

**THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE  
FOR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE EDUCATION  
AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

A report about context, foundation,  
programme and experiences  
of the first decade of its existence

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## **I EARLY DAYS**

As all beginnings the beginning of the European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE)<sup>1</sup> also has a beginning – strictly speaking it even has two beginnings. Because the idea to set up a European institute devoted to analysing the phenomenon of adventure as well as to the dissemination of the pedagogical approaches to experiential learning and to outdoor learning was based on the merging of the activities of two discussion circles, which - independent from each other - had existed before the Institute was founded and which had discussed the field of outdoor activities from different perspectives.

As early as in 1994 the Karls University in Prague hosted a conference organised by its sports department in cooperation with the Friluftsliv department of the Oslo University of Sport and Physical Education. The conference was attended by 43 participants from 12 countries, who under the umbrella topic of "Outdoor Activities", which was increasingly attracting widespread interest, discussed issues such as adventure pedagogical curricula, terminological distinctions or national objectives. Independent from the topics that had been planned and were discussed at this conference there clearly emerged a need for the continuity of these discussions on an institutionalised basis, which would ensure a lasting platform where everybody could relate the traditions and forms of their national adventure pedagogics from a European perspective. This wish for continuity found expression in the decision to entrust the Tornio Polytechnic in northern Finland with organising a follow-up conference.

Also in 1994, in winter, there was an international conference of the sports youth association of the German federal state of Hessen taking place in Wetzlar, which was attended by 43 participants from 12 countries. It was addressed especially to representatives of

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<sup>1</sup> This somewhat elaborate name mirrors the problem of the variety of the linguistic creations which try to give an answer to the by now great diversification in the field of outdoor activities. It constitutes a compromise solution and at the same time expresses the hope that the members of the Institute feel at home under this broad verbal roof. So far the Institute has not participated in further attempts at definitions, especially since living practice, which addresses the problems of the times, does not care at all about definitions, and, furthermore, a definition provides practically no gain in terms of insight. If one has found a definition one only knows how one can exchange one word or structure by another one without losing any information in the process.

youth welfare work, which explains that in contrast to Prague the topics under discussion focussed on the categories of "adventure", "experience", "body" and "movement". Motivated by the pressures of everyday youth welfare work the issues discussed were especially questions of how these categories might be instrumentalised to the benefit of everyday youth work, but also to the benefit of work with youth fringe groups in prisons, socially disadvantaged areas, youth clubs and football stadiums. At this conference there also emerged the clear wish to establish trans-national work connections in order to get to know more about the approaches to tackling the problems of disadvantaged young people by using exercise and adventure in the individual countries and to learn from them. Quite logically this led to the realisation that one would have to take a close look at the development and exchange programmes of the European Union in future. These considerations were to be continued at the next conference, which the Austrian educational institution "Initiative Outdoor Aktivitäten" had agreed to organise.

Before this conference actually took place in October 1996 in Spital/Pyhrn in Styria, two other events worth mentioning happened that strengthened the idea of a European institute for outdoor adventure education and experiential learning and sped up its implementation. One of these was the meeting in Vienna in preparation of the Spital conference, which took place in December 1995 in an extremely productive atmosphere, optimistic of success, between visiting the Theater an der Wien and strolling through the Spitalgasse Christmas fair at night. The other one was an event in April 1996 in Tornio, organised by Steve Bowles and Matti Telemäki, where almost the whole range of the scientific approaches to the topic that were gradually developing in their different forms at that time were present. (see LOYNES 1996) Already in Vienna, under mediation of Günter Amesberger, one had started to bring the two discussion circles into contact with each other. Now in Tornio, apart from other speakers, those people met who were to form the first Board of the Institute, namely Barbara Humberstone (England), Peter Higgins (Scotland), Jan Neumann (Czech Republic), Steve Bowles (Finland), Günter Amesberger (Austria), Bart Keus (The Netherlands) and Peter Becker (Germany), later joined also by Jochem Schirp (Germany). Up north, in Finland, this until then still rather vague idea of a European institute, which would provide the setting for transnational and transcultural discussions on adventure, experiential learning and outdoor education, was then further strengthened. This idea was then to be implemented at the forthcoming conference in October 1996 in Spital/Pyhrn.

## II THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To be sure it is people like Steve Bowles and Barbara Humberstone or the other Board members, for example, who organise conferences and attend them, who give presentations, elect directors, send out invitations, publish papers and books, formulate calls for papers or set up the institutes. That is, to be sure, individuals make their own history. However, trying to explain this history from the logic of the psychological disposition of the people involved would not do justice to the complexity of the situation, "because the historical context is not only the result of people's joint intentions. Motivated actions are intertwined with a naturally grown context, which is conveyed by a subjectively perceived sense but is not created by it". (HABERMAS 1970, 116) This means that if one is to adequately reconstruct the foundation process of the Institute one has to look beyond the mind frame and actions of the founding members in Vienna, Spital and Prague to the larger context beyond the individual one, which this foundation is imbedded in. With reference to the topics the Institute is concerned with, these are especially discourses on the cultural background of sport and exercise as they have developed in the confrontation with the living conditions of modern industrial societies. This cultural background knowledge has contributed to the setting-up decisions.

There is a rationalisation process that runs parallel to the development of modern societies. It is closely entwined with it and it intrudes upon the life of individuals the more severely the more modern their social sphere is. This affects especially the somatic dimension of our anthropological makeup, in relation to which individuals need to develop an ambivalent relationship.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, the increase of ever more complex challenges demands the systematic control of physical expression and the just as systematic repression of sensual impulses which might disrupt the ability of the individual to cope rationally with the increased complexity.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the body becomes the

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<sup>2</sup> Although these discourses, interpretation patterns and time specific knowledge have been put forward by individuals and work through them, they lead an autonomous life to a large extent. As POPPER (1979) understands it they are "products of the human mind", which beside physical things and psychological states of awareness form their own world. POPPER calls them the third world of theories, problems and critical arguments. Its "inhabitants" react upon the individuals, staking out their possible scope of action by influencing the way they lead their lives partly through conscious reasoning but also mainly unconsciously.

<sup>3</sup> All major theories of long-term social development observe a taming hold on physical expression in favour of a disciplined and disciplining reason. No matter how we reconstruct the development of society. As a process of disenchantment and rationalisation according to MAX WEBER, or as the process of the increase of civilisation according to the theory of NORBERT ELIAS, or as an interplay of the various forms of suppression of the internal and external nature as in the "Dialectics of Enlightenment" by THEODOR W.

provider of well-being, happy moments, excitement, times of fulfilment etc., which is why people devote much time to it, value it, tend and support it. Sport, wellness, adventure are the conspicuous peaks in this boom of different body styles that has been flourishing for some time - practically a somatic counter-movement to the rationalisation processes of modern times, as it seems. In the following a few examples will be given that show the seemingly paradoxical process of simultaneous devaluation and increased valuation.

In order to cope with the increasing complexity of modern life people develop well differentiated strategies to distance themselves. Thinking ahead, finding ways of balancing accounts, saving as a sensible way to cope with scarcities, frustration tolerance, cost-benefit calculation, postponement of gratification of needs, readjustment of expectations, etc. - altogether a "methodical way of life" - allow people to distance themselves systematically from physical closeness and directness in order to gain time for rational work processes and to keep up the planned use of their bodies.

- The rationalisation of work processes is leading to the development of machines that replace physical strength and skill to a large extent. The same is true for the exclusion of physical exertion in the organisation of everyday life. By turning switches and pushing buttons, for example, people make machines take over essential household tasks, which in former times demanded physical effort.<sup>4</sup>
- Developments in communication technology have made the physical presence of people almost superfluous. Home banking, video conferencing, screen-shopping or working at the home computer indicate how codes and chips substitute physical presence. Individuals are transformed into a bundle of data. In the production of a virtual reality the body solely serves as a carrier of data devices. This medial infiltration of everyday life increases the individual's distance to reality. On the one hand, people readily take advantage of the increase of symbolic systems, which push themselves

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ADORNO and MAX HORKHEIMER or, last but not least, as the successive increase of disciplinary powers, as in MICHEL FOUCAULT's work – each theory emphasizes the expansive success of an extensive rationality and discipline that both control the body and its desires more and more.

<sup>4</sup> Since machines and appliances are superior to the human make-up in terms of strength, speed and precision - for the philosopher Günter ANDERS (1983, 33) the body is, "seen from the perspective of the machines: conservative, unprogressive, antiquated, unrevisable, a dead weight in the rise of machines" - the Promethean difference between creator and machine is reversed. Compared to their performance the creator of the machines becomes a flawed product. In order to compensate for this difference, i.e. to bring the body in line with machines, "human engineering" applies a kind of discipline which is reproductive of the engineering force on the world and which standardises human body processes, so that human development can be treated as mass production.

between reality and the perceptive individual, to ease their load, i.e. indirectness is accepted; on the other hand, this is also, at the same time, registered as loss of access to primary reality, or rather as removal from it.<sup>5</sup>

- Developments in the pharmaceutical market make it possible to manipulate almost any psychical and physical state through chemical intervention. By taking drugs individuals can achieve sleep or wakefulness, high performance or relaxation. Drugs are used to eliminate symptoms of physical pain or to regulate “natural” physical conditions arbitrarily. People who take drugs treat their body like an instrument and try to adjust it to an individual plan of events.

