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Special Issue: Postcolonial Memory Politics in Educational Media

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Introduction: Educational Media, Textbooks, and Postcolonial Relocations of Memory Politics in Europe

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Cultures of remembrance or memory cultures have constituted an interdisciplinary field of research since the 1990s. While this field has achieved a high level of internal differentiation, it generally views its remit as one which encompasses “all imaginable forms of conscious remembrance of historical events, personalities, and processes”.¹ In contrast to this comprehensive and therefore rather vague definition of “culture of remembrance” or “memory culture”, we use the term “politics of memory” here and in what follows in a more specific sense, in order to emphasize “the moment at which the past is made functional use of in the service of present-day purposes, to the end of shaping an identity founded in history.”² Viewing the issue in terms of discourse analysis, we may progress directly from this definition to identify and investigate politics of memory as a discourse of strategic resignifications of the past as formulated in history and implemented out in light of contemporary identity politics. While the nation-state remains a central point of reference for the politics of memory,³ the field is by no means limited to official forms of the engagement of states with their past. In other words, it does not relate exclusively to the official character of a state’s policy on history. Instead, it also encompasses the strategic politics of memory and identity pursued by other stakeholders in a society, a politics which frequently, but does not always, engage explicitly with state-generated and state-sanctioned memory politics. Thus the politics of memory are currently unfolding as a discourse of ongoing, highly charged debate surrounding collective self-descriptions in modern, “culturally” multilayered and heterogeneous societies, where self-descriptions draw on historical developments and events that are subject to conflict.

Such collective controversies surrounding the politics of memory are currently, in a number of European nation states and in Europe as a whole, becoming particularly visible via these states' increasing awareness that they are *de facto* postcolonial societies of immigration. It is therefore not surprising that postcolonial politics of memory have advanced to take on the status, which they have held for some time now, of a new discursive topos in various national memory cultures and within an emerging European memory culture.⁴ This is particularly the case for European nation-states with a colonial past. For a long time, colonialism barely registered in the politics of memory that were influenced by discourses of the nation-state, which found their exemplary expression in Pierre Nora's "sites of memory" (*lieux de mémoire*).⁵ Now, by contrast, not least as a result of academic history's reception of the discipline of postcolonial studies,⁶ Europe's colonial and imperial past has evolved into a new focus for the continuously expanding field of research into memory culture and the politics of memory.⁷

While adopting a postcolonial view of Europe, we proceed from the now well-known observation within this field that colonialism, and the gradual development of societies' attempts to deal with this chapter of Europe's past, have a long-term impact on the societies of erstwhile colonial powers and on formerly colonized societies. The legacy of colonialism therefore challenges the way in which both European nation-states with colonial legacies and Europe per se perceive themselves in the present.⁸ For some time, this impact has been felt in the shape of heightened interest in the way in which societies and their public discourse deal with the colonial past in light of the emergent reality of postcolonial societies of immigration in a number of European countries. This increased interest highlights the social relevance of these questions. It is apparent that the colonial past represents both an overarching European experience, at least in part, and a challenge to self-descriptions framed within contexts that are intimately linked to the nation-state. Furthermore, each society's engagement with its colonial legacy is the site of diverse emergent arenas of societal conflict, related in particular to the assertion of national identity and to competing, conflicting memories arising not least from postcolonial immigration and from the return, or re-entry, of the imperial differentiation between the colonies and the metropolitan space into the former metropolises themselves.⁹

This special issue of JEMMS is the first academic publication to locate recent research on the politics of memory in the context of school education or, more specifically, in that of history textbooks and other forms of educational media used in schools. Such a focus is important because many current discourses and debates concerning the politics of memory refer specifically to representations of the colonial past in textbooks (and other educational media). Schools as institutions, and the educational media they make use of, carry out a central function in debates conducted within societies and the academic arena. Schools and educational media have an authoritative role in the transmission of knowledge that is deemed

socially relevant; they are likewise creators of meaning, that is, they appropriate and transmit history in the context of the present and future, progressing from the contemporary here-and-now. Schools in general, and the educational media they use in particular, mediate politics of memory in at least two ways. One consists in the fact that textbooks contain an expression of the self-image of the nation-state, characterized by the representation of national history, which students are required to acquire. The other consists in textbooks' performative communication, as media of institutionalized teaching, of an individual and collective "interpellation" (Althusser)¹⁰ in the name of an overarching collective identity, which is often primarily that of the nation. These circumstances point directly back to societal self-descriptions and to the question of how the overarching subject of representation, be it the specific nation in question or Europe as a civilization, is to be defined in relation to the rest of the world and to the other, and thus, accordingly, in the light of the colonial past. All this means that educational media go beyond merely acting as mediators of memory culture; they are subjects of concrete politics of memory reflecting and mapping the current constitution and status of postcolonial memory politics. This applies particularly to textbooks because they are directly subject to political control in two ways. First, their content is aligned to state-prescribed curricula. Second, in many countries they are required to undergo processes of state approval. Therefore, when questions related to national memory enter the political arena, they impact directly or indirectly on the depiction of such memory in textbooks. The articles in this issue by Marcus Otto, Susanne Grindel and Lars Müller in particular demonstrate this influence.

