

Hermann Lietz and the German Country Boarding Schools

Abstract This chapter introduces the ideas of the German educator and theologian Hermann Lietz. Lietz is well known for his idea of the so-called *Country Boarding Schools*, founded in Germany in the early twentieth century. The chapter discusses Lietz's biographical background, the most important pedagogical aspects of his work, the historical background, and the possible contributions for today's discussion. In particular, the Country Boarding Schools continue to exist in Germany and offer an interesting alternative to normal schools.

Keywords Country Boarding Schools · Hermann Lietz · New education

2.1 HERMANN LIETZ—A BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Hermann Lietz was born in 1868 in the small town of Dumgewitz on the island of Rügen, which is located in the German part of the Baltic Sea. The island is still characterized by a very rural, agricultural environment. Lietz's childhood years were strongly shaped by the rural surroundings. For the rest of his life, he would remain convinced that a natural environment was the best one for children and adolescents to grow up in. Since Dumgewitz was very small (even today, it can hardly be found on most maps of modern Germany), there was no school, so that at age 10, Lietz was sent to school in the next biggest town on the

mainland. This proved to be a defining turning point in his biography, with the remainder of his youth characterized by harsh contrast: positive memories of his childhood in a familiar, familial, and rural context, and a rather depressing youth and school years in an urban environment. This contrast, clearly determined by the experiences of his youth, went on to permeate Lietz's entire practice and aims.

Hermann Lietz described his school years as very upsetting. Everyday life was characterized by beatings and pointless rote memorization. Learning and growing through experiences gained in a natural environment, as had been the case in Dumgewitz, was replaced by the dry, lifeless study of school books. These experiences surely had a huge impact on Lietz when he came to found his progressive school concept. The following quote by Lietz is meant as an admonition: "May the educator never forget the sufferings of their own childhood"¹ (Lietz 1922, p. 35).

After finishing (high) school, Lietz decided to dedicate his life to achieving a social reform of society. At the universities of Halle and Jena, he studied Protestant theology, and obtained his doctorate under Nobel literature laureate Rudolf Eucken. His dissertation dealt with French sociologist Auguste Comte. In 1892, Lietz graduated as a senior school teacher for the subjects of philosophy, German, religion and Hebrew.

Two factors turned out to have a major influence on the development of Lietz's own pedagogy; the first being the teachings of Wilhelm Rein, another scholar in Jena. Rein, whose own pedagogy was based on Johann Friedrich Herbart's, worked in Jena as a world-renowned pedagogue around 1900. Many educators and scholars from other countries such as the UK and the USA traveled to Jena for Rein's summer courses to learn about Herbart's pedagogy. Rein also led a training school in Jena, where Lietz gained hands-on experience in pedagogy. Rein had proclaimed the programmatic goal of an *Erziehungsschule* (social education school); the main question he tried to answer was how the claim of educating pupils towards a moral, ethical life could be fulfilled within the greater context of *school*, and how this claim could take shape in a concept of schooling.

The second influence was Lietz's stay at the progressive Abbotsholme School in Derbyshire, England, founded by Cecil Reddie (1858–1932) in 1889. Apart from regular school lessons and a typical boarding school

¹"Der Erzieher sollte doch nie die Leiden der eigenen Kindheit vergessen" (Lietz 1922, S. 35). All translations into English are by the authors.

education, it featured a complex structuring of daily life. For example, the program included physical exercise, manual labor, recreation, and arts. A non-confessional religious studies class, modern language studies, and sciences were also part of the curriculum. Looking for an associate in the tradition of Herbartianism, Reddie had asked Wilhelm Rein if he knew anyone who might be able to help him develop his ideas further. Rein recommended his student Lietz, who then came to live in Abbotsholme for one year. Lietz would later process his experiences of boarding school life in the English progressive school in a literary way in his programmatic educational novel *Emlohstobba* (1897).

Once back in Germany, Lietz set out the educational principles for the foundation of his first school: this, the first *German Country Boarding School* (*Landerziehungsheim*), was then founded in Ilsenburg in the Harz mountains in 1898, followed by a second school in Haubinda/Thuringia in 1901, and a third at Schloss Bieberstein near Fulda/Hesse) in 1904. The fourth and most significant school was the Landweisenheim (Country Orphanage) Veckenstedt, built in 1914. It would also be the last school founded by Lietz, although his successors would go on to open further Country Boarding Schools.

