

The Influence of Adolf von Clauson-Kaas on the Development of the Subject of Craft in Estonia

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Abstract: Craft has been included as a general development subject in the curriculum of Estonian general education schools since 1894. In this work, the aim was to analyse the influence of Danish pedagogue Adolf von Clauson-Kaas on the development of craft as a school subject in Estonia. The main method used in this study was historical research through documentary analysis. Particular attention was paid to Clauson-Kaas's views on the role of craft in children's general development. Clauson-Kaas's views were also compared with the progressive pedagogical ideas that came to Estonia from other parts of the world in the nineteenth century, including craft becoming a subject and awareness of the educational importance of craft. Clauson-Kaas repeatedly visited Estonia in 1878 to introduce his ideas and organise courses for local elementary school teachers, which received wide press attention. As a result of his visits, an Estonian association was formed to promote crafts in the city and in the countryside (Verein zur Förderung des Hausfleisses in Stadt und Land). Craft was taught in 1881 at two seminars in Tartu and in 35 country schools. From the point of view of the development of Estonian education in the nineteenth century, Clauson-Kaas's primary contribution was the introduction of craft as a subject.

Keywords: Adolf von Clauson-Kaas, compulsory school in Estonia, craft education

Introduction

In the nineteenth century, the present territory of Estonia was divided into the governorates of Estonia and Livonia, which were a part of the Russian Empire, as was Finland. Serfdom was abolished in 1861 throughout the state, which lessened the influence of Baltic German barons over peasants. After the shock of the Crimean War, Alexander the Second tried to reform Russia by using more Western patterns; this in turn enabled the development of industrial enterprises and railways and affected education as well (Royle, 2000).

The first known data on the teaching of craft in an Estonian public school date back to 1804, when the provost of Kanepi, Johann Philipp von Roth, founded a new type of parish school where the children were taught basket weaving, broom making, etc., in addition to general subjects (Hirvlaane, 2000). In December of 1811, the Kanepi Handicraft School (Armen- und Industrieschule) for impoverished girls opened through the private initiative of von Roth. At the school, girls aged 11–14 received lessons in reading, religious education, religious songs, craft, and housework over the course of three years (Hirvlaane, 2004). The expenses incurred for the maintenance of both educational institutions were largely covered by the revenues from the sale of student handicrafts (Pöld, 1933). During that period, teaching in the subject of craft was organised under the influence of Pestalozzi's ideas (Sild, 1902).

During the 1870s compulsory education was introduced for Estonian peasants. With the education laws of 1874, 1876, and 1878, a unified curriculum and programme for public schools was introduced throughout Estonia (Andresen, 1985). In 1874, a unified study plan and programme was established across the governorate based on the "Liivimaa Lutheri usu Maakoolide õpetuse plaanid" (Teaching Plans for Rural Schools of the Lutheran Faith in Livonia). Geography was included as a compulsory subject in addition to religious education, the native tongue, mathematics, and singing, and history and Russian became recommended subjects. Gymnastics was introduced to boys and handicraft (namely, sewing and knitting) to girls (Andresen, 1974). In Northern Estonia, i.e., the Estonian governorate, a similar education programme was introduced in 1878 (Koolipidamise Seadus Eestimaa Evangeliumi Luteruse usu maakoolidele, 1878). However, there were no specific regulations for the teaching of handicrafts (Andresen, 1974). The subject was not mandatory in school, and no specific formal subject programme was required. According to the law of 1876, craftsmen without pedagogical qualifications

were allowed to work as teachers in educational institutions (Andresen, 1985). The goal was not the children's multifaceted development but rather the teaching of specific skills needed for adult life.

Craft has been included as a general development subject in the curriculum of Estonian general education schools since 1894. More precisely, on March 6, 1894, the law О введении ручного труда в число предметов преподавания [About the inclusion of craft in the subject of teaching] (Tsirkuljarõ po Rižskomu utšebnomu okrugu za 1894 g, 1894) was issued in Russia. The justification for the law highlighted the positive effect of the subject of craft on child development but only when specific educational goals are set and when it is taught with didactically correct principles in mind.

When speaking of the development of culture and education in nineteenth-century Estonia, one must keep in mind the multilateral influences due to Estonia's geographic position: on the one hand, the influences of Western Europe and Scandinavia and, on the other, Tsarist Russia, which Estonia was part of in the nineteenth century. In the same way, ideas about teaching craft also reached Estonia via different routes.

Methodology

This study focuses primarily on the influence of Scandinavia, more precisely on the activities of the Danish pedagogue A. von Clauson-Kaas. The aim of this study was to analyse the influence of Clauson-Kaas on the development of craft as a school subject in Estonia. The research question was: what was the influence of Adolf von Clauson-Kaas on the development of the subject of craft in Estonia at the end of the nineteenth century?