Any approach to politics of memory via educational media used in schools must take into account official or state-sanctioned national policies on history and not lose sight of further, conflicting perspectives on politics of memory within a society. In this context, France appears as an ideal starting point on account of the intensity of public debate there about state-sanctioned politics of memory, exemplified in its so-called memory laws.¹¹ France represents a paradigmatic arena of societal conflicts, waged in a number of different configurations, which we could summarize as postcolonial conflicts of interpretation and identification in societies of immigration; they are conflicts that center on which and whose history is remembered, transmitted and passed on to future generations via a range of media of national self-description, and on how this takes place. These conflicts manifest themselves particularly strongly in schools, educational media and textbooks, whose traditional remit in France is the twofold task of furthering republican inclusion and providing a representation of the nation.¹² The issue of what is incorporated into a politics of memory institutionalized in this way and how this takes place refers to the question of who, historically and in the present day, is deemed part or not part of the nation and in which conditions. This notwithstanding, one must enquire into the degree to which these decidedly controversial postcolonial politics

of memory are not merely an expression of the much-cited French national exception (*exception française*). They have rather moved beyond this to become, in France and other European countries with a colonial past, a highly active, inflammable topos within memory politics in individual nations, with the potential to acquire overarching significance in Europe; to represent, in other words, a collective “European site of memory”.¹³ In this context, school as an institution and the educational media and textbooks it employs, appear to localize and concentrate the current reality of a society empirically found to be culturally heterogeneous, thus reflecting particularly vividly the postcolonial resignifications and relocations to which European politics of memory are subject.

Proceeding from such postcolonial views about present-day Europe and the potential challenge posed by a postcolonial condition¹⁴ as it finds particular expression in textbooks and educational media, the articles in this special issue turn their attention to a range of aspects, discourses and conflicts surrounding postcolonial politics of memory, which they illustrate by way of selected issues and examples. The common thread of the articles in this issue concerns the extent to which (history) textbooks and other educational media are currently the site of postcolonial resignifications and relocations of European politics of memory, which would make it apposite to claim that Europe finds itself in a genuinely postcolonial condition.

Marcus Otto’s approach to this question enquires whether decolonization since the 1960s in France (the nation which has seen what are probably the most impassioned, polarized debates on the colonial past in politics, education and the public arena) has been made the subject of discourse as a fundamental challenge to societal self-descriptions and to an emerging postcolonial politics of memory in the knowledge transmitted in textbooks. Taking these debates as his starting point, Otto analyzes the extent to which decolonization and its representations impacted and continue to impact on textbooks’ content. Beginning chronologically with the reforms to curricula and history textbooks carried out in the 1960s, Otto examines the changing content of textbooks in the context of various societal discourses from the perspective of systems theory, which proceeds from the diverse couplings of societal function systems including politics, the mass media, academia, the public arena and the education system, all of which are highly relevant to textbooks. In the 1960s, the dominance of national and political history within textbooks ceded under the influence of the so-called *Annales* school to a critical history of civilizations, within which textbooks figured decolonization as an expression of a global crisis shaking western civilization in the wake of the two world wars. Since then, social modernization in France has provided the backdrop to a gradual reinterpretation of decolonization, which has been heavily influenced by the social sciences, and (especially in the 1970s and 1980s) which foregrounded the political creation of the Third World as a concomitant aspect of decolonization. The structural North-South divide arising from this shift, modernization in France, and the semantic category of (under-

)development thus came to form the cornerstones of a discourse of decolonization which had assumed profound ambivalence and which began from the outset of the 1980s to manifest itself in new curricula and textbooks; these, from the time they first appeared, attracted accusations of dismantling the national narrative into categories drawn from the social sciences or even from Marxism. This was followed by fundamental curriculum reform, initialized at the close of the 1980s, which ushered in a return to prominence of the “national story” referred to in French as the *roman national*. Furthermore, representations of decolonization increasingly became explicit bones of contention within society, with debate on the memory of the Algerian War representing these conflicts’ most significant origin. Following this was a focus on the consequences of decolonization in the former metropolitan space, such as postcolonial immigration and the perception of a crisis in republican integration. Otto closes his article by taking the vigorous debate in French society about the nation’s colonial past and its representation in the knowledge transmitted by textbooks to argue that the politico-epistemological challenges of decolonization are ubiquitous in present-day France in the sense of a postcolonial condition.

