it be a means of access to personal independence?' The author's second work deals with the drawing up and application of the Camille See Law (1880) which officially established secondary education for women[25]. Regarding this law, the author points out a number of contradictions with which any reform or innovation would find itself confronted. Thus, for example, while referring implicitly to the traditional social role of women, and while entrusting secondary teachers of girls with the task of producing wives and mothers rather than workers, the legislature nevertheless recruits female staff in order to carry out the task. It thus negates the initial conditions of its own project by creating a new career for women in the form of teaching. In addition, though designed for the education of adolescent girls from a well-to-do background, female secondary education gave young girls from poor families a means of access to the teaching profession, in other words to a modest but nevertheless independent position. In addition, the secondary education of women, with its republican origins, was organized in such a way as to be virtually identical to confessional education. In order to attract the middle classes, girls' lycees had to offer the same moral guarantees as the religious institutions. Thus it was indispensable for women teachers to be distinguished, well dressed, irreproachable in their conduct, in short, to be 'a kind of lay nun'.

Thus, while yielding to prejudice and conforming to the ideas of the time, women's secondary education immediately became a field for innovation and upheaval. In the long term, it was clearing the way for the feminization of the teaching profession and the evolution of the image of women in society.

The psychological and sociological analysis of the teaching profession, the circumstances in which it is recruited and trained, and the nature of its aspirations and ideology have been the object of various research projects.

For example, the perusal of 4,000 'instigated autobiographies' of primary school teachers during the belle époque, who began their careers between 1900 and 1914, has enabled J. Ozouf to demonstrate, among other things, how these teachers felt themselves to be entrusted with a political mission, i.e. to propagate the republican lay ideal. They felt themselves to be backed up in this course, even if they had to live through local unrest

aroused by the institution of compulsory schooling, or by the conflicts between Church and State, which were sometimes quite dramatic [26].

These power contests reveal the difficulties encountered at the end of the eighteenth century by the Parisian parliamentarians in their efforts to establish, following the expulsion of the Jesuits (1762), a veritable national education system and a body of teachers recruited solely on the basis of their academic competence. In effect, the creation of the agregation in the Paris Faculty of Arts (1766) excited lively opposition on the part of university personnel and members of religious congregations. Both considered that a competition based on examination did not make it possible to judge a candidate's talent and taste for the profession, and risked, moreover, opening the doors of the colleges to the enemies of religion[27].

One hundred years later, the creation of the Ecole normale superieure at Saint-Cloud, intended to train lecturers for the primary school-teachers' training colleges, triggered a new power contest. 'Primary education teachers are willing,' wrote J.-N. Luc in this connection, 'to entrust the training of future teachers to the universities, but, in order to rest masters in their own house, they insist on its being organized outside the faculties . . . The problem raised at that time is still a topical one'[28].

From a comparative point of view, M. De Vroede presents the two models which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and which, it would seem, gave rise to the structures of primary school-teacher training throughout Europe[29]. The first model, of which the Austrian Normalschule is typical, provides for courses of no more than a few weeks or months in a primary school chosen for the purpose. The second, represented by the Prussian Leh-rerseminar, offers a course of theoretical and practical studies lasting three years, with residence and a school of practice. In the evolution of teacher training during the nineteenth century the author also observes similarities between Prussia and the United Kingdom. In both cases, the ambitious goals of the first half of the century were forced to give place, from 1850 on, to modest projects of strictly professional training. It remains to investigate the circumstances, whether internal or external to the education system, of this apparent step backwards.

The comparative history of education systems

From the standpoint of the history of ideas and doctrines, the history of education has no frontiers. The works of Plato, Erasmus, Comenius, Rousseau and Dewey are examined in all treatises on education. However, when the historian considers the working of the school system or the social aspects of education, he will tend to remain within a national or regional framework in order to satisfy certain methodological requirements [30]. A feature of recent years has nevertheless been a growing awareness of the existence of problem areas common to different countries belonging to a particular historical or geographical group, such as the Western countries or the Third World. Thus, W. Frijhoff compares the results of enquiries carried out respectively in France and Germany on the origins and careers of secondary school pupils during the second half of the nineteenth century. Whereas administration and the liberal professions exercised a great attraction on the young Germans, their opposite numbers in France were above all attracted to the land, the Stock Exchange and technology. But if we investigate their actual careers, we find these tendencies reversed. Whereas the French elite with its engineering qualifications went into government service, the German elite had more of a tendency to turn to industry[31].

A comparative study by A. Guillain investigates the similarities and differences between the educational psychology of J.F. Herbart, much applied in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, and the natural education advocated by 'child study' in the United States. In both cases, one of the major political functions of the school was to preach and maintain national unity through moral, social and religious education. But whereas the disciples of Herbart tried to impose a single model to which everybody was supposed to

conform, 'child study' respected the differences between individuals whose free and spontaneous interplay was supposed to ensure the emergence of a norm which would finally impose itself without any constraint[32].