In 1919, Lietz died from the consequences of an injury sustained in the First World War. His plan, formulated in 1911, to transform all his schools into a trust, could only be implemented by his successors in 1920. This trust, the *Stiftung Deutsche Landerziehungsheime*, still exists today, coordinating and supporting the current *Hermann-Lietz-Schulen*.

The basic idea of the Country Boarding Schools was picked up by several other German educators, such as Kurt Hahn (1886–1974). Hahn's well-known theoretical model resulted in the foundation of *Schloss Salem* in Germany and the *British Salem School* in Gordonstoun in 1934. There, Hahn developed *outward bound*, a concept of adventure and experiential learning. These and other German Country Boarding Schools paved the way for the development of the United World Colleges (UWC) and acted as models for similar schools in Switzerland, France, and Japan. The Japanese educator Kuniyoshi Obara (1889–1977), famous for founding his own progressive school Tamagawa Gakuen, which was inspired by the German model, even said: “I want to be Lietz in Japan”² (Ito 2007, p. 111). Obara's philosophy focused on the education of the “*whole person*,” an idea taken from the tradition

²“Ich will Lietz in Japan werden” (Ito 2007, S. 111).

of Japanese *juku* pedagogy, inspired by the progressive leitmotif of an alternative schooling culture and student-oriented didactics modeled after Lietz. Today, Tamagawa Gakuen, located in what is now a suburb of Tokyo, has grown into an integrated pedagogical system, providing education for all age levels, from kindergarten to a fully accredited university. This example illustrates how influential and remarkable Lietz and his ideas have been even in the international context.

2.2 GERMAN COUNTRY BOARDING SCHOOLS

Lietz's school concept can be summed up in the following formula: If you want to change school (meaning the way that *schooling* is done), you need to establish a new school. In other words: a new, alternative idea of school as an institution is needed. Lietz wanted to establish his own, new school structure, based on a new philosophy of education. This philosophy was very much oriented towards sociological principles. One of its central tenets was that an analysis of the structural conditions of education and classes makes the *new* of a new school obvious. The main thesis of the following thoughts is that Country Boarding Schools offer an educational context which is first and foremost different from all other schools.

What distinguishes this concept from others? First, Lietz calls for a changed relationship between teacher and pupil(s), demanding that teachers not only take on the task of conducting classes well but also that a teacher should be a good example and role model for their pupils. However, this role model function requires a specific context, in which it (the function) and the new teacher–student relationship can unfold. Therefore, Lietz's schools had to be boarding schools in a rural, secluded environment, far from any influences of town and city life. Furthermore, the boarding schools were grouped into so-called *families*, comprising a group of students assigned to a teacher or a married couple of teachers. Lessons in the morning were only one aspect of the whole educational scheme. Practical work in the afternoons, community events such as the *Kapellen* (chapels) in the evenings, and the overall layout of the organization as a group of families played equally important parts in the daily routine. Lietz described this concept of daily routine as follows:

Classes are given in the morning hours; in such a way that one class unit does not exceed the duration of 45 minutes Two lengthier breaks of 15minutes each are made before and after class units. One of these breaks

will be used to do an endurance run, which is especially beneficial for the development of the lungs. During the first part of the afternoon, between 2 and 4 pm, students carry out practical or artistic tasks in workshops, the gardens, lawns, on the estate or in the drawing room, or they work in the laboratory or do musical exercises and play games. Only in the late afternoon, [...] a second study unit takes place: the independent rehearsal of the content that had earlier been discussed with the teachers (German: *Arbeitsstunde*). (Lietz 1906, p. 294ff.)³

Let us take a closer look at Lietz's program. A useful approach is to analyze the labeling of his schools. Why did he call them *Land-Erziehungs-Heim* (country education home)? Lietz wrote: "With this name, the founder wanted to sum up in one word what matters most to him, that is, to create spaces,

- where young people are educated, not only instructed
- where young people may grow up in the countryside in God's free, beautiful nature
- where pupils live together with their educators, as in an extended family, as in a country home, in a second home (Heimat), where real German ways and customs may be cultivated" (Lietz 1906, p. 290).⁴

Thus, the name says it all. This can best be explained by looking at the respective contrasting points to the signal terms included in the schools' name.