A number of the themes raised in Otto’s study, which demonstrates the degree to which history textbooks have become not only media, but also objects of postcolonial politics of memory in France, are continued in the article by Susanne Grindel on history textbooks in the United Kingdom, which analyzes current debate around the role of the British Empire as a colonial power in the light of planned revisions to the British National Curriculum in history. The article revolves around the core question as to the influence of these debates in educational policy and memory-related politics on textbooks’ content. Grindel’s argues that schoolbooks, as epistemic authorities, reflect not simply emerging narratives, but in fact the full complexity of controversies surrounding politics of memory, as they are indeed themselves components in these controversies. This notion is evident from the fact that the objective of the planned revision to the curriculum, in terms of educational policy, consists in according greater significance not only to history as a subject – which currently is only compulsory up to, and not including, Key Stage 4 – but also to a national historical narrative which would relate the history of Empire as a success story. This political objective, whose supporters include the committee of historians appointed by the British government to draw up the new curriculum, exists with the aim of generating a positively connotated national identity. Although these plans to strengthen the role and quality of history teaching have found support among teachers, both they and critical historians take a sceptical attitude toward the apparently proposed return to a closed canon of national history. They voice their criticism of the move in the light of a heterogeneous British society with inherent conflict potential, a society reflected in classrooms populated by multicultural student bodies to whom a single narrative and a sole, standardized path to the formation of national identity would fail

to do justice. In addition to these factors, British society is beginning increasingly to engage with the “dark side” of its history, such as crimes committed in the former colonies and the slave trade, establishing it in the narrative of national history through instruments including museums and exhibitions and thus calling the nation’s “post-imperial amnesia” into question. These debates around educational policy and politics of memory have brought their influence to bear in textbooks. Grindel’s diachronic comparison of two textbooks published in 1981 and 2006 respectively analyzes the changes in the representation in textbooks of British colonial history. The textbooks of the 1980s were characterized by a separation of national from imperial history which provided a guarantee of an unbroken narrative of success in spite of decolonization. In textbooks currently in use, by contrast, the history of the Empire takes a central position, creating a connection between national history, decolonization and postcolonial migration and thus causing nostalgic “imperial amnesia” to give way to an “imperial revival”; in this way, these recent textbooks represent Britain’s colonial heritage as an integral part of its national history, and reflect, in various forms, transformations in British postcolonial memory.

Echoes of state engagement with the politics of memory relating to colonialization and decolonization which has taken and is taking place in the former major colonial nations, such as France or the UK, have found their way to other countries including Germany, whose period as a colonial power was relatively short. In this context, Lars Müller explores the beginnings of a postcolonial politics of memory in Germany via the example of the political debate surrounding the remembrance of what was known as the Herero uprising. Müller’s starting point is the motion tabled in the German *Bundestag* in 2012 proposing the adoption of a resolution acknowledging the crimes committed by the German colonial power in south-west Africa as genocide and pledging reparation; in this context, he outlines the highly charged debate on German colonial policy which has taken place over the last two decades, focusing on the closely intertwined fields of academic research, policy and education. The academic discipline of history has only been engaging with Germany’s colonial past since the 1990s, with Namibian independence in 1990 providing the principal background to a particular focus in this work on the German-Herero War. The question of whether the crimes committed amounted to genocide ignited a broad debate within the academic community and among the wider public, a discussion that has as yet failed to produce a consensus. The German *Bundestag* first debated the issue of Germany’s colonial past and the war waged on the Herero in 1989. While all parties were in agreement on Germany’s “particular historical and political responsibility” toward Namibia, the Social Democratic Party alone called the war an instance of genocide. Over twenty years were to pass, due not least to demands raised by the Namibian government and the Herero people themselves, until German politics revisited the issue thoroughly, debating and rejecting the motion mentioned above in 2012.

Müller's analysis of curricula and textbooks from the 1990s to the present leads him to the conclusion that although the issue was given little or no attention in school curricula, the term "genocide" was used in places in this context during this period and has continued to extend its reach since then; some textbooks in use today, however, still do not use the term. The key finding of the analysis is that knowledge circulates among those engaged with the issue in the political, academic and educational fields; in other words, textbooks do not simply absorb and re-represent knowledge, a role which would place them at the conclusion of a societal process of negotiation of what is to be transmitted as knowledge; instead, certainly in this case, textbooks were early arenas of the issues surrounding the German-Herero War and its classification as genocide and thus acted as a resource for policymakers.

The articles by Luigi Cajani and Keith Crawford, albeit without explicitly making direct reference to public debate on the politics of memory, provide demonstrations of the fact that textbooks show the traces of continuity and shifts in representations of colonialism. Both pieces create connections between the content of textbooks and contemporary academic discourse, thus extending their scope to encompass other stakeholders in society. By adopting this approach, Cajani proves that, as in France and the UK, public debate is a characteristic of the politics of memory in Italy. His overview of representations of Italian colonialism and decolonialization in Italian textbooks begins with the fascist era, showing by the example of two textbooks from 1938 and 1940 respectively that during this period, fascist Italy justified its brutal colonial policies and claimed greatness by citing the self-declared civilizing mission it traced back to ancient Rome. The first textbooks produced in republican Italy after 1945, while they contained criticism of the second war against Ethiopia, presented a positive overall view of Italian colonial policy, invoking above all a demographically based apologia. The article notes, however, that the spectrum of representations in Italian textbooks was a broad one, as textbooks were not subject to state controls despite fascism's excision from schools. It was not until the 1960s that the curriculum instituted in 1918 was replaced and new textbooks produced. In other words, it took some time for the image of the "good Italian" to sustain its first cracks; this happened from the end of the 1950s onward and took the form of increased awareness within society, raised by the beginnings of academic research into the issue and broadcasting by public and private television channels, of war crimes committed by Italy during its colonial wars, particularly the use of chemical weapons – crimes not acknowledged by the Italian government until 1996. It is therefore hardly surprising that information on these war crimes filtered only very slowly into Italian textbooks during the 1970s and 1980s; their treatment remained noncomprehensive and the use of poison gas was mostly ignored or mentioned in the briefest of terms only. To this day, there are very few textbooks in use in Italy which discuss this issue in its entirety. Nevertheless, as Cajani explains, the myth of the "good Italian" is slowly beginning to crumble – not only in the public arena, but also in the