Behind teaching methods and educational psychology, according to S.D. Ivie, one can discern the social myths affecting the structures, functions, content and methods of education. In the light of these myths - belief in the divinity of the emperor or in the superiority of the Aryan race - the author compares the educational experience of Japan and Germany in the course of the years preceding the Second World War[33]. In each of these countries, the myth fulfilled five functions: preservation of the sense of collective identity; solidarity; incitement to action; the legitimation of authority; and the inculcation of ideology. If we take the legitimation of authority, the relationship between the emperor and his subjects would have been understood in Japan as a logical extension of that between parents and children. In Germany, the myth of the master race served among other things to justify the creation of a new elite.

Comparative studies sometimes concern only one country, reporting on regional or local disparities in the percentage of the population attending school, success rates in examinations or the quantity of school equipment. Thus, in studying the evolution of attendance at kindergartens in Paris between 1945 and 1975, E. Plaisance shows that it was in the most bourgeois districts, where the proportion of professional people and senior civil servants was highest, that the rate of pre-school education increased the most[34].

The spread of comparative studies in the field of the history of education has led some research workers to sketch the profile of the qualifications of the authors of such studies. In the view of R. Koehl, the comparative researcher should be familiar with the history of education in both the societies under examination in order to compare data relating not only to education, but also to important aspects of economic, social or political life[35].

Whatever the goal and the terms of the comparison, the observation of similarities and differences must be completed by an analysis of the factors in play. This kind of analysis will be outlined in Part Two of the present work, in connection with regional disparities with regard to literacy.

In ending this brief survey of the most popular current themes among educational historians, the interest aroused by the subject of education in Third World countries during the colonial era should be emphasized.

The history of Third World countries

In the study of the past in Third World countries, some historians try to define the educative structures which existed prior to occupation by the colonial power[36]. More, however, are concerned with the colonial period itself, either comparing the situation in the colony with that in the colonizing country, or scrutinizing the functions fulfilled by the school system in the colonies.

In this connection, F. Colonna has examined official documents relating to the primary teachers' training college of Algiers in order to study the training and role of 'native' teachers. Referring to the theories of P. Bourdieu on the functions of the school, Colonna considers that this role consists of serving as cultural mediators between the colonial power and the mass of Algerians, to propagate the 'legitimate' culture as opposed to the 'barbarian' one, in other words to magnify the civilizing mission of France[37]. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were two opposing models for the organization and content of teacher training. On the one hand, there was the segregationist doctrine, which consisted of designing a more elementary, more pragmatic training for indigenous student teachers than was given to their French opposite numbers, whether the latter were resident in the colony or in France. On the other hand, there was an assimilationist doctrine according to which the two groups should receive the same training. This second doctrine prevailed at the beginning of the 1920s on account of the evolution of the political

and economic situation. However, it was not long before the logic of its own development caused the limitations and contradictions of the assimilation doctrine to appear. In effect, the colonial power judged it neither possible nor desirable for all Algerian children to go to school. The result was a current of educational demands forming part of the larger movement of opposition.

This boomerang effect is found in another form in the outcome of the educational work carried out in Zaire, formerly the Belgian Congo, by the Christian missionaries[38].

From the end of the nineteenth century on, these missions organized vocational education for young Congolese. In certain cases, on-the-job training in productive occupations such as agriculture and building was designed to achieve goals both practical and moral - 'The Gospel of Work'. In other cases, the chapel farms provided an initiation in traditional cultural behaviour. The most brilliant pupils received advanced religious training with a view to serving at mass, taking the chair at religious assemblies or teaching the catechism. The objectives of the vocational training of Congolese were defined in 1909 at the Catholic Congress of Belgium by a professor of the University of Louvain: 'It will not be necessary to aim too high and want to train perfect workers capable of competing with European workers.' In addition, the on-the-job training organized by the Jesuits in various trades such as carpentry, cooking and garment-making, was considered a suitable means of increasing the resources of a Company and thus of extending its proselytizing action.

While the missions succeeded in their project to train clerks and auxiliaries for the church, they did not succeed in holding on to the agricultural workers or artisans, who flocked in large numbers to the towns where they found work less on account of their technical competence than of their basic education and their habits of work. Thus, contrary to their expectations or their intentions, the missionaries provided the workforce that the colonial system required.

Whether proposed by the missionaries or by the State, the offer of *educanormale superieure de Saint-Cloud*. *Revue francaise de pedagogie* (Paris, Institut national de recherche pedagogique), no. 51, avril-mai-juin 1980, p. 50-57.

CHAPTER III Research orientations in the history of education

Like the interest aroused by history, the activity of the historian is historically determined. In effect, at a time when yesterday's triumphal version of school history is being called into question, writes M. Crubellier, historians 'are restricting the field of their enquiries, tending to abandon the broad synthesis and keeping more to the list of sources or the analysis of very precise problems which have hitherto been too much neglected'[1].

However, the reactions aroused by the teaching crisis, notably the feeling of not being able to control a complex situation, of not being able to grasp its factors and mechanisms, sometimes lead people to seek compensation in theorizing and in the working out of vast syntheses where the desire for internal coherence conceals or attenuates the need for external checking by recourse to sources or various kinds of testimonies.

This first contradiction is just one way, among others, of categorizing the activities of the educational historian.