³"Der Unterricht wird auf die Vormittagsstunden verlegt und zwar so, dass eine Lehrstunde nicht die Zeit von 45 Minuten überschreitet und dass zwei längere Unterbrechungen von je 15 Minuten zwischen den Lehrstunden liegen. Die eine Pause wird zu einem Dauerlauf verwendet, der besonders günstig für die Entwicklung der Lungen ist. Im ersten Teile des Nachmittags, von 2–4 Uhr, findet praktische oder künstlerische Tätigkeit in Werkstätten, Garten, auf dem Landgut oder im Zeichensaal statt, oder Arbeit im Laboratorium oder musikalische Übungen oder Spiel. Erst am Spätnachmittag (...) erfolgt eine weitere Lern-tätigkeit, die selbständige Durcharbeitung des mit den Lehrern durchgesprochenen Stoffes (*Arbeitsstunde*)" (Lietz 1906, S. 294ff.).

⁴"Mit dem Namen wollte der Gründer in einem Wort sagen, worauf es ihm ankommt: Orte zu schaffen,

in denen, er-zogen⁴ und nicht bloß unterrichtet wird;

in denen die Jugend auf dem Lande in der freien, schönen Gottesnatur aufwachse,

in denen sie wie in einem Familienheim, einer zweiten Heimat, mit ihren Erziehern wie eine erweiterte Familie zusammenlebt, in denen echte deutsche Art und Sitte gepflegt werde" (Lietz 1906, S. 290).

2.2.1 *In the Countryside, Not in the City—Where Should the Ideal School Be Located?*

Like his teacher Wilhelm Rein, Lietz, too, perceived large towns and cities foremost as a potential threat to the desired goal of education. To Rein, the emerging metropolises were simply a “folly” (Rein 1919, p. 71),⁵ because: “The masses demoralize. They pollute the air, the house, the food, the clothes, and most of all, the mindset” (Rein 1919, p. 72).⁶ Lietz builds on this opinion and reaches his pedagogical conclusion that city life offers only negative influences for adolescents, such as alcohol, nicotine, and prostitution.

Towns and cities are a dangerous, endangering environment in which to grow up; the protective and alternative context of experience thus being the seclusion of the countryside. In this seclusion, one is totally empowered and in control of bringing that what is desired and necessary to the child, and to keep what is detrimental away from them. (Lietz 1924, p. 91)⁷

With this view, Lietz takes the ideal of rural seclusion and isolation, drawn from his own biography, and raises it to be the benchmark of his pedagogical aims and practices.

To him, this is not just about a sentiment for nature, merely complementing urban and city culture, but rather the loving and close relationship with nature as a radical pedagogical benchmark. In Lietz’s concept, the mere act of experiencing nature within urban areas is by no means sufficient to meet the necessary conditions for a Country Boarding School, thereby differing from concepts such as Ovide Decroly’s. What matters to Lietz is the complete isolation from harmful urban influences. “The countryside cannot be substituted by a few trees, lawns, and flower beds. Wherever there is no opportunity to romp about without

⁵“Narrheit“ (Rein 1919, S. 71).

⁶“Die Masse demoralisiert. Sie verdirbt die Luft, die Wohnung, das Essen, die Kleidung, vor allem aber die Gesinnung” (Rein 1919, S. 72).

⁷“Die Stadt ist danach ein gefährlicher, weil gefährdender Ort des Aufwachsens. Der alternative, weil schützende Erlebniskontext ist dagegen die Abgeschlossenheit des Landes (...), in der man es völlig in seiner Macht hat, das Wünschenswerte und Notwendige an das Kind heranzubringen, das unbedingt Schädliche von diesem fernzuhalten” (Lietz 1924, S. 91).

hindrance, to work on the soil, to work as a farmer, that is not where conditions seem to be most advantageous” (Lietz 1924, p. 93).⁸

At this point, his biography becomes a romanticized ideology of pre-modern desires as he links his ideal of the countryside with his socio-political goals of reform: “[a] brave and uncompromising fight against the worst threats to the people: alcohol, nicotine, excess, homelessness, lack of connection to the land, greed—that is what we must destroy” (Lietz 1917, p. 200).⁹ Lietz attempted to achieve this by making his desired goals the social rules in the Country Boarding Schools. Teachers were to give a positive example through their way of life, and students were to be taught the dangers awaiting them in urban life:

Students need to know the dangers of alcoholism and sex; they need to know how and to what extent physical exercise will benefit their bodies; they need to know how to evade the disadvantageous (harmful) consequences of working in factories and study rooms, and much more of that sort. (Lietz 1911, p. 26)¹⁰

In his biography of Lietz, Erich Meissner speaks of “[the] ascetic reduction of experience” when talking about the pedagogical value of rural seclusion; ascetic here meaning both the self-denial of luxury and constant entertainment, and devotion to creating “lasting foundations [for life]” (Meissner 1965, p. 38).¹¹ In the contrast between urban and rural life, only the latter provides an appropriate environment for this asceticism.