most recent textbooks. There is still however, a long way for Italy to go toward leaving behind its Eurocentric approach to these matters and giving issues such as, to cite an example, the everyday lives of the peoples it colonized the attention in history teaching that befits their significance.

Research on colonialism has come to unanimously recognize that European nations were not the world's only colonial powers; Japan is one example. Additionally, recent years have seen a surge in interest in "internal" colonialism, that is, the subjection of groups of indigenous people within a country to colonializing practices, as happened to the native Americans and the Saami in Sweden. Keith Crawford engages with this issue in his study of the depiction of Australia's indigenous population, the Aborigines, in Australian social studies textbooks and the monthly periodical *The School Magazine* between 1930 and 1960. Crawford's article demonstrates that the hegemonic discourses of the textbooks used in primary schools, representing the country's national master narrative, one of two things happened: either the culture and society of Aboriginal people were "forgotten" completely or they were presented as a "marginalized" group. This narrative justified the taking of the Aboriginal land by the colonists arguing in accordance with Enlightenment philosophers' idea of progress, reason, and industry. The Aborigines were compared to primitive European peoples whose lifestyle stood in contradiction to developed European civilization, its standards, advanced technological development and, above all, the progress of its nation-building process. This "discourse of paternalism" is one of the main underlying narratives in the textbooks. Added to this is the fact that the numerous conflicts between settlers and the indigenous population in the course of the colonialization process remained undiscussed in these textbooks, having been quite simply "forgotten". The dominant narrative of harmonious development in the name of the nation's progress was founded on the omission of the "other" from this narrative. This meant that the indigenous population was excluded from Australia's nation-building process. It was only with the advent of a counter-hegemonic movement in the 1970s that a gradual change in the representation of the Aborigines in textbooks began to take place. Today, the exclusion and stereotyping of indigenous Australians has largely disappeared from textbooks, with Aboriginal history and culture treated as an integral part of the history and society of Australia. An apology issued by the Australian government in 2008 to the Aborigines for the treatment meted out to them did not mark an end to controversial discussion around the interpretation of Australian colonialism, as the debates surrounding the terms "invasion" and "settlement" emphatically prove.

We supplement our discussion of postcolonial politics of memory in a primarily western European context with Gabriel Pirický's article, which addresses recently emerging aspects of what one might call a postimperial politics of memory in various nation-states in southern central Europe by investigating representations of the Ottoman Empire in secondary

school history textbooks published between 1990 and 2010 in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. Taking a comparative approach, the article sheds light on the extent of the impact which the rewriting of history textbooks in these nations in the post-1989 era had on corresponding representations of the Ottoman Empire. The representations dealt with in this article focus on the highly conflictual ways in which each of the four countries interact with the Ottoman Empire, concentrating primarily on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this context, Pirický convincingly expresses the view that the largely stereotyped depictions of the Ottoman Empire as a Muslim and Turkish “other” in the textbooks serve above all to reinforce the present-day self-image of each of the four states as nations rooted in a Christian Europe. The significance of these findings lies principally in the fact that the history thus represented, located primarily in imperial conflicts between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, has the potential to open up a multiplicity of transnational perspectives on postimperial memory. In sum, Pirický’s analysis of these representations shows how the textbooks in each country prioritize (albeit to differing degrees) the political imperative, which demands the *de facto* hegemony of a narrative founded on the identity of the nation-state, over such a multidimensional historiography which holds the promise of multiple approaches to these issues.

This special issue concludes with an essay about the representation of colonialism on German television, complementing our analysis of textbooks with the consideration of a further mass medium with substantial educational relevance. Taking as examples the German television series called *The Global German Empire (Das Weltreich der Deutschen)* and the melodrama “Africa, mon amour”, Wolfgang Struck explores how film-makers such as the German popular historian Guido Knopp exercise a “representational superiority” and control over the material which accords no space to alternative representations. Although more recent research has demonstrated that explorers such as the German “conqueror” Carl Peters were met not with primitive “savages”, but rather with highly developed social structures characterized by trade and diplomatic relations, the television series and its reenactments of the events rely on Peters’ reports as their principal source, effectively estheticizing and eroticizing the day-to-day reality of colonialism. Struck argues that popular education of this kind is tenuous due to its neglect of the findings which have emerged from the discipline of postcolonial studies and its contribution to the romanticization of colonialism. Filmmakers know in advance the story they want to tell, meaning they are largely uninterested in what they actually find on location. Furthermore, the sights shown in the program are neither natural nor cultural, but rather artificial; their sole purpose is to be consumed. The article thus reaches the conclusion that in these programs, the filmmakers construct the colonial world in accordance with their desire to tell the story they intend to tell; the result is the perpetuation of stereotypes, prejudices, and fantasies around the past – indeed, the visualizations of