Concerning histories of education

Other contradictions may be grouped under three headings, as follows:

The view of the relations between education and society. Certain opposing viewpoints are based on this factor. The controversies mentioned in the first chapter, which underlie the advent of the 'new history' or the revisionist trend, relate to the functions - integration or liberation - conferred on the school. In this respect the projection on the past of currently topical themes, such as the school's reproductive function or the deschooling of education, is the counterpart or complement of the process of recovering history with a view to

supporting or justifying certain theories or actions. Thus, in French

schoolbooks of the early part of the Third Republic, the superstitions of the Gauls are considered not as a phenomenon to be explained in the context of its own time, but as the origin or model of obscure, archaic practices which republican rationalism and the lay school wanted to eliminate[2]. In the United States, the revisionists make use of a certain interpretation of the negative role of the school in the nineteenth century to back up their theory of the deschooling of society.

Outside the education system, the past is sometimes used in a selective or tendentious way to influence present-day behaviour. Take the example of the *metis* or half-breed mentality, a form of intelligence highly regarded in the cultural universe of ancient Greece. Characterized among other things by a tendency not to take up sharply defined positions, a certain shrewd carefulness, dissimulation and resourcefulness, this mentality is nowadays sometimes referred to as a source of irrational conduct whereas its analysis has called for strictly rational procedures on the part of historians of psychology [3].

The importance of the rejection and recovery mechanisms can lead a historian to slant his work towards some arbitrary interpretation, the internal coherence of which will be ensured by his intentions or his ideology. It is of course often difficult to reject such bias inasmuch as in history, as in other human sciences, the illustration of a point of view is sometimes given as a proof.

We shall return to these methodological problems in Part Two where we shall be less concerned with studying the functions and effects of public education than with the conditions and contributing factors of the development of the school. We shall return to them in Part Three, when we come to consider the functions of history and, in particular, of the history of education.

The subdivision of the history of education. A second set of contradictions arise from disagreement over this aspect. Each of the themes presented in the last chapter, whether regarding the organization of the class, the recruitment of teachers or the use of audio-visual aids, can be studied from either a long-term or a short-term point of view.

Among the long-term phenomena we may note, for example, the study and popularity of certain subjects, including technical ones; the cyclical return of questions regarding the purpose of the school; or the secular superiority of the north of France relative to the south with regard to the rate of literacy[4], the dividing line running from Mont-Saint-Michel to Geneva. The long-term point of view is also *de rigueur* when considering the history of education in the context of social and cultural evolution. In this case, the historian is led to play down the role of the school as an institution and to propose new criteria for chronological subdivision. In Crubellier's view, the period of primacy of the immediate environment (family, parish, or village community) gave way to a period of cultural domination by Church and State via the school [5]. With regard to the family and changes of attitude to education, P.

Aries and L. de Mause agree in situating the origins of modern conceptions of childhood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in conjunction with the development of the school system and the classification of pupils by age group. But whereas Aries, a long-term historian, considers that this evolution takes place within a framework of broad slow cultural change, de Mause, on the basis of psychological history, attaches more importance to the direct influence of tensions between parents and children, emphasizing repressive practices and infanticide. In this connection, C. Webster writes that the public school in the United States was constructed on the basis of parental anxiety and of a fear of childhood; thus it appears as the result of an alliance between parents and teachers, and not as an institution at the service of childhood[6].

The points of view of Aries and de Mause lend themselves to a discussion of the relative importance and organization of the factors of change in education. This discussion will be taken up in Part Two of the present study. Here we shall confine ourselves to emphasizing

the limitations of a long-term approach to educational problems. More precisely, does the current situation of technical education as a kind of 'poor relation' stem simply from the effect of century-old prejudices? Can the failure of literacy campaigns and the difficulties of imposing universal education in Third World countries be imputed solely to the colonial heritage? According to M. Debeauvais, these problems 'are no longer concerned solely with the colonial heritage but also with the role of education systems in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities inside each country, and of international inequalities in the context of the division of labour between industrial countries and those of the Third World'[7]. This opinion restates the need for the educational historian to take note of present-day economic, social and political realities, and also to make the most of analysis of these realities.

Methodological aspects of historical research. A third series of contradictions is concerned above all with this aspect, although it is always difficult to decide on the relative importance of doctrinal factors on the one hand and an approach designed to reply to a question or to test a theory on the other.

In this respect, we have to draw a distinction between a unidimensional history of education and a multidimensional history associating the educational field with others such as economics, politics or religion. The concept of 'total history', linked, as we have seen, to the emergence of the 'new history', is an expression of the multidimensional mode. The same is true of the analysis of relations between science and ideology, with respect to the definition of complex notions such as that of aptitude[8].

Another couple of opposites are descriptive (or what one might describe as 'free') history and functional history, which highlights events and conflicts which might, in the long or the short term, influence educational situations.

According to L. Goldmann, the choice of this second approach makes it necessary to take into account 'human action anywhere and at any time, in so far as it has or has had some importance for or an effect on the existence and structure of some group of human beings and thus, implicitly, of the present or future human community'[9]. For example, in France, both at the time and afterwards, the war of 1870 and the Paris Commune aroused social and political reactions tending to a redefinition of the functions and a change in the methods and content of primary and adult education [10].