The above-described social developments can be summarized in a simple formula: “More and more rationality, control and discipline with the consequence of less and less body and spontaneity”. The advantages of neglecting parts of our anthropological heritage are obvious. Since problems that arise in modern society have become increasingly complex, the solution strategies must increase their complexity at the same time. Solving complex problems means that typical physical reactions such as slowness, emotions, sensuality or inaccuracy must appear as obstacles, that hamper the steady acceleration of the rational. We also have to accept that the physical aspect will lose influence in a lot of areas successively. Body and nature become atrophic matter in rationalist modern times.

If, at first, increasing rationality was welcomed as means of delivery from the dependence on inner and outer nature, there is by now growing scepticism whether the reign of instrumental rationalism, which exclusively follows the dictate of usefulness, can really guarantee a successful and good life. That is, the follow-up costs of unlimited, unchecked modernisation are becoming increasingly evident. With regard to the outside world we can observe ruthless exploitation of natural resources, destruction of landscapes, humanly caused natural catastrophes, contamination of the environment and food, etc. , and with regard to human nature the fact that people are not challenged enough physically but challenged too much on the cognitive disciplining side has led to glaring consequences. The psychoanalytical and social diagnosis of our times registers

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<sup>5</sup> Closely connected with this development towards more indirect dealing with reality, psychological disorders have emerged that in some cases might intensify and develop specific symptoms which have been registered in the International Classification of Diseases as F 48.1 "derealisation syndrome". Patients suffering from this syndrome complain that their bodies seem to be lifeless, that they seem to have lost their own feelings and that their surroundings appear strangely distant, unreal, artificial, colourless and automated.

an increase in fears, isolation, depression and allergies, but also in aggression. Too much strain has taken the place of the bacillus as cause for diseases. The consequence is an increased incidence of eating disorders, high blood pressure, concentration problems, and stomach problems.<sup>6</sup>

This pathological diagnosis at the same time nurtures the assumption that inner as well as outer nature cannot be subjected indefinitely to the acceleration processes of instrumental rationalisation. As if in a dialectic counter-movement there is a revaluation of the physical dimension and an increased sensitivity to natural signals that runs parallel to the devaluation and repression of the body. The vulnerability of inner and outer nature, as well as the respect of their respective rights, is becoming a permanent topic. In this way – virtually indirectly – body and nature, or physique and sport take up a position from which the loss of a total reason is criticised. As the opposite of a failing rationality the aesthetic-somatic-sensual dimension even becomes a better reason, which is meant to be able to make the necessary changes in the mistaken developments.<sup>7</sup> This reappraisal has reached especially the whole range of body culture and sport, their therapeutic variants, as well as the sportive and recreational, but also natural practices or their (social) pedagogical instrumentalisations.

However, the winners of this increased importance are certainly those physical practices that are carried out in a natural environment. Even though this claim may not be supported by a comparative epidemiological study between the individual European countries, it has already been shown in the contributions at the conferences in Prague, Wetzlar and Tornio that outdoor activities are very high on the popularity list. Also national studies, like that of the French sociologist Le Breton (1995), substantiate the enormous

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<sup>6</sup> This list of horrors and suffering should not make us overlook the enormous progress connected with the Enlightenment and the modern age. This is neither a plea for the re-enchantment of nature nor for the farewell to instrumental rationality. However, it is necessary to correct resolutely the inconsistencies that have arisen in order not to shelve the project of enlightenment as unfinished.

<sup>7</sup> If one ignores the different historical conditions, one might feel reminded by this reaction to the perceived negative effects of this control of nature and of the objectification of body relations of similar processes in the time of German Idealism of the late 18th century. In the face of the powerlessness of reason to implement the promises of the Enlightenment, nature as not-self as well as the sensual potentials together with aesthetics are put into a position from which they are meant to compensate for the powerlessness of moral and exact reason. (cf. MARQUARD 1987)

attraction of high-risk practices in natural environments. And finally, a clear indicator for this increased importance is the development of global outdoor industrial sectors with yearly fairs and a turnover of billions. Their advertising semantics, which you encounter practically everywhere, in fact combines two longings of our times, which mutually reinforce each other in the present boom of outdoor activities: the longing for authentic physical experience and the longing for unspoilt nature.<sup>8</sup>

It has taken about 250 years before the first timid steps into wild mountain landscapes and to the shore of the ocean developed into this enormously wide range of adventurous activities on the ground and in the air, on all mountains, on all oceans, lakes and rivers, through all deserts and forests of this earth. However, a few conditions had to be fulfilled first before people voluntarily dared to go into wild nature. First of all the Enlightenment of the 18th century had to take away their fear of the dark and of demons, monsters, dragons and other ghosts, which they imagined inhabited the mountains, forests, lakes and oceans. Before this and also parallel to this, starting from England, physico-theology had spread a view of nature in which it was no longer the result of the Fall and therefore bad, but in which it was worthy of admiration and greatly useful also for human beings, just like the results of the plans of a master builder. Finally, industrialisation set in motion the rationalisation process whose effects - as shown above - are still identified as the source of many wrong turns. Right from the start it fostered counter-reactions that set everything authentic and natural against the uneasiness with urban civilisation and industrial pressures. Gradually the fear of the fear of wild nature turned into a lust of the fear of sublime nature. Hostile nature turned into sublime landscape, where people burdened by civilisation could compensate for the effects of the beginning of the modern age by throwing themselves into daring adventures or in serene contemplation.<sup>9</sup>

The first timid alpine outings in the western Alps and the maritime excursions around the Isle of Wight have developed today into a wide-ranging industrial sector of adventurous

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<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Greenpeace activities worldwide are an indicator for the political dimension that topics like unspoilt nature and the reasonable and responsible dealing with its resources have in the public eye. In addition it shows how much people doubt the competence and political will of politicians to solve or even want to solve the problems that have arisen.

<sup>9</sup> In Germany the longing for and escape into nature had an "ersatz-political" dimension. As long as the aristocracy still kept the already economically successful bourgeoisie away from courtly politics, nature remained a society-free place into which the bourgeoisie, turning away from arduous political strife, could retreat from the political world. (cf. LEPENIES 1972)

practices<sup>10</sup>, which, at every new stage of rationalisation, such as the second industrialisation around 1900 or the global digitalisation around 2000, has not only increased the number of its followers and increased its need for wild nature, but it has also vastly increased its range of different activities. Today it is especially the spectacular variations of the confrontation with rock faces, oceans, mountains, forests, streams and deserts, which are also attractive to the mass media, that determine the public image of the outdoor sector.

Wherever first ascents, speed of climbing rock faces, weeks and days of circumnavigations are registered and compared, there is a tendency to unite all activities under the roof of adventure sports. What is thus easily overlooked, however, is that the educational content or the effective potentials of this adventurous confrontation with wild natural places can only develop beyond the competitive logic of the sport. And the fascination with the spectacular may cause other, less exciting practices, to be lost from view, although they also contribute to the range of the outdoor sector. In the following, both aspects: the autonomy of adventure and the "soft siblings" of the family of outdoor activities will be briefly pointed out.

### **Excursus I: About autonomy and about the experiential content of adventure**

While the fundamental formula of sports consist of constantly beating and increasing goals that have once been reached, the characteristic core of the structure of adventure is the playful confrontation with surprising obstacles. While sports represents a model of rational control and use of the body, adventure represents a model of curious epistemic exploration of the world. Different logics of action and experiential potentials follow from this divergence for each side. If the activities take their orientation from the logic of in-

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<sup>10</sup> People's longing for adventurous activity is not motivated alone by their seeking relief from social demands and pressures, which makes them look for places of limited retreat. There is another motivation, which goes far back into history, that was surely stimulated by the release of theoretical curiosity from theological and moral fetters. The revaluation of curiosity from vice to virtue in early modern times did not only cause the upswing of empirical studies, but also led to a great number of discovery projects. What was *categorically* unknown became *as yet still* unknown, but which was to be explored and discovered in many places of a foreign world and in foreign nature in an adventurous manner. There is still an echo of this heritage about 360 years after Columbus in the subtitle of the "Alpine Journal", published by the Alpine Club, which was founded in England in 1857. "A record of Mountain Adventure and Scientific Observation". However, it would be naive to overlook the substantial economic, political and missionary desires which presumably made up the greatest part of these explorative ambitions.

crease, the surreptitious tendency is to reduce nature to the function of backdrop or outdoor gym. Consequences of this attitude which are easily proved are the ruthless disregard of the autonomous laws of the natural spheres people have gone through and have made use of. The competitive logic of sports demands that the outer setting of the action is standardised, otherwise results would not be comparable. Anything critical therefore constitutes a disturbance and must be excluded as far as possible by standardisation. While in adventure crisis is the normal case, in sport it is the exception.<sup>11</sup> In adventure such crises can be caused by suddenly arising obstacles like, for example, sudden weather changes, appearance of physical problems, problems with paths and routes or also the rise of strong emotions. They upset the course of action, since the smooth routines, which are normally responsible for a trouble-free sequence of events, do not work anymore. The ensuing critical situation can only be solved and the sequence of action can only be continued if the available routines are transformed or complemented by a new solution. This crisis-causing obstructiveness also contains the egoistically motivated necessity to treat nature carefully and to respect its laws.<sup>12</sup>

It is especially this critical nature of reality and the individual's willingness to face it that produces the potential for experiences that is typical of adventure and that makes it so attractive for (social) pedagogical purposes.<sup>13</sup> In adventurous confrontation with sublime

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<sup>11</sup> If climbing moves close to sport, it serves well to illustrate the standardisation of outside conditions. In order to guarantee the same conditions to all climbers, fixed climbing routes are installed in indoor halls, which are to ensure that the performance of climbers can be compared.