colonialism currently disseminated via the mass media amount to the unbroken continuation of the logic of colonial representation. This is once again an emphatic indication of the fact that postcolonial politics of memory concern not only the objects and content of memory, but also, and indeed primarily, the forms and viewpoints of the representations depicted in the media which, as their name suggests, mediates memory. The evident truth of this thesis is particularly apparent in regard to the relationship between postcolonial politics of memory and educational media.

Viewed as a whole, this special issue seeks to shed light on the extent to which societies' coming-to-terms with their colonial heritage is not exclusively a national task, but rather represents a transnational, a European, indeed a global challenge. The discussions surrounding politics of memory in Europe continue in large part to take place within the context of each nation's specific history. Nevertheless, the experience of postcolonial migration from the former colonies is currently ushering in an awareness of colonialism as an overarching European legacy within global history. A European perspective of this kind, expanded to encompass the transnational and global historical context, promises to present a fundamental challenge to textbooks and educational media as well as to other media of representation. As the articles in our special issue have demonstrated, textbooks are not only carriers and media(tors) of knowledge arrived at in processes of negotiation within societies, but also subject to transformation into subjects/objects of the debates and controversies surrounding these issues. This susceptibility makes them core components of the processes by which politics of memory arrive at the positions which media of representation eventually transmit.

Within this context, Eckhardt Fuchs und Marcus Otto have conducted the research project on "Decolonisation and Memory Politics. School Textbooks in the Context of Social Conflicts in France (1962-2010)" at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig, Germany since August 2010.¹⁵ This special issue of JEMMS emerged from a workshop which took place in April 2012 as part of this project. Both the project and the special issue place emphasis on the discursive status acquired by textbooks in discourses of postcolonial politics of memory. In other words, their chief interest is the manner in which textbooks are both the medium and the subject/object of these memory politics. Beyond this principal focus, the project aims to open up new avenues of research, a remit giving rise to a complex set of questions: A **first**, hitherto neglected aspect of this field is the historical perspective of long-term historical structures or "long duration" (*la longue durée*), which retraces continuities and transformations in specific representations emerging from colonialism as well as contextualizing them within particular discourses of politics, academia or educational policy. **Second**, recent research into (post)colonialism has given rise to interest in the extent to which perceptions and strategies of representation exist that are

valid across regions (for instance Europe or East Asia) and to the possibility of comparing them. The newest research, which has looked into the specifics of the (post)colonial in a number of regions of the world, has called attention to the fact that (post)colonial history cannot be restricted to being a history of European influence. These findings both open up new vistas on regional forms of colonialism and postcolonialism¹⁶ and turn the spotlight on the issue of how colonialism and societies' exploration of their colonial past have acted, and continue to act, to induce change in the former European centers of metropolitan power and elsewhere. Following on from this, we may ask questions as to whether, and to which extent, textbooks are taking these new approaches on board and, for instance, exploring relationships between various (post)colonial cultures. A global comparison of textbooks with reference to their representations of colonialism could make a substantial contribution to this discussion; a pertinent example is the highly charged debate on Japanese colonialism, of which textbooks are a significant arena. A **third** issue in this context relates to the potential for comparison between the content of textbooks and that of other media relevant to education which serve as arenas for the discussion and representation of colonialism. These include museums, documentary and feature films. A comparison of this kind would highlight the plurality of the influences that come to bear on the knowledge acquired by school students. **Fourth**, and finally, the question of what these students actually know about colonialism, and thus the question of the degree of their participation in memory cultures, can only be answered by means of combining analysis of textbooks with empirical studies on teaching practices. We might continue by listing further points. However, we consider those we have mentioned to be sufficient evidence of the extent of this field of research – and of how much still remains to be done. Analysis of textbooks and educational media, conducted as part of and complementary to (post)colonial research, promises to deliver new insights for both academic fields. This special issue of JEMMS is intended to make an initial contribution to bringing these insights to light.

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¹ Cf. Christoph Cornelißen, *Erinnerungskulturen, Version 2.0*, Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte, https://docupedia.de/zg/Erinnerungskulturen_Version_2.0_Christoph_Corneli.C3.9Fen?oldid=84892, (accessed 17 December 2012).

² Ibid.

³ A paradigm of this can be found in Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984-1992).