From an apparently more technical point of view, it is possible to distinguish, on the one hand, a tendency to put together homogeneous series (such as costs, numbers, premises, content of programmes, etc.) with a view to quantitative and long-term analysis; and, on the other, a desire to go more deeply into the study of a single phenomenon - for example, a vote or the application of a reform - by collecting heterogeneous material (such as data on social and political conditions and legal measures, or the reactions of educationists, pupils and public opinion, etc.). In the first case, writes F. Furet, 'the historical fact is built up through a time series of homogeneous and comparable units. This "serial" approach substitutes a regular distribution of data selected as a function of their comparability for the ungraspable event of the positivist approach. The event becomes a phenomenon chosen and perhaps constructed as a function of its repetitive nature'[11].

Certain documentary sources, such as schoolbooks or educational reviews, meet the requirements of 'serial' history quite easily. Other types of material, however, may lend themselves to a long-term and quantitative approach. Thus, analysis of the content of prize-giving speeches in French secondary schools between 1860 and 1965 has enabled V. Isambert-Jamati to study variations in educational goals as between one decade and another or one group of educationists and another. To a larger extent, this variation is ascribable to broad ideological trends reflecting both the state of social relations and the impact of certain political events. Thus, whereas the appreciation of supreme values such as the beautiful, the good or the true are the dominant themes of such speeches during the last ten years of the Second Empire, acquisition of the skills necessary for success

took its place during the early years of the Third Republic, a period marked, among other things, by the defeat of 1870, the lay movement and colonial expansion[12].

What are the conditions and meaning of the development of quantitative techniques in the history of education? According to H.G. Graff, it can be accounted for by two types of factor.

In the first place, the partial taking over of education by social history has led research workers to take an interest in new subjects such as the family and demographic evolution, and to ask themselves questions in such new areas as the consequences of education for the individual and for society. Within this new framework, the educational historian cannot escape the need to have recourse to the quantification of data and the statistical treatment of results.

The second type of factor arises from the affirmation of the revisionist movement. In effect, those who belong to it need to make use of numerical data on social and geographical mobility, or on the distribution of health or income, in order to refute traditional doctrines concerning the functions of the school. Whatever the relative importance of these two types of factor, Graff refuses to reduce the quantitative approach to a simple technical problem. In his view, the approach is both conceptual and methodological, implying not only the search for new data but also the formulation of original questions and theories regarding the relations between social change and changes in the education system.

This conceptual and methodological evolution crops up again in the transition from narrative logic, in which what has occurred before explains what occurs afterwards, to the logic of social science, characterized by the urge to describe behaviour objectively and to determine its circumstances. In this connection, Furet[13] considers that period history, by which he means a chronological narrative aiming to reconstitute what has happened, is giving place to the history of phenomena, or the analytical study of a single theme over periods of time considered to be heterogeneous.

Nevertheless, many historians agree with Veyne that 'once they emerge from their documents and proceed to their synthesis, . . . they narrate real events in which men are the protagonists' and that 'history is a novel of real life'[14].

If history is a novel based on real life, it remains to determine what distinguishes it from one which is not. Perhaps this is the place to recall the possibility of a history 'oriented to the formulation and the re-formulation of problems, and to a clearer distinction between interpretation and what is based on research', in short of a history able to unmask both clever rationalizations (e.g. 'what happened was the only thing that could have happened') and a spontaneous acceptance of narrative logic[5].

Is it possible to assert, like L. Stone, that the survival or revival of narrative history is due to the decline of certain deterministic approaches, to the failure of attempts to reply to the big questions? According to E. Hobsbawm, 'it is a case less of substitution than of complementarity between, on the one hand, the analysis of socio-economic structures and movements, and, on the other, the history of human beings and their states of mind'. In short, 'there is nothing new in the decision to look at the world through a microscope rather than through a telescope'[16].

In any event, the contrast coupling of thematic history and narrative history relates to another such pair of opposing doctrines, i.e. laying the emphasis on circumstances or laying the emphasis on human beings.

The latter school of thought is illustrated by the success of a history of outlooks. Founded some fifty years ago by Bloch and Febvre, and long confined to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the history of ideas nowadays extends towards the modern and contemporary periods. According to Agulhon, this extension is due to the joint progress of ethnology, historical demography and, in particular, social history. In this respect, the attention given to the collective protagonists of historical movements has led to an

awareness of their particular ways of thinking or acting and to a rejection of anachronism in the interpretation of their motives, their perceptions and their feelings. 'Although revolutionaries,' states Agulhon, "may well have in mind the doctrines and programmes of the revolution . . . their behaviour is also determined by more spontaneous, non-intellectual factors, and that is why historians have deliberately adopted the concept of outlook {mentalities[11]. According to Michel Vovelle, the notion of outlook refers, relative to that of ideology, to a longer period of time, to memory, to 'the inertia of mental structures'. For many specialists, the 'climb from the basement to the attic', or in other words from social history to the history of outlooks, appears as an enlargement of the field of research. They conceive the history of outlooks as 'the study of mediations and of the dialectic relationship between the objective conditions of human life and the way it is told or even experienced' [18].