<sup>12</sup> The term of crisis that is used here has been taken from the theory and research programme of objective hermeneutics. Its etymology points first of all to two areas of meaning it had in the ancient Greek world. (cf. KOSELLECK 1991). As part of the medical crisis theory the term describes the turning point in an illness, which may or may not be the onset of the healing process. In the legal sense crisis means the phase where the judgement is found, where the reasons for and against a decision that has to be found are weighed against each other. This second meaning refers to a situation, which inevitably occurs through the interruption of the action, where a follow-up alternative has to be chosen which would make it possible to continue the sequence of action. It is necessary to choose because the generative rules, which are followed by action, always generate more than one follow-up course of action. Everyday life does not always allow this potential crisis to become conscious since this might make its smooth course considerably more difficult. If the crisis, however, does become manifest, it needs to be solved autonomously or with outside help, depending on the degree of its severity. (cf. OEVERMANN 2004)

<sup>13</sup> Of course sport also offers a number of meaningful experiences, which derive from systematic training and participating in competitions. These are especially the virtues of the rational management of the limited amount of time and physical resources that are available, which also force the individual to develop a

nature the individual can experience an attitude towards the world that is prepared for the possibility that surprising obstacles might occur, i.e. for an always open future, and that does thus not regard strangeness and uncertainty as a threat but as a challenge and a chance of something new emerging, that makes decisions confident that they will prove themselves, that takes interruptions in their stride or that awards the particular the challenge of the general.

By describing the different facets of experience, which inevitably result from the structural core of adventure, it becomes clear that the discussion of adventure is also a discussion of an anthropologically sound basic attitude towards how to cope with the world which, of course, always only expresses itself in different historical and cultural forms. In the face of the obstacles that are to be expected the conscious act of exposing oneself to disturbing situations is part of the theory of individuals who educate themselves in the process of coping with an obstructive (natural) reality and who think little of shelter and routines.

If adventure is not only to be a pleasant experience, a sudorific exercise, a fun-producing event or a lustful fright, it might contribute to a successful Bildungsprozess of children, young people and adults.<sup>14</sup>

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methodical lifestyle. What can also be experienced is the pattern of fair distribution of scarce goods (rankings) inherent in competition on the basis of performance differentials. (For further explanations cf. BECKER, e.g. (2005))

<sup>14</sup> The willingness of the individual to enter an uncertain world openly and full of curiosity, which finds expression in adventure, is the essential and life-long driving force of the individual's educational biography. During the childhood phase of life adventures give the child's curiosity to discover the world a playful frame, for young people they are transition objects, as Winnicott understands it, which help them to cope with tasks such as becoming independent from their parents, and for adults they are a means against early senility and a playful confirmation of the autonomous self. The point is to encourage this quality of autonomy-promoting self-disturbance, which is contained in the desire for adventure. It is difficult to translate the German concept 'Bildung' into English word 'education'. Bildung as a self determined process is more than education. It comprises the dialectics between a mental plan of the world and the dealing with the realities of the world. Neither the self nor the world are definitely determined by each other. After the interaction of both there is still left an element of strangeness which allows to carry on the process of further self-formation (Bildung). The strangeness guarantees the irritation of the (old) routines and in these critical moments new experiences can emerge. The German philosophers of Bildung Herder and Humboldt took over ideas from the works of Shaftsbury, like the "inward form", which is directed against the concept of the 'tabula rasa'. In the following we would rather prefer not always to translate the word 'Bildung' into the English word 'education'.

If one is convinced of the educational potential not only of adventurous confrontation with nature but also of less daring forms of it, it suggests itself that it should be integrated in different educational contexts. So far it has gained entry into school curricula<sup>15</sup>, into social educational efforts against exclusion<sup>16</sup>, into therapeutic work engagements<sup>17</sup> or into consultatory services.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Since the beginning of the German "Reformpädagogik", which took effect Europe-wide, but even before this in the context of the Romantic movement, the pedagogical suitability of the active or contemplative sojourn in nature has been discussed and has been implemented in different concepts. It is in Scandinavia where at present activities in nature are being used most consistently as part of school education. In Norway, for example, Friluftsliv is part of the national curriculum. The curricular reform of 1994 for primary, secondary and high schools obliges schools to teach Friluftsliv and its basic ideas as elements of everyday life (MYTTING 1996). In addition to this about 40 of the 77 Norwegian Folk High Schools have specialised in Friluftsliv (WESTPHAL n.d.). What is also worth mentioning are the forest kindergartens that can be found all over Scandinavian countries (gradually gaining popularity also in Germany) and the concept of the Uteskole, where individual subjects are taught outdoors and with materials and on problems that nature has to offer. Further, the "Weekly Nature Day" of the Danish Folkeskole should also be mentioned.

<sup>16</sup> Adventurous activities are a preferred means in the work with difficult, aggressive, socially disadvantaged, school dodging young people, who in international communication are labelled "Youth at Risk". However, instead of using the potential of adventure to make up for missed-out socialisation, the emphasis is all too often on the compensation of the misdirected quest for excitement and risk, but not on the educational aspects that go beyond this.

<sup>17</sup> In the course of the 18th century, parallel to the de-demonisation of raw nature and the establishment of sublime and beautiful nature, possible psychotherapeutic uses of different natural spheres and conditions were also explored. It became a recommended measure to expose oneself to the situation of the sublime coast or that of the breaking ocean not only against melancholy and other mental disturbances, but also in order to achieve harmony between man and nature. (CORBIN 1990) The fresh alpine air, which Rousseau praised in his epistolary novel *Julie*, was used 60 years later to cure tuberculosis. The medical exploitation of the Alps was followed by the mountaineering one forthwith. By now mountain air therapy, heliotherapy and thalassotherapy have become established natural courses of treatment. Relief is also supposed to be found in natural spheres for the troubled soul. Based on similar ideas of the effect of English garden settings and horror novels, which were both designed to cause surprised astonishment, agreeable trepidation, fear and a spellbound fascination in the stroller and reader, without them having to give up their security, a course of eerie shudders is meant to achieve a cure of confused minds. (v. TROTHA 1999) Today, the term therapy has often become rather unclear in connection with adventurous and experiential activities. Especially where "adventure or wilderness therapy" has moved close to self-awareness, the psychological stress, which arises when individuals can no longer solve the crises that may occur by themselves, and which is constitutive of therapeutic action, gets lost. It is replaced by growth and increase ideologies, which lead to identity quests and personality extension in ABC labs and natural settings. There is a struc-

## **Excursus II: Other outdoor activities**

***Environmental education:*** The very noticeable increase in outdoor activities and in the number of people practicing outdoor activities makes nature a good that is getting more and more scarce. There is no evidence that this process will change direction in the near future. If anything it will accelerate. The strain on the environment that has been caused by this process will continue. It raises a great number of ethical questions pertaining to nature that can, however, not be discussed here.<sup>19</sup>

If sublime nature and beautiful nature are places where individuals can also experience successful and good living, can playfully test it out and can, within limits, catch up on what they missed out on before, it may not follow inexorably, but it is quite reasonable that every effort should be made to maintain these beneficial conditions. "The due 'respect of nature' shows itself as respect of an irreplaceable opportunity to live for the human being". (SEEL 1991, 288) It was in this respect that the ethnologist Lévi-Strauss in his book 'Triestes Tropiques' (1955) lamented the loss of foreign cultural forms, because if they go we also, at the same time, lose opportunities to confront ourselves with our own cultural existence or with our own self and thus we lose opportunities to learn something about ourselves in the confrontation with the strange.

From this anthropocentric position nature becomes a counter-world that cannot be compensated for and that is inexhaustible, that in contrast to the mainly purpose-oriented everyday life serves no specific purpose, is unpredictable and is a world that seems different and strange to us and at the same time also quite familiar.

"Nature mirrors the subconscious dynamism of our own vegetative and subconscious emotional life, so that we can regain our - partly repressed - inner nature in

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turally similar process going on here as in the performance and doping medicine of sports, where it is no longer healing but performance enhancement that is the degenerated aim of medical practice.

<sup>18</sup> The logic of consultations on the basis of adventurous activities rests on the assumption that there is at least a certain similarity between entrepreneurial and adventurous activities. The remaining gap between both types of activities is closed after so-called "trainings" by transfer considerations, where a prognosis is made of how the knowledge that has been gained can be transferred to the professional field. Since there are no rules that have to be followed obligatory, the transfer expectations remain open. All instrumentations of adventure have to solve this transfer problem.