⁴ Cf., among others, Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire, eds., *La fracture coloniale. La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005); Blanchard, Bancel, and Lemaire, eds., *Culture postcoloniale 1961-2006. Traces et mémoires coloniales en France* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006); Olivier Dard and Daniel Lefeuvre, eds., *L'Europe face à son passé colonial* (Paris: Riveneuve Editions, 2008); Helma Lutz and Kathrin Gawaretzki, eds., *Kolonialismus und Erinnerungskultur. Die Kolonialvergangenheit im kollektiven Gedächtnis der deutschen und niederländischen Einwanderungsgesellschaft* (Münster: Waxmann, 2005); Malgorzata Pakier and Bo Strath, eds., *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (New York: Berghahn, 2010); Helena Gonçalves da Silva, ed., *Conflict, Memory Transfers, and the Reshaping of Europe* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010). See also, on cultures and politics of memory in Europe generally, among others: Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, ed., *Contested Pasts. The Politics of Memory* (London: Routledge, 2003); Sophie Wahnich, ed., *Politics of Collective Memory. Cultural Patterns of Commemorative Practices in Post-war Europe* (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2008); Karin Tilmans et al., eds., *Performing the Past. Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Siobhan Kattago, *Memory and Representation in Contemporary Europe. The Persistence of the Past* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012); Irial Glynn and Olaf Kleist, eds., *History, Memory, and Migration. Perceptions of the Past and the Politics of Incorporation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

⁵ Cf. Indra Sengupta, "Introduction: Locating *lieux de mémoire*: A (Post)colonial Perspective," in *Memory, History, and Colonialism. Engaging with Pierre Nora in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts*, Bulletin Supplement No.1, Indra Sengupta, ed. (London: German Historical Institute, 2009), 1-8.

⁶ Cf., among others, Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria, eds., *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002).

⁷ Cf. Jörn Leonhard, *Koloniale Vergangenheiten – (post-)imperiale Gegenwart* (Berlin: Berliner Wiss.-Verlag, 2010), and Pakier and Strath, eds., *A European Memory?*

⁸ Cf. Susanne Grindel, "Deutscher Sonderweg oder europäischer Erinnerungsort? Die Darstellung des modernen Kolonialismus in neueren deutschen Schulbüchern," *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 30, no. 3 (2008): 695-716.

⁹ Cf. Marcus Otto, "Das Subjekt der Nation in der *condition postcoloniale*. Krisen der Repräsentation und der Widerstreit postkolonialer Erinnerungspolitik in Frankreich," *Lendemains. Etudes comparées sur la France* 36, no. 144 (2011): 54-76 (76).

¹⁰ Cf. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays* (London: New Left Books, 1977), 121-176. On Althusser's theory of interpellation and more recent reception of his work, particularly in discussion on poststructuralist theory, see also Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power. Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) and Isolde Charim, *Der Althusser-Effekt. Entwurf zu einer Theorie der Ideologie* (Vienna: Passagen-Verlag, 2002).

¹¹ Cf., among others, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Les enjeux politiques de l'histoire coloniale* (Paris: Agone, 2009); Claude Liauzu and Gilles Manceron, eds., *La colonisation, la loi et l'histoire* (Paris: Editions Syllepse, 2006); Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, eds., *Les guerres de mémoires. La France et son histoire. Enjeux politiques, controverses historiques, stratégies médiatiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008); Johann Michel, *Gouverner les mémoires. Les politiques mémorielles en France* (Paris, PUF, 2010).

¹² On this issue, cf., among others, Corinne Bonafoux, Laurence de Cock, and Benoît Falaize, *Mémoires et histoire à l'école de la République. Quels enjeux?* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2007), also Laurence de Cock and Emmanuelle Picard, eds., *La fabrique scolaire de l'histoire. Illusions et désillusions du roman national* (Marseille: Agone, 2009).

¹³ Cf. Grindel, “Deutscher Sonderweg”.

¹⁴ Cf. Otto, “Das Subjekt der Nation”.

¹⁵ The project is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG no. FU 250/14). We would like to thank the German Research Foundation for their financial and other support for the project and the workshop.

¹⁶ Cf. Olaf Kaltmeier, Ulrike Lindner, and Binu Mailaparambil, “Reflecting on Concepts of Coloniality/Postcoloniality in Latin America, South Asian and African Historiography,” *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsgeschichte* 1, no.21 (2001): 14-31.

The Challenge of Decolonization: School History Textbooks as Media and Objects of the Postcolonial Politics of Memory in France since the 1960s

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Abstract • This article analyzes how the fundamental challenge of decolonization has resonated in history textbooks published in France since the 1960s. It therefore contextualizes textbook knowledge within different areas of society and focuses on predominant discourses which influenced history textbooks' (post)colonial representations in the period examined. These discourses encompass the crisis of western civilization, modernization, republican integration, and the postcolonial politics of memory. The author argues that history textbooks have thus become media as well as objects of an emerging postcolonial politics of memory which involves intense conflicts over immigration and national identity and challenges France's (post)colonial legacy in general.