This focus on outlook has brought about certain changes in historical practice. In particular, it has given rise to a systematic use of indirect testimony. Thus, in portraying the characteristics of popular culture in the sixteenth century, in order better to grasp the views of the world which in those days were transmitted orally, R. Muchembled calls upon 'the forces of repression to relate the history of what they were trying to repress'[19]. In the same way, in drawing up his *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français*, J. Maitron draws, among other sources, on the *Gazette des tribunaux* in order to portray the life and action of obscure militants[20].

At the same time as it enlarges the field of historical enquiry and the techniques of investigation, the flowering of the history of outlooks may correspond to a need for compensation vis-a-vis the ruptures and uprootings caused by the rapid changes in economic, social and cultural life. Its object is indeed to recreate for us the emotions, beliefs and representations of our ancestors. However, according to Furet, 'it is not so much concerned with explaining what is strange as with finding the familiar behind the illusion of strangeness. Thus it contains the seeds of a temptation to picturesqueness, which constitutes its link with the public at large'[21]. Furthermore, if applied to the study of colonized peoples, the notion of outlook sends us back to a static psychology recalling summary judgements about the supposedly permanent characteristics (for example impulsiveness, vindictiveness, fatalism and so on) of the 'natives'[22].

Thus it would be better to replace it by the more dynamic notion of personality building itself in action. In this connection, we may regret that as a rule historians pay little attention to the orientations of psychological history. The founders of this discipline considered that intellectual and affective functions are 'by their nature subject to change, imperfect and imperfectible' and asked questions about the origin of certain forms of conduct such as the memorization of a story or the representation of the notion of work [23].

Consider, for example, the representation of the notion of work. In ancient Greece, farm work was not perceived as a job but rather as an attempt to obtain divine blessings. The exercise of a craft was seen as an extension of the natural qualities of the craftsman and not as part of a division of labour which would optimize productivity. Closer to our own time, in the nineteenth century, the function of labour grows blurred, in the writings of the followers of Saint-Simon, behind that of an industrial order of society, the noun 'industrier (industrialist) applies at that time equally well to the workman, the engineer or the owner. If we turn to the school of the disciples of Fourier, we find the idea of labour eclipsed behind the mechanism of passion. In other words, far from being the motive force, work is itself motivated by the passions[24].

The evolution of the relations between the various branches of historical research affects the status and functions of history. Thus, by concentrating on the study of particular problems such as the modalities of school streaming or of the teaching of a subject, rather than on national systems of education, history becomes an instrument of communication between the specialists of different countries and accordingly a better instrument of

comparative research. At the same time, in so far as they are increasingly aware of the context or the spirit of a period, historians cease to sit in judgement on the people or actions of the past.

However, in rejecting any linear image of evolution, does not the 'new history' call into question the very concept which makes the time scale the basis of the evaluation of progress? Does it not cast doubt on the sense of the history of education? Moreover, does not the devaluation of national themes bring with it the danger of depriving historians - and their readers - of an important source of motivation?

These complex problems will be taken up and discussed again in Part Three and in the conclusion of the present book, with respect to the functions of history and the notion of progress.

Educational historians

The alternative viewpoints proposed in this chapter may cast some light on the orientations of educational historians. Naturally, these distinctions are of a schematic kind, and the same historian may from time to time apply several approaches, no doubt different but often complementary, and in any case not exclusive. Nevertheless, the tendency to prefer one approach, one kind of subject matter, or one particular way of managing and interpreting data allows us to sketch out the outline of certain categories of social historian without, however, falling into the excess of a too rigid typology.

First of all comes the scholar whose basic activity is research into new sources of documentation and whose ambition is either to provide working instruments or collections of texts for the use of the other historians, or to paint a picture as complete and precise as possible of some doctrine, work, institution or educational practice. The work of collecting and organizing material may give rise to different strategies. E. Le Roy Ladurie distinguishes two kinds of historian, 'the truffle seeker and the parachutist. The truffle seeker finds a treasure, a rare document, rich with promise. The parachutist ... rakes over a broad terrain, thanks notably to quantitative methods.' The author adds that the ideal would be to be both at the same time.

Often, the historian is concerned not only with reconstructing what really happened but also with recreating the way in which what happened was seen and felt by people at the time. In this case he becomes a historian of outlook.

Let us take the example of infant care and, in particular, wet nursing. It was a response to concerns which have largely disappeared. An external sign of social rank, its object was not only to enable women in high society to fulfil their worldly obligations. It was also linked to the demographic situation at the time and to a certain view of biological mechanisms. In effect, in view of the very high rate of infant mortality, one did not become really attached to a child until it had reached the age where one might be reasonably sure of its survival. Moreover, because of the idea which people had of the interactions between the circulation of the blood (stimulated by sexual relations) and the production of milk (effected by these same relations), it was considered desirable during the period of breast-feeding to obviate all risk of the mixing of these two liquids, and to prescribe an abstinence with which the wet-nurses could, naturally, come to terms. [25]

Sometimes called upon to synthesize, the historian bases his analysis on the result of works of scholarship in painting broad canvases, whether synchronic or diachronic, of some educational institution and, in certain cases, outlines the laws underlying the trends. In the history of educational institutions, the rivalry between what Durkheim calls the formal and the realist trends stems from this approach. These laws will be discussed in Part Two.