⁸“Einige Bäume, Rasenstücke und Blumenbeete machen noch nicht das Land aus. Wo nicht weiteste Gelegenheit zum ungehinderten Umhertummeln, zur Arbeit am Boden, zur bauerlichen Berufstätigkeit ist, da ist auch nicht der Schauplatz, der uns als der günstigste erscheint” (Lietz 1924, S. 93).

⁹“mutiger und rücksichtsloser Kampf gegen die schlimmsten Volksschädigungen: Alkohol, Nikotin, Ausschweifungen, Wohnungselend, Mangel an eigener Scholle, Geldgier, das ist es, was wir durchsetzen müssen” (Lietz 1917, S. 200).

¹⁰“Der Schüler muß z.B. die Gefahren kennen, die ihm durch Alkoholismus und Sexismus drohen; muß wissen, wie weit und in welcher Weise Sport für seinen Körper zuträglich ist; was er tun kann, um den nachteiligen Wirkungen der Arbeit in der Fabrik und Studierstube zu entgehen, und noch vieles derartige” (Lietz 1911, S. 26).

¹¹“bleibenden Gegebenheiten” (Meissner 1965, S. 38).

2.2.2 *Education, Not (Just) Instruction—What Is a School Supposed to Accomplish?*

Given the social changes of the late nineteenth century, the question of the function of schools was heavily debated, with one recognized goal being that schools were not only to provide lessons where students were instructed, but also opportunities for a broader education—in and out of classes. Here, Lietz draws on the schooling theories of his own teacher from Jena, Wilhelm Rein, who, building on and developing Johann Friedrich Herbart's pedagogy, had developed the idea of a school for [social] education. For Rein, this new kind of school seemed necessary as a response to changing family structures, namely the observation that families had been pretty much losing their former educational function and power. He was convinced that this vacuum of social education had to be filled by, “the educational power of the school. And the new pedagogy is aware of this difficult task, and all its interpretations culminate in the notion of [social] education; thus, classes should also focus on this notion” (Rein 1914, p. 121).¹² Accordingly, the function of school is not only the distribution of knowledge but much more, that is, the provision of a broader education of the pupils. For Rein, this idea is the aim of a necessary process of reformation. Idealistic thought characterizes his rationale for a school of (social) education. The aim of all education should be the formation of a religious-ethical personality, with the (social) educational schools, “facilitating a general humane formation of the human character, serving religious-ethical interests; initiating a refinement of a complete education which is not tied to any particular social rank” (Rein 1904, p. 600).¹³

Lietz seized on this idealism and simultaneously combined it with pedagogical pragmatism. He also criticized the state of culture around 1900. His core argument was that, if the aim of education is to be the formation of religious-ethical character, then this cannot be achieved in the existing school system. Instead, *schooling* must be done in a

¹²“durch die erziehlische Kraft der Schule ersetzt werden. Und die neue Pädagogik ist sich dieser schweren Aufgabe bewußt, und alle ihre Darlegungen gipfeln in dem Gedanken der Erziehung, ihm soll auch der Unterricht dienstbar gemacht werden” (Rein 1914, S. 121).

¹³“eine allgemeine Menschenbildung, die im Dienste der religiös-sittlichen Interessen steht, vermitteln; die Veredlung einer Gesamtbildung anbahnen, die nicht an gewisse Stände geknüpft ist” (Rein 1904, S. 600).

completely different, completely new way. Country Boarding Schools, with their alternative structures, seemed to be the perfect environment for achieving this aim. Lietz argued that the only reason that the *old school* primarily gave instruction was that the task of the broader, social education used to be carried out by family homes and social environments. However, this had changed by the end of the nineteenth century, so that now schools had to shoulder the burden of dealing with both subject teaching and social education. Established, yet outdated, schools were unfit to fulfill both tasks, as was evidenced by the condition of young people.