<sup>19</sup> Developments in industry and traffic have certainly produced much more severe human-caused pollution and environmental damage than the activities of the outdoor movement. However, this observation is no release from the responsibility for the damage that is caused by the pedagogical or therapeutic use of nature. Basically we find all ethical questions relating to nature repeating themselves here that are raised also in industrial contexts.

outer nature. The wild passion of the hurricane mirrors our own repressed passion, the reflecting mountain lake the buried sources of stillness and serenity. In the pulse of natural rhythms, the change of day and night, of the seasons, in the alternations of generations of plants and trees we experience the ups and downs of our own phases of life and moods. In contrast to the sensory world of the town with its cerebral technocracy and literalism the sensory world of nature is more organic, physically closer, more regressive. In nature we experience our own origin, our own roots.“ (BIRNBACHER 2006, 71ff.)

If one does not carelessly want to pass up these opportunities of gaining experience and ludic self-assurance or of belated socialisation, it is advisable to include the knowledge and activities which relate to the preservation, care and protection of the natural environment, which the educational processes make possible, in the field of outdoor activities. Such knowledge comprises, for example, knowledge of natural connections, (depth) ecological concepts, considerations of sustainability or knowledge of the susceptibility to damage of natural habitats. Activities might range from measures of nature preservation and protection to natural scientific and humanistic observations and descriptions of nature and to non-verbal symbolisations of natural experiences or educational environmental games and sensitisation to the environment and natural encounters.<sup>20</sup> In some cases respect of natural processes might actually mean to abstain from activity, namely where these processes might be irredeemably disturbed by the intrusion.

***Practices of hunting and gathering:*** Finally, all those activities need to be included that are part of the tradition of hunting and gathering, that is all practices of gathering and harvesting of everything edible, be it fruits, mushrooms, roots, honey, be it fish or game, whichever is to be found in the individual natural region. The motivation for this activity is neither the discovery or experience of a strange landscape as in adventure,

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<sup>20</sup> In this sector of generally "softer" activities there are also no transnational historical comparisons which systematically explore the common or different roots and courses of development of environmental awareness and environmental education. As in many areas of the outdoor issue, there can be found, for example, in Germany in the Romantic Movement, as a reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, approaches of an early nature awareness and environmental education that are well-worth considering. There is especially the conception of the Schelling disciple Bernhard Heinrich Blasche, who as early as in 1815 resisted instrumentalised nature descriptions and who presented educational ideas for the laying out of gardens, for nature preservation, for an early sensory encounter with natural phenomena of children or for the identification of internal relationships of natural phenomena. (cf. to this and to other approaches TROMMER 1993)

nor is it the protection and preservation of a landscape worth preserving, but the source of this impetus is the exploitation of food-providing nature. While originally these practices forced people to lead a nomadic life due to the seasons of the year, local conditions or exhaustion of natural resources, they lost more and more of their importance in agricultural and urban societies and have practically disappeared in the economically-oriented lifestyle of today's industrial societies, which is characterised by the contrast between threatening civilisation and healthy nature, between danger and purity.

It is not necessary anymore today to be able to read animal tracks and follow them, neither is to be able to tell what event might have set off the call of the jay, to be able to interpret the rustling of the leaves or to develop blueberry-picking skills and find good fishing grounds. In the modern age mantic, track-reading and physiognomical skills and abilities have become obsolete. Track reading has transformed into track spotting. We live in a world where orientation and provision of one's livelihood comes from other sources. The knowledge our grandparents still had falls into the category of nostalgia today, has become part of flea markets, which receive great attention every weekend in large cities.

The knowledge and competences of hunters, nomads, herdsman and gatherers may not be relevant any more in the modern age, but it might give those who travel for a prolonged period of time through the wilderness, for example, an additional source of food. Apart from the nutritional and taste-related benefits, the reading of tracks, which can tell something about what happened or what might be about to happen, can gain a life-saving importance when these natural signs point to dangerous situations. (BECKER 2007)<sup>21</sup>

It is only in the Norwegian Friluftsliv that all three categories of activities are combined: the early culture of gathering as part of rural living practice, which, furthermore, was

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<sup>21</sup> The importance of this archaic knowledge of track reading, which is used in adventurous travel, goes far beyond the area of outdoor activities. Using it at the same time raises the issues of the tendencies of disembodiment, virtualisation and de-realisation, discussed above, through which modern societies try to cope with their increased complexity. In contrast to what is happening in de-realisation, where signs gain the upper hand over the things that are described, track reading does not go with the idea of a confusion of unrelated signs. Track reading has a concrete reference in a concrete world. It presupposes that things actually exist. (cf. KRÄMER et. al 2007) As a basic operation in epistemology one could assign the techniques of track reading to the GINZBURG (1988) paradigm of circumstantial evidence, in which he summarises the methods of case-oriented generation of knowledge and which he contrasts to the Galilean paradigm of abstractive and generalising natural science.

closely connected with the female share of the tasks of coping with life, the practice and procedures of discovery and adventure, represented by character of Fridtjof Nansen and the concerns for a natural environment worth protecting, as it expresses itself in parts of the concepts of deep ecology. In other European countries these three fields mostly exist side by side without any real connection, they are evaluated as of different importance or are even completely ignored in the present situation.<sup>22</sup>

In the face of this situation that in nearly all European countries, despite different socio-cultural and socio-ecological circumstances and despite different geomorphological con-

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<sup>22</sup> Even if the Norwegian Friluftsliv joins different cultural styles and traditions, like a kind of hybridization, it is in comparison to other Scandinavian variations in Denmark, which seems to have been strongly influenced by Sweden and Norway, and in Sweden a relatively closed approach. While these countries take a rather pragmatic view as to openness or scale of the concept depending on the current state of development of society, the reproduction rules of the symbolic and practical order is controlled much more strictly in Norway. The cooperation of various discourse guardians, who represent the different traditions, may certainly lead to different "understandings of purity" of what is orthodox within the group, but to the outside it presents the appearance of a very distinctive culturally impregnated concept, which will make it more or less impossible to transfer it to other cultural contexts, unless one imports and copies only the term 'Friluftsliv'. There is a very marked difference, for example, between the absolutely distinctive Norwegian context-controlled form and the faceless and placeless US American concept of "adventure based counseling", which can be applied practically universally and at will. (About the cultural background of Friluftsliv see the work of Gurholt Pedersen.) Finland which, due to its geo-climatic and geomorphic similarities, has an equally long outdoor tradition is hardly included in the Scandinavian discourse on Friluftsliv. This may be connected with the fact that the situation of political suppression that prevailed in Finland for a long time did not provide the suitable conditions to develop an attitude towards nature which is ludic, not purpose motivated and free from the burdens of everyday life. The Finnish outdoor concept of Erä arose from the necessity to escape from invaders, who frequently descended on Finland. The Fins had to retreat into the forests in order to hide and survive there. This meant one did not only live in nature but also from it. Nature lacks the element of a bourgeois counter-world projection. Lakes, forests, birds, fish, reindeer, berries, etc, are not a backdrop for recreation or playful self-assertion, but without it people could not have survived. What is symbolic for this Finnish style confrontation with nature is the pukka, the knife as instrument of the fight for survival. Also the sauna, an important element of the Finnish relationship with nature, is mythically super-elevated as places of entry to and exit from life. Steve Bowles has pointed out to me that even the Erä contains the traditional topographical dualism, which assigns to men the sojourn in forests, wilderness and bush, from where they return with meat or fish, while women manage the interior spheres, for example, that of the house. As he told me orally, in the 1970s women began to set the female way of approaching nature, calling it *eränainen*, against the male-dominated *erämies*, but which only gained stronger public attention in the 1990s. Discussing the aspect of integration of quite different kinds of activities, the Czech concept of "Turistika" also needs to be mentioned, which even offers dramatic forms of presentation besides the common range of outdoor activities.

ditions, a general need has arisen for individuals to expose themselves actively or passively to unadulterated nature, it is understandable that the wish has arisen for an international platform, which aims to understand the historical and cultural diversity of these different national paths of development. This wish becomes even more understandable if one looks closely at the fact that the international pool of knowledge is still relatively small, despite the ubiquitous attractiveness and acceptance of the activities. Especially the transnational connections which had existed between individual European countries above and below ground since the Romantic period had not been explored at the time of the foundation of the institute; neither had the country-specific application fields, the typical teaching methods or the national training concepts and working conditions hardly been known in the other countries.

This has been a rough and certainly heteronymous sketch of the state of society in relation to the outdoor sector, in which the decision to set up a European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning was taken by the general meeting of conference participants in October 1996 in Spital/Pyhrn, after the ideas that had been developed after the preparatory meeting in Vienna and the conference in Tornio had been presented to them.

### **III KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND NETWORK SUPPORT. EXPERTISE AND COMPETENCE – THE FOCAL POINTS OF THE WORK OF THE FIRST DECADE**

The "Youth and Social Work on the Move" conference from 1 to 5 October 1996 in Spital, organised by Günter Amesberger, did not only create the foundation ambience but also quite clearly shaped part of the self-awareness of the Institute: namely the part which considers itself the catalyst of international meetings of a social learning practice which seeks to achieve its educational aims with the help of body and exercise related methods of experiential learning and the activities of adventure.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, the purpose of these meetings is to offer the opportunity to exchange professional experi-

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<sup>23</sup> Expressed in the theoretical language of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in social learning all body and exercise related approaches in children and youth work start from the assumption that their young clientele have less economic, social or cultural capital than physical capital. Especially in situations of refused recognition, as for example at school, they invest in this type of capital, in deviant ways, in order to compensate for perceived marginalisation. Belated socialisation, which aims to prevent young people getting left behind on the labour market, could for example, take its course via this attractive body capital in order to gradually convert it into educational capital, which again could then be invested in appropriate gainful work.

ences of everyday work and, on the other hand, they are to be considered as opportunities to develop joint transnational projects.