More remote from works of scholarship, the philosophical historian analyses the works of the major educational writers in order to sketch the evolution of the goals of education, to follow the changes which have occurred in attitudes to children, or to study the heritage of Plato or Rousseau.

Proclaiming their allegiance to one school or another of contemporary sociology, some historians are occupied with analysing the workings of a particular sector of the education system, for example recruitment, curricula or the subsequent careers of pupils. Expressed in terms of the functions fulfilled by the school, their conclusions served to feed the controversies already mentioned above regarding the flowering of the 'new history' and the revisionist movement.

It happens that the sociological historian may also be a statistician or an information specialist interested in the quantitative analysis of temporal series of homogeneous units such as school numbers, the level of education among soldiers, or the number of adult education courses. This kind of activity will be discussed in Part Two in connection with work on literacy and the demand for education.

This rapid review of the activities of historians does not claim to be exhaustive. Nevertheless, it gives a sufficiently good picture of the diversity to make one wonder about the soundness of any project of selection and training common to all educational historians.

Does not each field and each approach impose its own methodological requirements? In attempting to define these requirements, in connection with the history of primary education in the nineteenth century, P. Caspard and J.N. Luc warn the research worker against 'the privileged rank wrongly accorded to the interpretation of official texts' and against 'broad generalizations', suggesting instead, on the one hand, that priority be given to a micro-historical approach to the workings of the education system and, on the other, that the necessary classifications of students should be made according to sex, socio-economic category or habitation[26].

Quite apart from methodological recommendations, Brickman sets out what he considers to be the desirable qualifications for historians in general:

— a liberal education including literature, aesthetics, philosophy, the psychology of education, mathematics, etc.;

— a good knowledge of world history from ancient times down to the present day;

— an extensive knowledge of the history of education with respect to ideas, institutions, individuals, practices and results;

— a profound knowledge, on the basis of original sources, of at least one sector of the history of education;

— a mastery of historical research methods;

— a knowledge of the history of historiography; and

— the ability to read easily the languages used in the writing of history. To this already substantial list of qualifications should be added the knowledge and capacity needed to carry on a dialogue implied by the strengthening of links between the history of education and other human sciences.

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CHAPTER IV The history of education in the context of the humanities

The historical study of an educational problem appears to confirm the words of F. Braudel: 'History lends itself to dialogue. It has little structure of its own, and is open to neighbouring sciences ... It is the most literary and readable of human sciences, the most open to the public at large'[1]. No doubt this point of view needs some toning down, particularly when quantitative historical research is taken into account. Moreover, even if technical obstacles are left aside, can one say that the dialogue between historians and the practitioners of other human sciences is always easy or even possible?

Should the notion of interdisciplinarity here raised be considered as a mere product of wishful thinking, as the object of fruitless projects, or as the expression of useful and effective interaction?

Difficulties in the meeting of disciplines

It seems difficult to envisage the relations between the history of education and other human sciences from a global point of view. In effect, such relations spring from different elements and thus raise a number of questions:

— What is the place of the history of education among other educational sciences such as educational psychology or sociology?

— What is the position of educational history vis-d-vis the other branches of history, notably in relation to social and cultural history?

— What could be the nature of the relations between the history of education and other human sciences sometimes called general or fundamental, such as psychology, sociology and demography?

Indeed, can it not be said that the same kind of problem arises in connection with relations between movements or special fields within a single discipline, in this case the history of education?

For the moment, let us confine ourselves to this last question. The rapid growth of knowledge and the diversification of approaches and techniques lead some specialists to think that the gap between the different branches of a single discipline, or between research and application of the same discipline, can only continue to grow, thus rendering communication more and more difficult between persons whose collaboration would appear indispensable to the development of that particular field.

In psychology, for example, M. Reuchlin draws a distinction between those who accept and those who refuse the fundamental role of science, i.e. the explicit, public and verifiable

nature of all proceedings and statements, or, to put it the other way, between those who accept and those who refuse a contamination of the scientific process by ideology. More precisely, 'it is because it wishes to be verifiable that scientific psychology imposes a technicality and constraints which might seem unacceptable to some, and that it must accept limited objectives; but it is precisely to the extent that it is verifiable that it possesses characteristics intrinsic to development. By the same token, it is because it ignores or postpones the exigencies of verification that clinical psychology enjoys a certain kind of success, but is also unable to know if and when progress is achieved'[2].

It would be possible to extend these remarks to other humanities and, for example, to draw a distinction between an essentially interpretative and sometimes dogmatic type of history, on the one hand, and, on the other, an approach to the subject whereby the historian attaches much value to documentary research, to explaining his processes and to placing his results in context.

Thus, as we have already had occasion to emphasize in the preceding chapter, there exist several schools of the history of education in the same way as there exist several schools of educational psychology or sociology.

This being so, one may wonder whether the respective contributions to any interdisciplinary relationship should not be quite widely differentiated. Thus, for example, one might study the relation between the demand for training as a contribution of educational history and the situation of the labour movement as a contribution of social history.

However, still other difficulties arise. These spring from the usual way of classifying disciplines, which tends to establish relations of dependence between them or which subordinates the part to the whole. Thus, in a work entitled *La recherche historique en France depuis 1965*[3], the history of education is incorporated in a section entitled 'Histoire culturelle et histoire de Part'.