The main method used in this study was historical research, which in the context of educational research, can show how and why educational theories and practises developed (Cohen et al., 2007). Hill and Kerber (1967) have categorised the values of historical research, one of which is to shed light on present and future trends. That value has been used in the context of this study. In our research, we used documentary analysis of historical materials, such as archive documents, newspaper analyses, and other historical data. The document repositories of the Estonian Historical Archive, where the reports of inspectors of public schools from the nineteenth century have been collected, were used as direct sources (Eesti rahvakoolide inspektor (1846–1904) [Inspector of Estonian Public Schools] Eesti õigeusu talurahvakoolide inspektor (1873–1902) [Inspector of Estonian Orthodox Peasant Schools]). Since each school essentially had its own inspector/supervisor to whom current reports had to be submitted, the data contained in these documents can be considered sufficiently reliable.

Newspaper articles had to be treated as secondary sources in this study because secondary sources are those that do not bear a direct physical relationship to the event being studied. A secondary source would thus be one in which the person describing the event was not actually present but obtained descriptions from another person or source (Cohen et al., 2007), as is true of the newspaper articles used for this study. In this study, newspapers published in Estonia in 1876–1879 were processed, and the keywords searched were woodwork, craft, and Clauson-Kaas. A total of 16 articles were found within this period, the contents of which were analysed using the qualitative content analysis method. In addition, archival documents of two funds were worked through to map the changes in educational life in the given period, and printed works published by Estonian educational and social figures who lived in the researched period were also studied.

Document Materials

A. von Clauson-Kaas's Thoughts on Craft as a School Subject

The Finnish educationist Uno Cygnaeus can be considered the founder of pedagogical craft as a subject. His ideas were followed in many countries, and his biggest influence on the development of craft was in the Nordic countries, among them the Swedish educationist Otto Salomon and Clauson-Kaas. It was Cygnaeus who introduced the term "slöjd", which became common in Nordic schools (Kantola, 1997). Cygnaeus wanted to add an educational perspective to the teaching of craft, wherein the acquired knowledge could be applied to practical work. In his opinion, craft should be a subject equal to others in public schools, and it should be taught not just for the purpose of acquiring a profession but also because of its importance in developing and nurturing qualities (Kantola, 1997).

In the period when the reform of public schools was carried out in Finland, on Cygnaeus's initiative, the Dane Clauson-Kaas began to promote his teachings on a broader scale, and the dissemination of the ideas of teaching craft also gained momentum in Estonia. By the end of the 1870s, a craft movement was born in Livonia, the centre of which was Tartu. The movement was strongly influenced by Cygnaeus but especially by impulses originating from Denmark.

The press noticed the introduction of Clauson-Kaas's "work school" in February of 1876 in Germany and that the principles of this craft school seemed progressive. Then, in December of 1876, two significant articles, translated from the German newspaper *Balti Nädalakiri*, were published in the newspaper *Eesti Postimees* (Kuus, 1876a, 1876b) and introduced Estonian readers to the principles of Kaas's work school and its benefits for the education system.

The following were highlighted in these articles as important (Kuus, 1876a, 1876b):

- Craft is a meaningful of spending free time. According to Clauson-Kaas, craft is an important part of everyone's daily activities, regardless of age. If, up until that point, craft had been mainly considered a women's activity, then attention should be paid to finding and learning activities suitable for men.
- Doing crafts plays an important part in a child's moral upbringing; they will develop a love for work, the need to experience joy in work, and a desire to do good for their loved ones, which add an ethical aspect to the activity.
- Craft contributes to the development of the following personality traits in children: reasonable planning of work, neatness and cleanliness, a frugal attitude to materials, consideration of others, and economic thinking.
- Solving tasks related to craft also contributes to the development of thinking and, relatedly, supports what is learned in other subjects.
- Work school helps one make choices about one's future career and acquire the necessary skills beforehand.

The theory of work school (*Arbeitschule*), which began in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, was also referred to by Clauson-Kaas in his presentation at the German Society in 1876, which was in turn quoted by a newspaper. Clauson-Kaas claimed that work school can and should be intertwined with a general education school since a well-organised work education supports learning and facilitates the understanding of other subjects (Kuus, 1876a). In his mind, it was an inexcusable mistake if schools only share knowledge but the 'hands are left without practice' (Kuus, 1876b). He highlighted the general development aspects of craft, noting that in the organisation of each piece of work, one must also teach, show, and pay attention to the development of thinking, sense of proportion, and drawing skills, all of which are also useful when studying other subjects (Kuus, 1876b).

Clauson-Kaas's methodical guidelines for the teaching of craft (Kuus, 1876b) were also presented:

- General working methods should be taught and the hand and eye given practice rather than focusing on the skill of one specific master craftsman.
- Tools should be age appropriate.
- The use of tools should follow the principle of simpler to more complex (for example, at the beginning, the use of a planer should be taught, then the use of a jigsaw, knife, and other carving tools).
- Work methods and the use of tools must be demonstrated.
- 2–3 hours a week should suffice for teaching.