2.2.3 *Homes, not Day Schools—What Is the Best Structure for a School?*

Schools exist not only to disseminate knowledge but also to educate students. Yet, how are schools supposed to do that? The answer: through two main features which set Country Boarding Schools apart from regular schools:

- their geographical location
- their being boarding schools.

Yet what characterizes a boarding school in terms of education? The main benefit is not, as one might assume, that people are living together all the time, but rather that the context of the boarding school allows for the imitation of a specific way of communication. A way of communication which is said traditionally to have the greatest educational effect: namely, communication within a *family*.

What does that look like in Lietz's concept? Here, teachers not only prepare and lead classes but also serve as a kind of family figure for groups of around twelve students—the so-called school family. Rural and family aspects mutually complement each other. The rural environment serves as a macro-structure in which the family-like context is embedded as a micro-structure. Both macro- and micro-structures are expected to have educational functions and effects. Lietz emphasizes the mutual, reciprocal relations that result from day-to-day interactions within the school family: "While the members of the family might not all be of the same age, age differences will not be very grave, since that would require different ways of treatment and living, and since there is no guarantee

that the oldest and youngest members of the group will influence each other in the desired fashion” (Lietz 1924, p. 94).¹⁴ The structure of the school families, being under the leadership of teachers, is meant to break up the separation between school and everyday life by embedding education into the shared structures of life. For this goal, it is vital that everyone lives together in a boarding school, following specific rules. This aspect was influenced by what Lietz had witnessed at the Abbotsholme School. For him, it is imperative that the educational purpose of school can be fulfilled only through the organization of specific, familial communication structures (see Luhmann 1990). Lietz also realized this by distributing students of different age groups to different boarding schools, so that only certain age groups were to live and learn together: the youngest group (9–12 years) lived in Ilsenburg, the next oldest (12–15 years) in Haubinda, and the oldest (15–19 years) at Schloss Bieberstein. Since Lietz was not only a practitioner but also a theorist, he aspired to make his own reformed, progressive schools a model for a general school reform.

This last aspect can be deduced from his principal work on educational theory, *Die Deutsche Nationalschule* [The German National School] from 1911. Lietz explicitly understood his work as a contribution to *the school reform based on the German Country Boarding Schools* (which formed the book’s subtitle: *zur Schulreform aus den Deutschen Landerziehungsheimen*). Once they had been modified and adjusted, he wanted the practices that were tested and tried in his schools to take on the function of being a role model function for the reform of all state schools—even in urban environments. The mandatory motif was Rein’s theory of the social education school. While the key feature of rural life could not be transferred to the regular state schools, there are other aspects that do offer connecting points, such as the internal organization of the school with its focus on familial structures of communication.

This familial aspect remains remarkable even today. In this respect, the Country Boarding Schools may offer an answer to the simple question of where one may find identification structures, such as peers and teachers as family, for young people in modern schools. Put another way:

¹⁴“Die Glieder der Familie werden zwar nicht ganz gleichaltrig, aber auch nicht von zu großem Altersunterschiede sein, da dies wiederum eine verschiedene Art der Lebensweise und Behandlung erfordern würde, und da keine Gewähr vorhanden ist, dass älteste und jüngste Glieder der Gruppe sich in der Hauptsache richtig beeinflussen” (Lietz 1924, S. 94).

might there not be ways and opportunities to create such family structures within regular schools, despite the mostly formal role attribution? This question seems to be an important one, especially today, when one thinks critically about the educational performance of schools.

2.3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Western world before the First World War was characterized by nationalism, especially in the bigger European countries. This characteristic plays a key role in Lietz's answer to the question of which cultural context a school should prepare children and adolescents for. His answer is two-fold and ambivalent, showing a peculiar tension, located between national pride and universal humanism.

- The issue of national pride (German: *Nationalstolz*) matters to Lietz. However, the term has become problematic for many Germans because of later twentieth-century history. Thus national pride is understood and received somewhat more problematically than in other countries. Lietz's basic idea was that people are born into a specific cultural context, which then continues to influence them. Education plays a special role in this, namely, to ensure that the respective national-specific religious ethics that have been subsumed in the national context will, as effectively as possible, be transmitted to the next generation. The arrangements for school reform should therefore serve the evolution of national strengths. School reform should also support and advance the fight against deficiencies in one's own, national cultural context. The following quote shows what Lietz considers as the national illnesses: "All German schools have to fight the bad habits of drinking alcohol and smoking, which are harmful to health and strength" (Lietz 1913, p. 95).¹⁵ This shows that, to Lietz, the context of educational thought is also defined by national traits –in contrast to the progressive position, with its vision of one single humanity, universally uniting all people. From our modern perspective, this is more than