Other difficulties stem from the mobility or the disappearance of frontiers between disciplines. The historian P. Aries writes in this connection:

It is a strange thing that whereas historians are tempted by synchronization, the human sciences often rebel against it, seeking a long-term point of view. This is why the gaps between history and the other human sciences are tending to narrow; an event more recent than one might imagine following fifty years of lip-service to interdisciplinarity, during which time it has never really been implemented [4].

The sociologist G. Vincent appears to agree with this opinion, defining the process of socialization in the following terms:

To speak of a socialization process, in the sense that one speaks of a production process, is not to designate a series of proceedings or agents such as the family, the school or the media, nor is it to describe the operation which culturalists have defined as the absorption of group values by individuals. It is rather to try to find out by what means a society creates and constantly recreates itself... it is rather to evoke contradictions, ambiguities, violence and resistance[5].

In the light of these two series of observations, is it right to speak of interdisciplinary collaboration, or of a process of conversion, or even of contamination? Should one not rather emphasize the trend for history to become 'total' and even to set itself up as an 'overall human science'? Indeed, is interdisciplinarity conceivable at all if one has not first of all defined the field of each discipline, while nevertheless leaving room for the inevitable overlapping zones?

However that may be, the totalizing character of the 'new history' cannot help but give rise to fashions and to affect the behaviour of specialists. For an educational historian, not to draw attention to his involvement with social history or the history of outlooks is to run the risk of seeing himself classified for good among the latter-day positivists or, at least, among those who have ceased to be 'with it'. According to G. Bois:

What had been essentially a fruitful renewal of historical methodology was quickly changed by fashion following its first successes. Here was the 'new history' launched like a brand of detergent! Even if one remains attached to a narrative, unilinear and narrowly event-linked type of history, one will henceforth have to proclaim one's allegiance to the 'new school' in order to make the product easier to sell. Better still, we shall soon see the most empirical historians becoming enthusiastic promoters of statistical refinement. Thus, the introduction of simple techniques takes over from the working out of conceptual tools, and positivism finds a way to survive by dressing up in new clothes[6].

By way of complement to Bois's pertinent remarks, let us just add that many research workers did not wait for the exhortations of the 'new' historians in order to study such subjects as the social origin of pupils or the daily routine in the schools of bygone ages.

Sometimes, in the course of preparing a report or carrying out research, a particular research worker may become aware of relations between his own and some neighbouring or complementary speciality. This might for example be the case of a psychologist or sociologist who, upon the altar of academic requirements, introduced a historical dimension into the study of some basically psychological or sociological problem. In this connection, an analysis of these theses reveals a frequent tendency to use the most questionable procedures and results of historiography. Over and above the inevitable errors, anachronisms or clichés, one can often observe an absence of any reference to the context, or an obsession with signing a precise date to the origin of an idea or an institution.

When the context is mentioned, it is often in the manner of a stylistic exercise. An author may speak vaguely of economic, social or cultural factors. In other cases, an impression of greater precision is given by stressing the importance of some factor such as the emergence of new social classes, an economic crisis or a demographic upsurge. But unless the relations between these factors and educational reality are gone into more deeply, the author does not succeed in going beyond a certain historical or sociological formalism.

Analysis of the troubled interface between disciplines cannot, however, mask the existence of reciprocal influences nor the prospect of mutual enrichment or the synergic deepening of knowledge.

Mutual enrichment

We have had several occasions to emphasize the importance of the role of sociology in enlarging the field and renewing the subject-matter of the history of education. In referring to this role with respect to the historical study of literacy, H.J. Graff considers that the progress achieved in this field is due less to educational historians than to the work of specialists in social mobility and demography[7]. This remark indirectly raises the question of the legitimacy of educational science.

Some authors consider that the influence of demography on history is greater than that of sociology[8]. Based as it is on parish registers, tax returns and other such records, demography brings fresh life to social history and the study of outlooks. As J. Dupaquier points out, 'instead of tackling the great problems of history - which are not always the real ones - with ridiculously inadequate measuring instruments, the sole ultimate use of which is to cover up the guesses and prejudices of authors, this approach brings down the level of observation to that of individuals and families'[9]. Thus, contrary to the stated opinions of certain historians based on the testimony of theologians or moralists, the population of France under the ancien régime appears to have respected the Commandments. Indeed, the proportion of extramarital births, nowadays 26 per cent, varied between 4 and 16 per cent before 1750.

Whatever the contributions of different social sciences to historical research, according to F. Furet, 'the act of learning to know the past cannot be separated from that of

understanding the world in which we live'[10]. However, rooted as it is in the present, the historian's curiosity sometimes arouses phenomena of projection and recovery that American authors call 'pre-sentism'.

By the same token, an understanding of history can affect research on present-day society and the individuals who make it up. Nor is this influence confined to finding historical explanations for contemporary problems. In effect, sooner or later, experts in all disciplines feel a need to go back to their sources and the process of their development in order to go more deeply into certain epistemological problems. For example, inasmuch as modern experimental pedagogy borrows the essence of its concepts and techniques from scientific psychology, one might be tempted to think that the latter is an older science than the former. This over-simplification is, however, called into question by the historical approach. In fact, experimental pedagogy has to a large extent developed independently or, more precisely, according to a process based both on purely educational needs and on models which existed well before the end of the nineteenth century[11]. Thus, the doctor and educator Jean Itard carried out a veritable educational experiment with a view to developing and controlling the capacities of the 'child savage' who had been entrusted to him.