These thoughts presented by Clauson-Kaas made a great impact in Estonia. At the meeting of the Imperial Livonia's economical society in January 1877, members discussed the suitability of Clauson-Kaas's idea of craft as a school subject for boys' parish schools in Estonia (Stryk, 1877). In the December 14 edition of the publication *Eesti Postimees*, or *Nädalaleht*, Gustav von Stryk, the secretary of the Imperial Livonian Communal and Economic Society, announced that, similar to every other year, the society's public meetings would take place in Tartu on January 9 (Monday) and 10 (Tuesday), 1878. In addition to other presentations, society members also listened to an overview of Clauson-Kaas's system of conjoining "work school" with "learning school" and possible ways of implementing that system in Estonian public schools. It was decided at the society's meeting that Clauson-Kaas himself

should explain the “work school” system, so they decided to invite him from to come Copenhagen to Estonia for the occasion (Stryk, 1877).

The Spread of A. von Clauson-Kaas's Ideas in Estonia

The year 1878 was significant for the spread of ideas related to teaching craft in Estonia. That year, Carl Robert Jakobson (1841–1882), a well-known figure of the Estonian national movement, gave his so-called “three patriotic speeches.” C. R. Jakobson, a publicist and writer as well as the author of many school textbooks, tried to bring Estonians up to speed with new pedagogical trends that were gaining ground in other parts of the world. In 1876, he saw pupils work exhibited in Finland. He pointed out that Finnish schools developed children practically as well as mentally (Jakobson, 1959). Jakobson asked why such teachings had not been introduced to Estonian public schools and answered his own question by stating that there were no qualified teachers in Estonia. He suggested that municipalities send one educated woman or a young teacher to attend a preparatory teacher training school in Finland for a year at their own expense. In addition to the fact that the acquired skills would enable young people to make money with crafts made during long wintry evenings, such an education would also develop a person mentally; they would acquire the skills to keep neat and clean, making their lives better overall (Jakobson, 1882).

Also in the year 1878, as mentioned above, Clauson-Kaas was in Tartu in January, introducing craft education to teachers according to his own teaching system. Newspapers commented that Clauson-Kaas's explanations and justifications were clear, and should they be accepted and acted upon, the public schools in towns and rural areas would greatly benefit from them. It was pointed out that the education and teaching of children had, for the most part, remained one-sided, as only the child's mind was educated but the hands remained untrained. It was noted that Clauson-Kaas showed that, in addition to general education, schools should provide education in craft without thereby harming the quality of general education. He had taught children at schools to do straw work, basket weaving, book binding, and carpentry and had seen that both children and older people happily agreed with his methods (Jannsen, 1878b).

A. Stryk, the lord of Pala manor, organised a new society, fuelled by Clauson-Kaas's ideas – “The Society for Developing Home Craft in the Countryside and in the City” (Verein für Förderung des Hausfleises in Stadt und Land) (Jannsen, 1878a). The society's primary goal became the preparation of future craft education teachers. For this purpose, Clauson-Kaas was once again invited to Tartu in September 1878, where he held a course for teachers and women who might start teaching boys and girls in the future. The course was organised by Stryk (Jannsen, 1878b).

Courses for Craft Teachers

The courses began on September 5, 1878, in Tartu and lasted for six weeks. Initially, 41 men and 17 women were supposed to participate in the courses, but finally 44 men and 18 women took part in the courses (Jannsen, 1878c, 1878d, 1878e; Kuusing, 1971). The courses were held in German and cost 25 rubles per participant (Jakobson, 1878a). In addition to courses taught by Clauson-Kaas, woodwork was taught by Mr. Hansen from Denmark, and handicraft was taught by Mrs. Elise Baranius, who had previously attended craft courses in Copenhagen for this purpose. Baranius had started teaching craft for women the previous autumn in Tartu; she had opened her own school for handicraft, where she taught German, arithmetic, and calligraphy in addition to sewing and women's handicraft. The school for handicraft operated in Tartu until 1883 (Sirk, 1983).

The course attendees were divided into five groups (Jannsen, 1878c). Men were taught straw work, broom work, basket weaving, cardboard work, wood cutting work, carving, polishing, and basic sawing. Women's courses excluded carpentry, carving, and coarse straw work (Pöld, 1933), and handicraft was taught instead. But Baranius found that not all handicrafts practised by Danish women should be included in the teaching of women's handicrafts (Kuusing, 1971).

Many schoolmasters also participated in the course. Through the teachers who had received this training, craft was able to reach some Estonian and Latvian public schools, and craft society reports noted that “thankworthy work has already been done” in many Estonian schools (Eesti rahvakoolide inspektor, 1846–1904). Exhibitions of works created during the course were organised to introduce the possibilities

of craft education and the accompanying aesthetic effect and sense of satisfaction to a broader audience (Jakobson, 1878b).