¹⁵"Alle deutschen Schulen haben ernsthaft gegen die, Gesundheit und Kraft schädigenden, Unsitten des Trinkens alkoholischer Getränke und des Rauchens zu kämpfen" (Lietz 1913, S. 95).

problematic. The valorization of one's own nation is inevitably connected to the depreciation of other nations. In this respect, Lietz resonates with the saying, *Am deutschen Wesen soll die Welt genesen* [German ways will cure the whole world]. This sense of national identity might, for some, be a reason to marginalize Lietz and his pedagogy altogether. Yet, next to his emphasis on German values, he also presents us with a set of quite different ideas: the striving for international contacts, international understanding, and universal, generally humane ethics.

- From a religious standpoint, Lietz never tired of pleading for the progressive ideal of an ethic that encompasses all of humanity. His main, comprehensive interpretation of a world view consists of the dichotomy of *idealistic* and *materialistic*. All other dichotomies, such as questions of race and nationality, are derived from and determined by that main dichotomy; the idea being that all people, regardless of race, nationality, and sex are equal in terms of their aspirations to lead their lives in an ethical way. All developments that align with idealistic thinking and acting are good; all developments that proceed from materialistic thought and acting are bad. This interpretation permeates all other, secondary distinctions. Lietz was first and foremost a rigorous idealist.

What remains is an unrelieved tension between a sense of nationality on one side and a vision of universality on the other. It is possible to understand Lietz's work in two entirely different ways. One view is that Lietz might have been politically right-wing; this view is supported by his critique of urban culture mixed with prejudice against Judaism and Socialism. However, one can also point out that socialist educators such as Leonhard Nelson and Minna Specht were among Lietz's closest friends. In this respect, his attitude towards Jews and Socialists is assumed to have been determined by his orientation towards idealism.

What appears most disconcerting for the modern reader is Lietz's enthusiasm for the war and his opinions on Judaism and Socialism, as well as his repressive comments on sex that appear throughout his work. At the same time, many of his pedagogical principles still apply today. The notion that schooling always consists of the interplay between structural arrangements and individual (personal) actions has proven fundamental. The current Hermann Lietz schools strive to extend Lietz's pedagogical ideas to suit international understandings. The concept of

the Country Boarding Schools is easily realized without any sense of nationalism; what matters is the pedagogical core. For school reform, the interconnection of two contexts is crucial: the macro-context of the rural countryside and the micro-context and microcosm of the school family; both of these are the result of structural decisions that were designed by Lietz to manage education. Within these structures, Lietz unfolds what progressive educators call *child-centered pedagogy*.

What is a teacher to Lietz? In an appeal to the body of teachers, Lietz characterizes the role and position of teachers as follows: “Spark understanding and excitement for the character and future challenges of the nation; practice with the young people in your small community to learn civic virtues, let everyone within the community serve the whole with full force, let them carry out duties, exercise their rights” (Lietz 1912, p. 52).¹⁶ He also described the teacher as, “[a] priest of humanity and of God in the true meaning of the word” (Lietz 1897, p. 53),¹⁷ thereby contrasting the teacher to the “instructor or even the drill master” (Lietz 1897, p. 53).¹⁸ “The teacher of the past viewed the student first and foremost as someone subordinate that he could command, backed up by the authority provided to him by his office and his superior age” (Lietz 1906, p. 298).¹⁹ Lietz, however, says about the contrast between the old and the new teacher: “The teacher of the new school and the parents of the new family are completely different [from the old types of teacher], who rely only (!) on the natural authority that comes with intellectual, ethical superiority” (Lietz 1906, p. 298).²⁰

¹⁶“Erweckt Verständnis und Begeisterung für Wesen und Zukunftsaufgaben der Nation; übt Euch mit der Jugend in Eurem kleinen Gemeinwesen, staatsbürgerliche Tüchtigkeit zu erlernen, laßt in ihm jeden nach seinen Kräften dem Ganzen dienen, Pflichten erfüllen, Rechte ausüben” (Lietz 1912, S. 52).

¹⁷“Priester der Menschheit und Gittes im wahren Sinne des Wortes” (Lietz 1897, S. 53).