This concept does not only demand a different type of participant than usual, but also demands a different type of conference organisation. Participants were by no means passive listeners to academic lectures, but active designers of a common working reality. This intended change follows the idea, which was already presented by the social reformers John Ruskin and William Morris and later John Dewey, that every good trade needs an exchange of ideas and experimenting together. (SENNETT 2008) The element of working together when the objective of a project needs to be found and discussed, agreement needs to be reached on the appropriate measures, applications need to be organised, the project needs to be implemented in everyday life and the result needs to be reflected upon, does not only break through routines well-worn through repetition, but it also enhances the quality of the work. To learn from each other in exchange also means to understand the differences between the partners in this exchange.<sup>24</sup>

Because of this focus on developing projects the customary form of giving presentations to the plenum hardly played any role. Instead, transnational projects were developed in 10 workshops, which beside working on the subject matter also provided for youth exchange, mutual job shadowing or short visits. A few projects will be named as illustration - raft-building and rafting on the Danube in German-Austrian cooperation, youth exchange between England and Austria in the context of violence prevention measures, a German-Austrian-Czech ride along the border on bicycles and wheelchairs with children with multiple handicaps, a Belgian-Austrian-Dutch-German cooperation to support young long-term unemployed to gain a vocational qualification, the development of intervention models relating to the individuals' sphere of life and to physical exercise against violence and drug taking in the cities of Vienna, Salzburg and Berlin, a cooperation between youth work organisations from Norway, Germany, Austria and England about body and gender identity of girls. (cf. also AMESBERGER, n.d.)<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> It cannot be excluded, may probably even be expected, that this joint project work will show also desirable side-effects, such as a better utilisation of ability potentials, an increase in work efficiency or the promotion of international understanding.

<sup>25</sup> Not all projects could be realised. It is not always easy to implement additional projects, which must seem to be an extravagance compared with the efforts of everyday social work. They had applied for financial assistance at the national offices of the European development programme of "Youth for Europe". Smaller organisations often lack the bureaucratic infrastructure which is necessary to cope with the still enormous administrative work that the implementation of the projects entail. At the conference in Spital

The objective of creating a systematic network had been the legacy of the Wetzlar conference, where it was especially representatives of children and youth work who were interested in practical discourse who determined the content of the agenda. It has remained a central concern during the first decade of the Institute after its foundation to maintain this discourse and to extend it. The follow-up conference of Spital, which took place in 2001 in Marburg, was organised according to the same principles as the conference in Spital, which met with a great response from the participants. Marburg was attended by 70 participants from 14 European countries, and showed a clear opening towards Eastern European countries. This opening was strengthened in the following years, which eventually manifested itself in the 5th conference of the Institute in Czarnocin in 2003. (see BECKER/SACK n.d.)<sup>26</sup>

The project planning carried out in Marburg following the Spital example this time was organised according to the systematic lines of the professional practice of the field: social exclusion, migrants, disabilities, school and youth work, gender and sustainability. (about the projects see EOE 2002)

The intercultural professional exchange developed a great effect in two respects. On the one hand, organisations for the disabled joined to form the Europe-wide network "Breaking barriers", which has been in regular contact since 2001 (see contribution by REINERT/RIEHL in this book); on the other hand, the contacts developed into a large scale project, carried out by Dorin Festeu and Barbara Humberstone, in which 18 organisations from 12 countries participated. The aim of this project, "Non-formal Education through Outdoor Activities" (see also the contribution by HUMBERSTONE/FESTEU), which was financed by the European Commission, was to analyse the educational potentials that outdoor activities have for educational practice outside schools. The project group, who worked together for a period of two years, developed a guide which does not only put together examples of good practice -that is, it provides an insight into the work-

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not only projects were drafted but the plenum also elected Günter Amesberger, Peter Becker, Steve Bowles, Peter Higgins, Barbara Humberstone, Bart Keus, Jan Neumann and Jochem Schirp, almost all of whom had already worked on the concept of a possible institute at the conference in Tornio or at the preparational meeting in Vienna, as the first board of the Institute.

<sup>26</sup> The educational institute of Frajda, which organised the Czarnocin conference, was also prepared to step into the breach at short notice when a conference that had been planned for Helsinki in 2006 could not take place there. Czarnocin 2007 was the 8th and so far last conference, which the institute has organised in cooperation with a youth work organisation or a university.

ing methods of the social pedagogical field - but which also intends to be a guide to carrying out adventure pedagogical undertakings. (cf. FESTEJ/HUMBERSTONE 2006)

Arrangements and rearrangements, attempts to create a successful and good life according to one's own plans, taking corrective action in an existing practice - in short, the intervention practice of working life is one thing, taking a pressure-free, questioning, searching look from a distance at this working life and the conditions it is taking place in, is another one. This reflective look, which does not aim at any immediate change, represents the second tradition that determines the work of the Institute, the origin of which can be traced back to the Prague conference. This was also continued in three conferences.

The first conference that was organised in cooperation with the AOL in Edinburgh in 1998, "Celebrating Diversity-Learning by Sharing Cultural Differences" (cf. HIGGINS/HUMBERSTONE 1998) took place in a country whose society, against the backdrop of the Empire and the Commonwealth, found itself faced with all facets of the topic from the arrival of the *SS Empire Windrush* in the docks of Tilbury to the rucksack bombers of most recent times. The interplay between the differentiating specific and the standardizing general, which is always present in multinational, multiethnic or multicultural debates, was discussed in the Scottish capital, on the one hand on the basis of the differences in national forms of expression of adventure pedagogics (EOE n.d.) and, on the other hand, along the possibilities of intercultural development of knowledge and identity.

The academic conference discourse that was opened in Edinburgh was continued two years later in Sweden in cooperation with the University of Linköping and the community of Kinda in Rimforsa. The conference discussed the basic principles of the Swedish concept of the Outdoor school, raising questions as to how far landscapes and sections of landscapes can be opportunities for learning processes organised by school and in how far the methods of adventure pedagogics may offer alternatives or complements to the range of methods used at school. (cf. EOE 2001, DAHLGREN/SZCZEPANSKI 1998)<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> It is to be assumed that the already described accelerated development of a ecological-technical rationality, which also embraces the organised learning processes at schools and universities (cf section V of this contribution), will lead to an increased demand of educational opportunities in the field of aesthetic and sensory perception of the world. It remains to be seen whether the stimuli and demands that accompany the growing up process of children and young people in a "natural" way are sufficient to foster an

The topic of the Ambleside conference "Old Traditions, New Trends" (HUMBERSTONE/NICOL 2005) in 2004, which was organised together with the Academy of Brathey, had been motivated by the observation that especially in industrial societies young people are increasingly turning away from outdoor activities which have an image connected with perseverance, exertion and asceticism and are turning towards practices that carry a promise of risk, excitement and speed.<sup>28</sup> The mentality of the modern age, which puts all cultural naturalness and continuity under pressure to change, does not only cause considerable unrest for the traditions of the outdoor world, but also urges new orientations.

In a similar way that the conference discourse of the practitioners developed into an autonomous network, the academic discourse has also evolved into a cooperation which is comprised of universities that offer study programmes in the field of Outdoor, Adventure and Experiential Education. The organisation was founded in Marburg by representatives of the universities of Brasow, Buckinghamshire, Marburg, Olomouc, Oslo and Lancashire in 2002. Among others the aims of the network are the discussion of curricular elements as well as the discussion of the development of vocational fields with its consequences for studies and teaching, the creation of trans-universitarian European study modules, but also the organisation of a regular exchange of students and teachers, which, from the national and regionally determined point of view of the author has already reached a considerable extent. In 2007 the organisation's first international research symposium took place in Marburg, where doctoral candidates were able to present and discuss their papers on the outdoor section.

The meeting of practitioners and theoreticians has found expression especially in the organisation of the two described and documented forms of conferences. What has not become visible there are the discussions that have taken place about their mutual relationship and their appropriate presentation. They have examined such fundamental issues that two aspects of this discussion will be referred to here as a conclusion. These are the relationship between theory and practice and the question about the prerequisites of an appropriate teaching practice. While the first aspect follows almost automati-

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appropriate aesthetic sensitivity and attentiveness or whether these stimuli become so rare that the sensory potentials atrophy, which in its turn would probably have far-reaching consequences for the development of the psychosocial, but also the cognitive abilities of the individuals.

<sup>28</sup> However, occasionally it is enough just to exchange labels to get lost interest back. If "hiking" hardly manages any more to entice young people to come out, this feeling changes if the same activity is announced as "trekking".

cally from the tension between the moments of action and reflection in the individual's life, the second issue, through its increasing money-making and business management dimension, which are two different expressions of the already described rationalisation process, has been forced on the pedagogical practice from outside.

#### **IV PRACTICE AND THEORY, ADVENTURE AND CONCEPT**

Ever since there has been the role of the *theoros*, the idle spectator, who with a detached attitude takes a reflective look at what is going on in the world there has also developed a tension to the attitude it has moved away from, namely that of the active, intervening, recreating, caring attitude of practice. This tension between distance and closeness is what has partly determined the mutual perception of theoreticians and practitioners until today.