Keywords • civilizing mission, crisis of civilization, decolonization, France, history textbooks, memory politics, modernization, postcolonial condition, postcolonial legacy, republican integration

Introduction and Theoretical Exposition

In one much-cited view, school history textbooks are the “autobiography of the nation”, or the “memory of society”.¹ In this article, I will first expand upon this notion, which has taken root in the discipline since its initial exposition, in the context of social theories. I will then develop it historically by initially conceiving of history textbooks as media of social self-descriptions then examining the transformations observable in such self-generated national narratives in France since the 1960s in the light of decolonization. The (post)colonial dimension of the national experience has increasingly become an object of study in France on account of the complex interconnections between its republican tradition and its colonialist civilizing mission (*mission civilisatrice*).² It is therefore no coincidence that in present-day France, colonialism and decolonization are the objects of an emerging postcolonial politics of memory with high conflict potential. The country's history textbooks act as a particular arena

of this phenomenon.³ The article will begin by sketching the theoretical framework for the discursive status of textbooks as a medium, with particular reference to a (systems) theory of society, to then demonstrate the ways in which history textbooks in France since the 1960s have become media and objects of a postcolonial national politics of memory.

Applying Luhmann's theory of social systems to school textbooks,⁴ we can conceive of them as media of a society's education system and as a form (realized in and *as* media) of the structural coupling of different autopoietic, that is, recursively self-generating and operatively self-referential societal function systems. As media of the education system, textbooks follow the code used by the system and its key differentiation which is either transmittable or not transmittable.⁵ On the basis of this primary codification, the education system becomes an arena for the selection of content, topics, and forms of teaching, which then find their way into textbooks. However, this key differentiation is clearly so abstract in nature that there is a need to concretize the assumptions and criteria underlying selection. This concretization takes place at the level of (educational) programs which, aligned to the system's inherent transmittable/not transmittable code, may be said to formulate the code explicitly in direct relation to particular objects. Examples of such programs are determining ideas of pedagogy, didactic concepts, and curricula. At the level of the curriculum, the education system is flexible and open to transformations; it is an arena of continuous negotiation and communication of what precisely is transmittable or not transmittable; how, and in which form; and of what, accordingly, should actually be transmitted. It is in this arena that we can localize the medium called "textbooks", which undergo in this context a process of programming, formatting, didactic conception, revision and criticism under pedagogical and didactic aspects, and so forth. By contrast, textbooks regarded from the perspective of other function systems – primarily politics, the mass media, the economy, and science and academia, but also the law, the arts and religion – take on a completely different role, or are subject to entirely different types of gaze, or monitoring, within these systems; that is, they are regarded in accordance with other codes, specific to each system.⁶ In this way, the political system, whose self-description and central organization is the (nation-)state, monitors textbooks as media whose primary end is to determine their degree of suitability as vehicles which compete for political power within the state. This struggle takes place in accordance with the key distinctions which govern the political system: power/no power or office/no office, and, emergent in democratic systems, (in) government/(in) opposition. This means that textbooks assume political relevance primarily in conflict situations. Textbooks in subjects which generate meaning and identity, such as history, geography, social studies, and religious education, are of particular political interest insofar as they are, or can be, subject to

monitoring as media of politically legitimized self-description, specifically the self-description of the nation-state.⁷ The structural coupling of the education system with the academic/scientific system is relevant to textbooks (and to research into textbooks) in multiple ways. First, the subject-specific knowledge transmitted via the medium of the textbook is structurally coupled – and generally mediated in each case via the discipline of subject-specific didactics – with the knowledge communicated in individual scientific and academic disciplines in the context of the overarching code true/untrue. Second, textbooks are objects of academic research in a range of disciplines as well as in textbook research itself, which evolved out of the structural coupling of politics, the education system and academia.⁸

The structural coupling between the education system and the mass media evidently constitutes a special case. Textbooks are analyzable both as a medium in the context of this structural coupling and themselves as a mass medium. Whereas the mass media essentially adhere to the code of information/noninformation and their *programs* center on the news value of pieces of information, which frequently appeal to trends or hold the potential for scandal,⁹ textbooks as a (mass) medium appear, among other operations, to combine this code in a specific fashion with the code (transmittable/not transmittable) regulating the education system; this phenomenon may provide an explanation for the closer adherence to a traditional canon of knowledge in textbooks than elsewhere. Like the mass media in general, textbooks act in their specifically institutionalized manner as authorities of selection and filtering¹⁰ for the generation of societal self-descriptions that are considered to be sufficiently relevant and legitimate to the society in question. They carry out this function in relation to the transmission of knowledge that is declared to be canonical. Furthermore, textbooks themselves may become the subject of discourse in the mass media, usually in a scandalizing manner in accordance with the mass-media codification outlined above. The overall effect of these processes is to generate, particularly in the conditions of multiple and diverse structural couplings with other function systems described above, a highly specific pressure of contingency which insistently brings itself to bear in textbooks, turning them into a multivalent medium of the selective constitution of meaning and of a corresponding societal self-description. The structural coupling of the educational with the political system is of fundamental significance insofar as that, in the evolutionary process of the two systems' functional differentiation, it has caused the characteristic segmentation of the political system into nation-states to exert extensive influence on the education system.¹¹ Another key phenomenon is the structural coupling of the education system with science and academia, whose impact reveals itself in what could be called the coevolutionary manner of development of the segmentation of academic research into disciplines, and the segmentation

of the education system into subjects to be taught, although the former is not reflected in its entirety in the latter. This impacts directly on the textbook as a medium inasmuch as it deals in each instance with particular subjects and therefore, via the academic didactics of the subject in question, is coupled to a degree with the corresponding academic disciplines.

