

Editorial

*Erwin Rauscher**

Education creates culture.

However, Austria is a small country,
and so we only have one and the same word in German for education and culture.

We just call it “Bildung”.

My very warm WELCOME to all of you
coming from so many countries,
especially from as far as the United States.

For a long week you will discuss issues
about Teaching, Mentoring and Research in and across the Disciplines.
And I have seen that you are integrating the Arts, Language, and Culture.

What we simply call “Bildung” in German is a word full of magic power:

- It enables us to look beyond the horizon.
- It gains influence over our health.
- It enables us to self determination and freedom.
- It is the anchor of modern societies.
- It connects languages and the languages connect people.

But it also produces baseless fears:

- the rulers fear the emancipation of the servants
– according to the German philosopher Hegel,
- men fear the independence of women,
- and our modern world dreads the shadows of poverty and exploitation.

But you do not need to be afraid
when I now ask you to solve this riddle:

Do my five theses about “Bildung” address education or culture?

Because you know:

Life without mysteries is no solution.

And any solution to mystery depends on the context.

Now my first thesis:

“Bildung” – I use the German word – Bildung is sustainable!

The one and only sustainable aspect of “Bildung” and of learning
is to prove one’s learning is through one’s doing.

Maybe you know this little story:

Two planets meet out in universe.

“You don’t look very well”, says one to the other.

“I’m indeed doing badly”, answers the other.

“I have homo sapiens.”

– “How horrible! But don’t bother – they won’t last long.”

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To put it differently:

Teaching means building windmills to change the world.

And in ecological terms:

If you always and only buy the ready-made,
you will never have the chance
to design or create something completely new.

Now my second thesis:

“Bildung” is politics.

We all know the internationally best-selling book *“Sophie’s World”*

– it was translated into sixty languages, and more than forty million copies have been sold.

Maybe it is so popular

because its author Jostein Gaarder is asking many questions.

The one who asks questions, is never without knowledge.

Only those who spoil or even kill the questions with their answers are without knowledge.

And those who do not dare to ask questions are ashamed of gaining knowledge.

Learning also means to ask questions

about the things we do not know

and about those we cannot possibly know.

In *Sophie’s World* there are two kinds of questions:

On the one side, there are the sincere, metaphysical questions
about God, about life and death, about the universe.

These questions are always the same – but the answers are always different.

On the other,

there are the moving, the ethical questions

about a fair society, about one’s home country, about solidarity.

There are no definite answers to these questions.

This is why we need to discuss them over and over again.

For us in Austria the most important question is the following:

Which tasks does migration create for our schools and society?

Navid KERMANI, last year’s peace prize winner of the Frankfurt Book Fair, talked about Europe
as *the continent of desire for many*, but also about its *gated community*.

Now my third thesis:

“Bildung” is creative.

An educationalist would now probably say:

Creativity is the kind of work that we can sell as fun.

A teacher would possibly reply:

Creativity is the kind of fun which needs to be earned through work.

If teachers are “Giving Trees”,

following Shel Silverstein’s famous children’s book,

if they are scratching post

and the place that proves shade

and peace and the opportunity to climb upwards,

then they widen the children’s horizon

through deep insight, understanding and vision.

Insight creates understanding.
Understanding creates decisions.
And visions encourage leadership.

Pupils who look beyond the subject matter
and also ask for the reasons for given solutions
learn to look beyond the horizon.

Their creativity is stirred
when they have new ideas upon noticing the obvious.

This is how creativity creates evolution rather than revolution.

Thesis number four:
"Bildung" creates freedom.

Because "Bildung" starts
where people do not hunt for their prey
but for acknowledgement!

"Bildung" also appreciates the dispensable,
it takes care of the useless,
and "Bildung" also develops the unnecessary.

Now my last thesis:
"Bildung" requires vision.

The famous Italian film maker Federico Fellini said: *"The only real realist is the visionary."*

Utopia is seeking to see the invisible,
and vision deems to make it visible.

Tele-vision may be non-culture
because it makes people look without realizing
and because it makes you fall asleep without dreaming.

In Shakespeare's drama "The Tempest" the magician Prospero says:
*"We are such stuff
As dreams are made on;
and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."*
The Tempest, Act four, scene one.

On this note I wish you all:
Sleep well
and have fancy dreams during this international week!

Any maybe you will now use the words "education" and "culture" as you like it.

Because cultural tendencies impact the way children participate in education.
And educational tendencies impact the way children participate in culture.

Have a great time in Baden and Vienna, enjoy our "Bildung" and our culture!