Hardly had the distancing look been established when exactly this distance became its undoing, with serious consequences, as documented in the anecdote of Thales of Miletus and the Thracian servant girl. (cf. also to the following BLUMENBERG 1987) The philosopher, deeply preoccupied by looking at the starsigns of the night sky, overlooks a cistern that is lying in his path and the inevitable happens, he falls in. It is only with the help of the servant girl that he can get out of this awkward situation. In one of the many versions depicting this unhappy event the practical-minded maiden ridicules the absent-minded philosopher, who is so preoccupied with what lies in the distance that he overlooks what is near. What the practitioner cannot understand she can only make fun of.<sup>29</sup> What the practical-minded servant girl interprets as the unlucky Thales' weakness, that he has removed himself too far from reality, is exactly what his strength is. It is only the increasing distance from the practical sides of life that makes an investigative look possible.<sup>30</sup> Whoever is deeply involved in pressing matters cannot at the same time create

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<sup>29</sup> A variation of this tense relationship between theory and practice, which occurred early in history, is also the different characterisation of human kind of Anaxagoras and Aristotle. While Anaxagoras calls man intelligent because he has hands, Aristotle, on the other hand, claims that man has hands because he is intelligent (cf. MITTELSTRAß 1992). In the first position theory comes out of practice, homo faber determines homo sapiens, in the second practice follows theory, homo faber follows homo sapiens.

<sup>30</sup> This distance between theory and practice was revealed even in the anthropological assumptions of the ancient world, which thought the aim of man's becoming upright and of the flexibility of his head was that he could look at the sky. Not the horizon, which is the point of orientation for the practitioner, is the point of reference for the vision, but the all-encompassing. By the example of the gradual breaking away of the vision from its earthbound fixation BLUMENBERG (2007) has shown what neglect of practice this has led to. In any case the starry sky is a thing that is "unreachable for any kind of action, of practice, of technolo-

a distance to it. But if he wants to do that he has to withdraw from what lies close. For the practitioner who is engaged in tackling immediately arising problems the detached attitude may well appear presumptuous or disconcerting in the face of his own pressure to do something.<sup>31</sup> During outdoor activities this perception is often intensified especially when the activities are adventurous practices.

Adventure is a model of the most intense action. In the face of possible consequences the solution of critical situations in rapids, on the rock face, close to the wind or in thick fog requires extreme alertness and just as alert senses. You are in the thick of the action. It is a different story with concept or even theory. In contrast to adventure, which needs to tackle the phenomena immediately, concept and theory keep the phenomena at a distance. They give relief from the need to act. BLUMENBERG (2007) says that they allow *perceptio per distans* or *actio per distans*. It may be that concept accomplishes this preventive feat for adventure by making it possible that one can anticipate a thing or event that has not happened yet in order to gain time by this advance imagination, which can be used for appropriate preparation for what is coming. The immediacy of the confrontation can be moderated, surprise effects can be offset and a block against action can be avoided.<sup>32</sup>

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gy; it is purely theoretical, removed from everyday life and its demands, relates to no professional practice. (ibid. S. 15).

<sup>31</sup> This tension between Thales and the maiden, between theory and practice, is also repeated in the relationship between the traditions of schools and the traditions of workshops, i.e. in the relationship between the knowledge that is taught and technical skills, where up until early modern times there was a difference in importance that gave the free knowledge of schools a higher status than the knowledge that serves a purpose, which is necessary to cope with everyday life. The Milanese cathedral was almost not finished because the 1,400 architects and stone masons that were involved in the building had got into a fight about status. The latter expressed the opinion that "the science of geometry must not be allowed to have any part in this matter, because science is one thing and art (which was practice at that time, the author) another" (BURKE 2000, 103). The architect said in response "art without science (in other words practice without theory) is worthless (*ars sine scientia nihil est*)" (ibid. 103). As the magnificence of the cathedral shows, they obviously must have come to the conclusion that both theory and practice equally contribute to the successful arrangement of the world. However, the realisation that both fields, theoretical reasoning and technical skills, need to take part in the arrangement of the world does not yet settle their relationship to each other.

<sup>32</sup> BLUMENBERG (2006, 2007) has explained the origin of concept and its function for the development of the human being. Man who had moved from his original situation in the forest into the steppe began to walk upright. The line of his horizon that was thus created divided the world into visible and invisible things. In order to prepare himself, in the sense of self-preservation, for what is not visible, still distant or to

However, with theory it is different. It is true, it does increase the performance of concepts (BLUMENBERG 2007), but this is also a reason why its manageability or even development comes into conflict with the intensity of the action. The pressing need to make a decision, which is demanded so often in adventure in the case of critical disturbances or interruptions of the actions in order to continue the action sequence, has little use for the delaying attitude of theory that wants to postpone decisions until clarification and unambiguity has been achieved in adventure action must be immediate. There is no time for theoretical discussions. The hesitating indecisive attitude, that allows decisions to be postponed, as it is possible in theory, is pushed aside by a quick and determined decision, which ensures that the interrupted action sequence can be continued.<sup>33</sup> This situation illustrates the fact that both the development and also the application of theory takes place only where leisure has asserted itself against the pressing need to act.

The amount of time that theoretical analysis requires and which is not available in practical action, which is perceived most acutely in adventure, points to the appropriate sequence of the two fields. In terms of order theory comes after practice.

In order to keep up the ability to act, practice needs to solve the problems that arise daily by making decisions and carrying them out. Since they are always made for an open future there is uncertainty as to whether a decision has been found that is appropriate for the situation. This feeling only disappears after a time when the chosen solution to the problem has had a chance to prove itself or when the pressure to act has abated. At

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make it at least symbolically available to himself, concept developed into an instrument which made it possible to bridge spatial or temporal distances. Further instruments that have the same function are the throw or the trap. (BLUMENBERG 2007)

<sup>33</sup> Where a quick, sure decision transforms the threatening critical nature of a situation into becalmed action, or turns uncertainty into certainty, it often becomes the source of male heroic myth. As virtue it is then set off against the vices of talking, weighing up or "flogging something to death" - against being overly intellectual. Non-hesitating immediacy and spontaneity signals certainty of knowing what to do. It is particularly attractive as supportive orientation in (life) phases, which are characterised by uncertainty and fear. This may be part of the particular importance of the authoritative and charismatic strength of the leader in youth movements, also of the attraction of forming groups and societies, which is fostered by uncertainty. These connections, which in Germany, as part of an ideology, have contributed to fatal consequences, have not yet been sufficiently examined in their fundamental significance for the quite frequent decision-demanding situations in adventure pedagogics. If reflective delay or postponement of action, i.e. distance, are given up for the benefit of various forms of closeness, the situation takes on an instinctive quality. "The human being delays and hesitates not because he possesses reason, but he possesses reason because he has learned to grant himself delay and hesitation." (BLUMENBERG 2006, 559)

this point the conditions are fulfilled in which theory can unfold its reconstructive power. Free from the need to act, that is without any immediate regard of utilisation, it is now able to reconstruct the conditions of the decision and its implementation from an unprejudiced and retrospective perspective. Retrospectively it is now possible to answer the question of why, which could not be answered with complete certainty in the open situation of the decision. (cf. OEVERMANN, 2000). HEGEL (1970, 28) has described the placement of reflective theory at this point with the picture of Minerva's Owl, which begins to fly out at the onset of dusk, exactly when the figures of life have become old and grey and cannot be made younger but can be recognised, or when active life is becalmed in the evening twilight that shades everything in grey.<sup>34</sup>

If theory - as the sociologist Ulrich Oevermann (2000) says - exerted an influence on the decision, it would not only call into question the autonomy of practice in the sense that technocracy makes up its mind for it, but it would also fail to recognise the fundamentally open and thus critical character of decisions, for which no routines are available. Because if they did exist, that is if in every decision-demanding situation one had set routines carrying well-tried knowledge at one's disposal, the future would not be open anymore. The past in the form of proved routines would have gained dominance over the present and future. No more transformation would take place, but only reproduction.

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<sup>34</sup> Hegel has described this picture also in the foreword to "Grundlinien". "To say a word about giving instructions as to what the world should be like, philosophy always comes late anyway. As the idea of the world it only appears after the time that reality has finished its educational process and has completed itself. History also necessarily shows this, which concept teaches that it is only in the maturity of reality that the ideal comes out in contrast to the real." (HEGEL 1970, p. 27 f) Hegel's contemporary Friedrich Schleiermacher, who also lived in Berlin in the 1820s, also holds a very clear view as regards the temporal sequence of theory and practice. In the lectures in 1826 he says: "It is a fact after all that in all fields which are called art in the narrow sense, practice is much older than theory, so that one cannot even say that practice was receiving its particular character from theory in the first place. The dignity of practice is independent from theory; theory only serves to make practice more aware." (SCHLEIERMACHER, vol. 2, 2000, 11) Even before, in the lectures of the winter term of 1820/21 he had asked the question, "What is the relationship between theory and practice?" and gave the following answer. "Practice as what one experiences always comes earlier, and theory only follows it if one sees that one thing has turned out well and another bad, and when one reflects on how it has come about that one has done this or that in exactly this way and not in another. So before theory is even created one presupposes that there is something in the human being which makes practice happen. Practice does not evolve from theory." (SCHLEIERMACHER, vol. 1, 2000, 309)

These fundamental objections do not mean that there may not be situations where theory is used in a different place than after the end of a practical action. This always happens when practice cannot cope with the demands that are close at hand by itself, or - as OEVERMANN (2000, 444 ff.) describes it - when the progress in scientific knowledge has increased the rationality of crisis solutions to such a degree that the attempt to solve the problems with the means one has on board seems irrational. In order to prevent that autonomy, which is already limited, is becoming even more limited, intervention must be professionalised. Here also adventure intensifies the situation. While the subject matters of other pedagogical fields are not critical in themselves, adventure as permanent interplay between routine and crisis is in itself identified as critical. Its pedagogical impartation or instrumentalisation in (social) pedagogical contexts is therefore in all the greater need of professionalisation.