Ignorance of historical aspects of behaviour can paralyse psychological research, as has been shown by P. Malrieu in his studies on relations between historical and genetic psychology. The latter has had to rid itself of the notion of immutable functions, essential to human nature. Thus, the disciples of Piaget admit 'the essential universality of basic cognitive structures' even if, from one country to another, cultural conditions impose differences in the rate and style of the construction of behaviour. For their part, psycholinguistic disciples of Chomsky emphasize the existence of 'fundamental structures' or 'universals'. Experimental psychologists, on the other hand, tend rather to study the relations between two functions (for example, memory and intelligence) than their 'interconstruction'. To sum up, in the view of Malrieu, genetic psychology must take the construction of behaviour as its object. This construction takes place via the child's various encounters with history. In effect, the psychological functions develop through the perception of manipulation of works, objects or instruments which are themselves historical products. Moreover, the adult with which the child identifies conveys modes of behaviour which are also products of history[12].

The problem of time is another meeting-place between historians and psychologists. According to the orientation of their research, they are both interested in experienced, perceived time (where there is an attitude, a feeling of duration and succession); or in the operative, measurable time of the collective consciousness; or in the conceived notional idea of time (notably with the respect to historical times) of the reflective consciousness. For example, attitudes to the passing of time underwent profound changes at the end of the Middle Ages. As J. Le Goff puts it, there was a transition at that time from 50 'church time' to 'merchant time'. Theological time, dominated by God, punctuated only by the rites of the church, gradually yielded to time as 'managed' by the merchant. In effect, the latter based his activity on temporal computations such as stocking with a view to subsequent shortages, buying and selling at the right moments, or the charging of interest which made it possible to realize a profit over a period of time [13]. Psychologists and historians study not only attitudes to time, but also the means adopted by people in order to evaluate it, defeat it or escape from it, by reference either to eternal principles or to tradition. The genetic psychologist takes a particular interest in the stages by which the child masters the idea of time, thus contributing to the educational psychology of history.

Quite apart from this exploration of the same subjects, historians and psychologists can also follow similar or converging lines in their own mono-disciplinary research. Thus, like certain historians, M. Richelle stresses, in a collective work entitled *Psychologie de demain*, the need to concentrate on the problems in hand rather than on the methods of

explanation, or in other words to see science 'not as a set of certainties, but as a manner of asking questions'[14]. In the same work, with respect to the utilization of research results, P. Oleron proposes the establishment of psychology for everybody which would also be the psychology of everybody 'in so far as it would take into account the problems of daily life'[15].

By according priority to the problems and stressing the need to approach the same question on the basis of practical situations and from different points of view, it would be possible to arrive at a better definition of the place of the history of education among human sciences. It would also be possible to advance the study of interdisciplinarity among educational sciences.

Persistent differences

In this connection, it would be pointless to underestimate the differences separating history from psychology or other humanities. These differences relate to the possibilities of scientific rigour which each discipline offers.

According to G. Granger, history is 'a clinic without practice' and the historian 'a speculative clinician'[16]. These laconic definitions would appear to express a double impossibility: on the one hand, that of conceiving a technique of action on the basis of examples taken from the past; and on the other, that of affecting the object of study in order to know it better.

We shall be going more deeply into the first aspect of Granger's reflections in Part Three, dealing with the functions of history. As regards the speculative activity of the historian, it is a truism to state that he is unable to carry out any real experimentation, or in other words to reproduce the phenomenon under study after having determined the conditions of its appearance. Nevertheless, this impossibility cannot negate the requirement, common to the human sciences as a whole, to submit any proposition, hypothesis or opinion to checking against the facts. Naturally, whether we are talking about history or psychology, when a situation had been sufficiently well analysed to justify the formulation of an exact question, such a question will naturally call for a precise answer, perhaps with some indication as to probability or some discussion of the possibilities of generalization. To be more explicit, let us consider the function of the school. The general question of whether the school has in the past mirrored the social strata or whether in the long run it produced conditions such as to call those strata into question can only give rise to an ambiguous answer in so far as the two functions have always existed side by side, as can be shown by many examples. On the other hand, precise questions such as what was the origin of pupils in colleges under the ancien regime, or what professions were followed by young men from different social categories, can be answered precisely with respect to the sample of schools under consideration[17].

These comments on the degree to which various human sciences or approaches can be considered genuinely scientific do not in any way exhaust the subject of interdisciplinarity. There remain other questions to be gone into more deeply, such as that of the training and specialization (single or multiple) of the research worker, or that of the transfer of knowledge and attitudes when a specialist changes 'workshop' or discipline, whether temporarily or permanently. It also remains to envisage the conditions for the constitution of genuine multidisciplinary teams and their chances of success or survival in a scientific universe dominated by increasing specialization, compartmentalization, competition and conflicts between competing groups.

It sometimes happens that such disputes arise out of conflicting conceptions about change in education.

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