¹⁸“Unterrichter oder gar Drillmeister” (Lietz 1897, S. 53).

¹⁹“Der Lehrer der Vergangenheit hat in dem Schüler in erster Linie den Untergeordneten erblickt, dem gegenüber er zu befehlen hat. Dabei hat er sich vor allem auf die aus seinem Amte und seinem überlegenen Alter erwachsene Autorität gestützt” (Lietz 1906, S. 298).

²⁰“Ganz anders der Lehrer der neuen Schule und die Eltern der neuen Familie. Sie stützen sich nur (!) auf natürliche Autorität, die aus ihrer geistigen, sittlichen Überlegenheit erwächst” (Lietz 1906, S. 298).

At the same time, Lietz, similar to Freinet and Decroly, was concerned to create free spaces for children's own activities within the pre-existing contexts. He writes: "The healthy, normal child wants to build, to shape, to create a world around themselves, to be a kind of Robinson Crusoe, exploring their own island. They need to be given the opportunities to do this, so that the creative spirit and energy doesn't wither but is confirmed and so that the future inventor and organizer may grow" (Lietz 1906, p. 292).²¹ While the Country Boarding Schools as social spaces were designed by adults, this does not mean that they comprise purely adult-centered structures. Rather, Lietz wanted his Country Boarding Schools to be understood as child-appropriate environments. The schools were, and are, to provide the pupils with natural, free spaces in which to engage in their own activities and free development. In this sense, teachers were, and are, to take on the role of facilitator or catalyst of childhood learning.

2.4 CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

Lietz's model of an alternative school, the Country Boarding School, is still actively and successfully practiced today. There are currently four Country Boarding Schools operating on Lietz's principles: in Haubinda, at Schloss Bieberstein, at Schloss Hohenwerda, and on the island of Spiekeroog in the North Sea. All four are privately owned and dedicated to transforming Lietz's idea of a child-appropriate pedagogy into an active school community and educational concept.

Today, each of these schools has a different approach to implementing a concept of *globally oriented education*. The school at Schloss Hohenwerda (grades 5–10) attempts this through special musical education. The oldest functioning Country Boarding School, in Haubinda (grades 1–13), allows students to explore societal responsibility within the context of a school village. Schloss Bieberstein (grades 10–12) emphasizes extensive economic education. The schools are homes for students from all kinds of nations, especially attracting Chinese pupils.

²¹"Das gesunde, normale Kind will bauen, formen, eine Welt um sich schaffen, ein Robinson im kleinen sein. Zu diesen Tätigkeiten muß ihm Gelegenheit gegeben werden, damit seine Schaffenskraft nicht verkümmert, dass sie sich bestätigen und so der künftige Erfinder und Organisator heranwachsen kann" (Lietz 1906, S. 292).

The final school in the list provides extraordinary opportunities apart from the normal school curriculum. Since 1993, the school on Spiekeroog offers the *High Seas High School* as a form of adventure and experiential learning: up to 30 students aged 15–18 years are given the opportunity to sail on a traditional sailing ship from Germany to the Canary Isles, on to the Caribbean, towards South American or Central American shores and back to Germany via Cuba and the Azores. During this time, the participants undergo a professional training as sailors in addition to regular classes in all core subjects on board the ship. Stops in the various countries *en route* provide further opportunities for special educational experiences, such as on-shore language courses.

Another example of globally oriented education is the educational year offered at the Lietz-Schule Schloss Bieberstein. Over the course of one year, students dedicate themselves to education in the original meaning of the word—beyond the usual evaluation, comparison, and competition of classroom performances—to reflect on their perceptions of the world and to approach individual responsibility and maturity. This transitional year takes place after the middle school level and enables pupils to enter senior classes which would prepare them for university, or an apprenticeship. During this time, in addition to core subjects, students may choose between a multitude of activities, including aid projects in Romania or Nepal and mountain climbing tours in the Alps. This concept of globally oriented education extends the ideas of social education that Lietz formulated a hundred years ago. Drawing on the tradition of the Grand Tour, an educational journey that had for centuries formed the final part of a young nobleman's or young gentleman's education, Lietz considered traveling and taking journeys an important part of his program. The concepts and practices of these modern projects have very diverse dimensions: education as self-reflection, education as communal experience, education as experience of and encounter with the other, education as deceleration of the school career, education as global experience. Education goes on a journey to the wide world of thought, of realms of experience, and cultural spheres.

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