The prerequisites of professional action, that is the action of therapists, doctors, lawyers, teachers, are imparted at institutions of higher education (in Germany at universities), not for elitist ideological reasons, but because there the unprejudiced habit of a scientific approach to the world is taught and practiced as well as an introduction to the job-specific intervention practice through trying it out.<sup>35</sup> It must be the future interest of the Institute and also of the COMPASS network to point out these connections as far as they find it within their means, partly in order to put a check on the increasing rank growth in the range of qualifications offered on the free market, which has developed as a reaction to the enormous and still growing interest in adventure pedagogics, while there is a shortage of professionally trained personnel at the same time. The qualified teaching of a professionalised attitude might also be the solid part of an answer to the security hysteria which has been spilling over from Great Britain to other countries of the continent, and which in its blindness to an appropriate sensitivity to crises has begun to

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<sup>35</sup> In this present setting the need for professionalisation of adventure pedagogics as well as the characteristics of professional action can only be referred to briefly. Professionalised action, i.e. providing solutions for crises on behalf of others, joins the ability to understand a case in reconstruction and to produce a scientific expert's report. These components that stand in tension to each other, firstly the proven knowledge, which aims to generalise, creates independence from the individual, belongs to the sphere of routines, and secondly, the reconstruction of the situation and the specific problem of the client which the knowledge is applied to or alternatively the case is subsumed under, merge again in the attempt to restore limited autonomy.

destroy or, in fact, has already destroyed the educational potentials of adventure. The Institute should turn one focus of its attention also to this development in future.

## **V STANDARDS AND STANDARDIZATION. AGAINST THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF THE (ADVENTUROUS) MIND**

The clarification of the relationship between theory and practice is something that follows inevitably from the matter itself. It is also a result of the cooperative relationship between both professional groups that are represented at the Institute. The question of an appropriate concept and organisation of educational and learning processes in youth work, school and university however is a discussion that has been forced on us by the outside, i.e. from the political administration. It has two closely connected reasons. On the one hand, in the face of the argument of scarce economic means the question arises whether the allocated money is being used efficiently. On the other hand, the conditions on the labour market are being introduced as the reference value to assess efficiency.

The increasingly accelerating processes of change on the labour market demand flexible employees who can adapt to any conditions no matter what the labour market situation is. Flexibility, in fact, stands for a whole bunch of key qualifications, such as learning how to learn, conflict competence, team competence, communication competence, risk competence, time management, which, however, need to be content free to guarantee flexible action. The educational systems that are supported or financed by public tax money become places where employability and marketable skills are taught. Thus they become feeder institutions of the market, which subordinate their contents to external purposes. They give up the goal of producing “gebildete” subjects who become individuals in situations where they have to prove themselves and exchange it for that of the disposable individual. And nobody asks the question of why on earth are publicly funded educational systems used so completely to supply the labour market? Why does the market itself not teach those qualifications that it believes its employees absolutely need to have? This would free the educational systems from their service function and would create room for the organisation of Bildungsprozesses.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> With reference to Germany these reforms set school and university back to the time before Humboldt's reforms of the Prussian educational system about 1800. It was the state of the universities at that time, where the studies in colleges and academies had degenerated to vocational training, which Humboldt reformed with his formulation of a concept of Bildung. Now the dominance of the modern market has reversed this liberation again and has tied the education systems again, like before 1800, to fulfilling its needs - of course at a modern level.

The course of this reform has been set; it is hardly possible to change it. Why still bother about it? The Institute is confronted with these educational policy decisions in two ways. For one thing, most of its members involved in municipal youth work, school and university are affected by the reform<sup>37</sup>, for another the subject that stands at the centre of the work of the Institute is becoming deformed step by step in such a way that there is a risk that it will gradually lose its relevance for fostering Bildungsprozesses. From the perspective of the cultural pattern of "adventure" I wish to point once more to the consequences of making Bildungsprozesses follow the ideas and principles of business management.<sup>38</sup>

Once the labour market has been established as the reference value, the rest will follow practically automatically. The language that goes along with this reform is infiltrated with pointers into which direction it is going. Terms like customers and customer orientation, services, standards and standardisation, quality assurance and quality control, benchmarks, credit points, yield indicators, product orientation, output, target agreement, programme tests, contracts, etc. - they all show that the reformers quite obviously start from the assumption that the market and Bildung follow the same rules, that Bildungsprozesses can be organised in a similar way as the running of a factory, of an office, of a

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<sup>37</sup> Although this affects the whole practice field which is financed through taxes, it is not the whole field that rejects the reforms (the same is true for theory, of course). There are positions which approve of making educational processes serve business management purposes, but also positions that have recognised that the standardisation and its evaluation according to the preset norms, such as ISO 9000 and the certification sticker that goes with it, may be translated into a competitive advantage. The reformatory measures do not improve the practice, but they can be made use of wonderfully well in the contexts of marketing. At the same time there is the development of an enormous certification and accreditation industry, which is creating a considerable monetary flow for controlling tasks. Small institutions with limited financial power may find their existence at risk if they are forced to get certified, despite doing good work. This is why there are partly free certifications available, which means, though, that those who are certified are split into two classes. This proof of quality also opens up a lucrative field for the creative work of façade painting and scene-shifting.

<sup>38</sup> This for Bildung disastrous development has been criticised by many concerned educational sociologists and educationalists; it has however met with little response in education policy, which has shaken the intellectual illusion that academic texts be political deeds even further (BOURDIEU 2001). On the other hand, it would also be inappropriate not to react; it might be interpreted as agreement. Chris LOYNES (1996a), following Ritzler's graphically descriptive theses of the McDonaldisation of the world, did point quite early on to the dangers that may be looming for adventure from the direction of standardisation.

selling situation or according to the stages of an industrial production line.<sup>39</sup> If one looks closely again at the Bildungsprozess, it is easy to see that this assumption is based on a misapprehension.

The structural logic of Bildung determines its progress as the overcoming of crisis-generating obstacles. Crises are a sign that the available routines, in which the knowledge is stored that has proved successful so far, do not work anymore and that individuals are forced to confront the obstacle which produces the crisis and which severely interrupt the course of the action sequence. These may be crises that force the individuals to choose from the available action alternatives the one they believe will allow them to continue the interrupted action sequence successfully; it may be crises, however, that arise through unexpected events or physical states such as pain or ecstatic emotions. Finally, it may be crises which arise because individuals look at a section of the perceptible world just for the sake of it, i.e. idly, and examine it intensively, do not subsume it under an action purpose such as the achievement of a practical goal. (cf. OEVERMANN 2004, 2008)<sup>40</sup> None of these forms of dealing with crises that foster Bildung, individuation and autonomy can be standardised, can be solved by the application of programmes or can be tested by standardised tests. The results of these confrontations cannot be predicted. If this was possible the category of crisis would cease to exist, standards and standardisations would only reproduce themselves.<sup>41</sup> Unification efforts miss the core of Bildung, which is always individuation.

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<sup>39</sup> The point here is not to criticise the business management model on principle, but the inappropriate transfer to other areas of life. OEVERMANN (2000a), for example, has shown that the use of the term "customer" for clients in social work is not only inappropriate but even cynical, because the characteristic part of a customer, his buying power, is exactly what those who are dependent on the support of social work or youth social work do not have.

<sup>40</sup> The institutionalised form of the idle, carefree, patient attention to those things that resist the need to categorise them quickly, which look for moments that disturb expectations, which create closeness to the particular features of the phenomena in order to learn something new about them, is, in the original sense, the school, whose name still reminds us of *scholé* - the time that is freed from the pressures of the world. However, today it has turned into a learning institution which is hardly able any more to teach "scholastic reason" (BOURDIEU 2001). Such an organisation can definitely tolerate standards and standardisations.

<sup>41</sup> From the attitude that tackles crises those processes of learning that belong to the sphere of routines are quite different. Learning means systematically acquiring knowledge that has proved successful in earlier crises, or action patterns are practised and drilled. Nothing new comes from these processes, in contrast to coping with crises, where this is the case. Learning, learning programmes and practising are indispensable parts of Bildung, which, however, is a comprehensive process. (OEVERMANN 2004) Side-effects caused by standardisation or its strategic controlling function can only be referred to briefly here.