In 1881, the newspaper *Eesti Postimees* noted that from May 25, 11 teachers in Tartu studied according to Clauson-Kaas's method of teaching, but this time, the instructor was Adolf von Hoffmann (Grenzstein, 1881). Adolf von Hoffmann (1840–1903), Tartu town councillor, social figure, craft teacher, and head of the Livonian Society for the Promotion of Home Crafts from 1887–1892, was among the educational figures through whom the ideas of craft education spread in the Estonian areas of the Livonian governorate. The course lasted six weeks.

It was noted in the same article that since craft was a new phenomenon in school, people tended to doubt its necessity (Grenzstein, 1881). The author of the article argued that if the school government and general population supported this new undertaking, it could be beneficial for both the people and the land and could not possibly do any harm. The press supported the idea of craft-related education, but there were concerns that it might affect the main schoolwork. There were articles both for and against the new subject in Estonian daily newspapers such as *Eesti Postimees*, *Postimees*, and *Olevik*, among others (Sirk, 1983).

In the 1880s, influenced by Clauson-Kaas's explanatory work and the courses held in Tartu, the goals and content of craft as a subject changed considerably, and its teaching expanded. According to the Livonian Society for the Promotion of Home Crafts' 1884 report, craft was taught in the governorate in at least 14 parish schools and 10 municipal schools (Tallinna Söber, 1885).

In the 1880s, craft-related education took place in various forms (Tallinna Söber, 1885; *Eesti õigeusu talurahvakoolide inspektor*, 1873–1902; Pullat, 1969; *Reglement für die Fennernsche Taubstummen-Anstalt*, 1896):

- Craft workshops in parish schools (schools of Räpina, Kanepi and Kursi).
- A craft workshop, a so-called practical class (Kuressaare Exemplary Parish School).
- Craft classes (Tallinn's School for the Children of Sailors, Tartu Town School). Carpentry, turning, blacksmithing, locksmithing, and binding were taught.
- A craft class for the residents of the Estonian Blind Children's Asylum. Braiding and brush-making were taught.
- A crafts department at Vändra School for the Deaf-Mute. Wood carving, bookbinding, shoemaking, and carpentry were taught.

As illustrated above, craft as a subject took root in only a few public schools. Thus, newspaper writers argued that ideas related to craft education would probably reach people better through special schools created for this purpose. The formation of understandings about the goals of craft education and vocational training and their interrelationships took time, but the need for craft education was felt.

Discussion and Conclusion

From the point of view of the development of Estonian education in the nineteenth century, Clauson-Kaas's primary contribution was the introduction of craft as a subject. His ideas were mainly introduced in the press of the time (Jannsen, 1878a, 1878b, 1878c; Kuus, 1876a, 1876b; Stryk, 1877).

The openness of Estonian educationists to craft education is illustrated by the fact that, having become acquainted with Clauson-Kaas's ideas, they invited him to Tartu, Estonia, where he gave an introductory lecture and later supervised courses on the teaching of craft (Jannsen, 1878a, 1878b, 1878c). According to the 1881 edition of the newspaper *Eesti Postimees*, 11 schoolmasters studied according to Clauson-Kaas's teaching methods for six weeks under the instruction of Adolf von Hoffmann (Grenzstein, 1881). Von Hoffmann was one of the educators who enabled the spread of the ideas of craft education in the Estonian territories of the governorate of Livonia.

Clauson-Kaas's teaching of craft was one of the first instances of a systematic approach to teaching craft, which emphasised the generally developmental aspect of craft for children and recognised craft's motivational impact on learning other subjects. Students enjoyed craft, and it was used as a method of external motivation.

As a result of the teacher training courses, craft was taught in 1881 at two of Tartu's seminars and in 35 country schools. The total number of country schools in Estonia in those years was about 1,148. Thus, the impact of the courses was relatively small but significant. Since craft was a relatively new subject in school, people tended to doubt its essentiality: "Some applauded it, others criticized it, some were somewhere in between." (Grenzstein, 1881) There were many articles published in various Estonian daily newspapers both for and against the new subject.

The teaching of work methods, work culture, and sustainable consumption of materials was held in high esteem even at that time. In addition, the pre-vocational aspect of craft was deemed important since it helped students choose a vocation after finishing school.

As previously noted, Estonia was part of the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century, which is why the empire's laws were enforced in Estonian territories too. Although the teaching of craft lay dormant for nearly a decade, a law was passed on March 6, 1894, through which craft was introduced as an official school subject. In its justification, the positive impact on a child's development was mentioned but only if clear educational goals had been set in the teaching of the subject and if it was taught by following didactically correct principles.

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