In adventure, which itself is a practice that is free from everyday concerns, the individuals are - to repeat this once more - confronted with the kind of reality where they can experience all types of crises and can prove themselves able to deal with them. Although adventurous travel, due to its characteristic exceptional situation, may today be associated especially with coping with decisional crises or traumatic crises like pain or strong emotions or "brute facts" that are forced on the individual from the outside, such as suddenly occurring weather changes, one should not forget that with the rise of the double aesthetics of beauty and sublimity in the 18th century the development of adventurous physical practices in the mountains and on, by and in the sea was motivated first of all by the quest for the aesthetic experience of the sublimity of wild nature and not by managing difficult routes or weathering violent storms. While, in confrontation with the wildness of nature, one can hardly avoid traumatic crises and decisional crises due to their sudden intrusion into the routines, the patient attention and leisurely contemplation of tangible natural processes and phenomena is based on a conscious withdrawal from routines. What had given action sequences their critical character before can now become an object of aesthetic experience or naturalist learning.<sup>42</sup>

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On the one hand, test-oriented checking that individual results meet preset standards reduces the matter that is to be taught to criteria that can be checked, which, as a rule, means it is trivialised and banalised until finally it is mutilated even. On the other hand, tests generate - as WINKLER (2006) has pointed out - a kind of self-training of those who are tested. The anonymously set test standards, which one has to submit to in order not to be excluded even before the test has started, create a testable individual, which is achieved in the way that schools adapt their teaching to "teaching to the test" (ibid., 164) or by parents obtaining Pisa trainings as practice for their children. The fact that tests are subject to a bell-shaped model of what is average gives rise to the perception that there are risk groups at the two ends of the curve. Those who do not meet the normative requirements belong to these groups. They and their environment become suspects who need special attention. In their case normalisation work is called for - whichever form this may take. (WINKLER 2006, about normalisation of the body BECKER/KOCH 1999)

<sup>42</sup> The critical examination of the tangible world, whether it is in the mode of conceptional or aesthetic insight, is supported in both cases by an attitude that is not directed at a purpose and by an unprejudiced look at the object. Both approaches can concentrate on the same object. For example, the origin of the atmospheres of twilight, thunderstorms, rising fog or sundown may be examined in respect to their physical or meteorological perspective or in respect to their somatic sensual impact. But also the flight of a falcon, the rush of a torrent, the swarming of an ant heap, a rock formation, the structure of a bird's nest, passing clouds or the churning sea in a storm might give rise to and become objects of aesthetic experience and naturalist observation. The works of the entomologist Jean-Henri FABRE (2003, 2008) provide enlightening examples of patient observation and description of natural processes. Under a leisurely attention to these natural processes that pursues no specific interests the focus turns on the autonomous laws

If adventurous activities are to make a contribution to fostering individualising educational processes or to the re-establishment of autonomy that has been restricted, then their planning and teaching must of course also be directed by the conditions of crisis solving. Put in another way this means that both standardisation as well as programming does not only destroy the essence of adventure, but they also take away the self-determination of the individual by making their course of action resemble that of a machine. Furthermore, subsumation under standards fails to recognise that the individual's level of Bildung is the result of the stimuli that had objectively been available for this individual and which he or she had been able to take advantage of according to his or her subjective level of Bildung. Thus, whoever "works" with adventure needs first of all to find out what degree of challenge he or she can stand, which is appropriate to his or her level of Bildung, without being over or under challenged. Every appropriate challenge must assume that there is more action competence than there really is. If it did not do this, there would only be a reproduction of what is already there. In order to carry out an appropriate comparison between challenge and level of Bildung, the subjective prerequisites of the children, young people or clients need to be carefully diagnosed. This is not a procedure that can be standardised, neither is the comparison with the appropriateness of the challenge. This must be decided upon anew in every single case always by considering the individual conditions.<sup>43</sup>

Outdoor activities almost automatically lead to reflections, where the experiences of the activity is integrated into the routines. Crisis-solving activities need to be retold. Whoever has gone through an adventure would like to experience it again in narrative. This retelling offers opportunities to give what has happened a place in one's biography or to discuss its importance for future action. The talks are the more fruitful the more lively and interesting they are. Also in this last phase of teaching standardisation is unthinkable.

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of nature, which is not always observed and respected appropriately in outdoor practice. Where nature only serves to provide the backdrop for adventurous self-production, a patient attitude - in the case of the sublimity of a reverent approach - may make thoughtless interference more difficult or even prevent it altogether.

<sup>43</sup> Often it is practice itself that is susceptible to programmes and standardisation, because through their pre-determined nature they carry the promise that complexity can be handled effortlessly and without the need to make decisions. Independent from the fact that these promises miss the inherent logic of teaching and despite allowing for pressures of everyday life, when accepting prescribed patterns practice gives up part of its professional autonomy, which corresponds to a form of de-professionalisation.

This process of standardisation of institutionalised Bildungsprozesses, for which Bologna and PISA are two typical labels, belongs to the modernisation process described above, which can also be understood as the increasing enforcement of formal rationality. Real life processes are subjected to empty economic market, organisation or evaluation models, as described before, without giving due consideration to the unwieldiness of the objects or processes. This may, on the one hand, save time - an attractive prospect for systems that are continually accelerating - but, on the other hand, it does not guarantee any gain in knowledge or better understanding and thus does not afford the opportunity to give better support to Bildungsprozesses.

## **VI EPILOGUE**

The function of the epilogue, which comes from the world of the theatre, gives me the opportunity to summarise and comment on the issues I have presented and to forge links to other topic areas. The European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning is quite justified in claiming a European dimension. In the first ten years of its existence it has not only reached the core countries of adventure pedagogics but has also approached countries where such a detailed discussion of this form of pedagogics does not yet take place. Illustrative proof of this European response is given by (x) participants from (x) countries, as well as the number of diverse European countries which the Institute has been able to attract to its conferences and for the projects and networks, such as "Breaking Barriers" and "Compass", which were initiated by it.

The multitude of the countries mirrors the multitude of national, culture-specific approaches to adventure pedagogics. At the same time there is a marked family character, i.e. they are diverse, but there is a lot of common ground in this multitude. One of these common features is certainly the adventurous confrontation of outer and inner nature. As both ludic and serious framework for the dialectic relationship between routine and crisis, which provides the dynamism for the individuals' Bildungsprozesses, adventure is part of the universal anthropological dimension, without which no developmental processes are perceivable.

Placing adventure firmly in the Bildungsprozess illustrates two things.

1. So far adventurous activities in nature have been associated with sport in most European countries. They are taught as part of the studies for sports teachers and in school sports lessons. Because of this association adventure runs the risk of being

trivialised and reduced just to the teaching and practicing of adventurous sports, to which various pedagogical objectives may be assigned quite arbitrarily. If adventure is to develop its critical Bildungspotential, it must be able to keep its independence or find a place in other institutional contexts, such as in pedagogics or social work.

2. Placing adventure firmly into the Bildungsprozess itself, makes it unnecessary to justify it by focusing on its instrumental use as an attractive means to compensate for loss through modernisation or other psychological deficits, such as boredom or surplus aggression. By refusing to give it an extraterritorial, compensatory place, which may be available for people to escape to from their impersonal, estranged social reality, where they can find relief and rejuvenation, the relationship between adventure and society becomes more apparent. The willingness adventure demands to leave behind proven routines, to put existing beliefs/mechanisms to the test or to experiment with boundaries and thus to open the door to a chancy and uncertain future, which means having to deal with the unfamiliar and unpredictable, establishes a practice which is not a relief from the modern age, but is a part of it, in the same way as it actively demonstrates its central idea.

This essentially unifying character gains divergence through the individual culture-specific forms which have led to a multitude of national approaches and working methods. The Institute must continue to help preserve this plurality, which has developed around the common structural core. But it would also be appropriate in the context of European integration to go beyond the anthropological common ground of adventure and examine further connections, possible transitions and comparability between the heterogeneous cultural approaches not least in order to systematically increase the scope of action of adventure practice.

In order to implement this the transnational discourses and networks that have already been established by the Institute need to be further strengthened and systematically extended. This means the Europe-wide communicative connections need to be gradually reinforced. One prerequisite for this would be that the national public becomes even more open to foreign things, that there is a readiness for mobility and that opportunities are created and mobility is sanctioned and supported by the administration, through international projects, job sharing and other instruments of mutual contact. This would, at the same time, create realistic conditions for integrated learning and the development of informed opinions throughout Europe - admittedly in a limited area.

However, the kind of actions described above, like the uniformization of the European educational sphere prescribed by the EU in 1999 in Bologna, which produced nothing else but a "taylor-made teaching machinery" (RADTKE 2008) that imparts standardised titbits of knowledge, does not hold out much promise of successful integration. The uniformization of the exact curvature of cucumbers, of the capacity of condoms or the diameter of apples may perhaps give rise to some amusement about the irrational bureaucratic control mania, but the unenlightened destruction of matured Bildungsstrukturen, as demanded by the market, is likely to have far-reaching negative consequences for the life opportunities of all those affected. Looking at the ongoing security debate there seems to be the same threat of uniformization looming over adventure pedagogics. In this connection the Institute might provide the platform from which the process might at least be commented on from the point of view of critical expertise even if it might not be redirected.

To keep to the image of the theatre: at the end of the display of the history of the Institute, which has only just started really, I do not want to miss the opportunity to thank the dramatis personae, the members of the board, for their persevering collaboration. With prudence and knowledge they have planned what is unplannable and have tried to organise it. Even so, they need to be prepared for the fact that the way of the world may not take any notice of their good intentions.

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