These diverse structural couplings are a decisive factor in the social complexity of textbooks as media and accordingly constitute a significant background condition governing the discursive formation of the knowledge transmitted in textbooks.¹² In this way, textbooks, particularly those dealing with subjects dedicated to the formation of meaning and identity – such as history, geography and civic education – are not only media of the reduction of this social complexity, but also repeatedly find themselves subject to this very complexity in the course of the processes of structural coupling we have described. It is only when viewed against this backdrop, then, that we are able to comprehend the diverse range of discursive circumscriptions of, and contained within, the knowledge transmitted by textbooks. Time and again, these structural couplings give rise to discursive spaces of resonance between politics, academia, the education system and public discourse as represented in the mass media; discursive spaces which also affect history textbooks as media of the self-description of a society. In France, perhaps more than elsewhere, history textbooks are decisively influenced by the design of the educational programs they refer to.¹³ Curriculum reform in the 1950s and the consequent overhaul of history textbooks in the 1960s, which drew their most significant inspiration from the so-called *Annales* school, marked a specific caesura in this regard, which we will take as the starting point and central emphasis of our discussion here.¹⁴ Curricular schedules drawn up since the 1960s have been characterized by their explicit insistence on contemporary history, which means that they were designed not only to continue the history they contain into the present, but also to employ present-day terms and concepts to describe and interpret this history. Since the start of this period, the knowledge transmitted by textbooks has undergone a transformation on the basis of the key discourses and spaces of resonance current at the time in question, as we will outline below. Our discussion will provide particular insight into the manner in which the challenge of decolonization has been met and dealt with on the basis of the discursive resources operating at the respective moments in time. The Algerian War represents the central formative event of the decolonization process and thus of France's self-description when faced with the loss of its colonial empire.¹⁵ As Shepard argues, the "invention of decolonization" went hand-in-hand with a process of modernization in France's self-description, effected by screening out, with considerable success, the memory of colonial French Algeria.¹⁶ This notwithstanding, decolonization remains to this day an urgent, fundamental challenge to France's self-

description, a challenge which is primarily political/epistemological in nature.¹⁷ I will demonstrate below how this challenge has been articulated in history textbooks¹⁸ since the 1960s and how these textbooks have evolved into prominent media and objects of the postcolonial politics of memory in France.

The Event of Decolonization as an Expression of the Crisis of Western Civilization in the 1960s

Well into the 1950s, the dominant approach in French history textbooks was that of a nationally oriented history of politics and events. This was not least a manifestation of the structural coupling between politics, the education system and academia (indeed history as an academic discipline), whereby history teaching both adhered to the prevailing methodological orientation of history as an academic discipline and was tasked with supporting the political socialization of future citizens in a spirit of civic education. This was a central objective of history teaching in post-Second World War France, where the reforming and reanimation of a national sense of self was a primary political objective. The 1950s, however, were also a time when the so-called *Annales* historiography articulated a programmatic critique of this methodological nationalism and of the historiography of political events which dominated the academic history of the time, an endeavor in which it met with increasing success.¹⁹ The seminal alternative propagated by *Annales* historians was its comprehensive approach based on a “history of civilizations”, which drew on both historiography and the principles of the social sciences. In the course of the 1950s and 1960s, this new approach, which was critical towards the notion of a received national history, took at least partial root in history curricula and textbooks, principally under the aegis of Fernand Braudel.²⁰ This represented a fundamental change of direction for history textbooks, inasmuch as it replaced a politically focused history of events, primarily concentrating on the nation-state, with an overarching “total” history (*histoire totale*) of the world’s civilizations. Nevertheless, the structure of these history textbooks effectively constituted a compromise between historiographical innovation and a concept of history which tended to emphasize the nation-state: The first part of textbooks produced at this time generally presents the two world wars and the subsequent process of decolonization in a manner which focused on the history of political developments and events, while the second part provides a depiction of the world’s civilizations in terms ranging from historicization to ossification. Not only does this depiction make the concept of civilization, which played a prominent role in contemporary historiography, into a central

category of its presentation of history; we even see the terms “decolonization”²¹ and “Third World”,²² both of which were very new entrants to the language, directly included in textbooks of this period where they discuss national independence movements in the colonies, with the aim of enabling students to grasp the present-day world by becoming aware of its history.²³ This objective, which was associated with the (political and pedagogical) aim of encouraging students to develop a critical mind (*esprit critique*),²⁴ which in turn was intended to introduce students to what were called “burning issues” (*questions chaudes*) or “questions of high social relevance” (*questions socialement vives*) – of which colonialism, the Algerian War, and decolonization and its repercussions and implications were to become canonical examples.²⁵

The initial depiction of decolonization in the textbooks in question represented it principally as a consequence or continuation of or indeed an appendix to the two world wars. Nevertheless, this backdrop provided for decolonization as a process of global history to attain a formative significance as what may be called the paradigmatic expression of a crisis in (Western) civilization.²⁶ The 1960s saw a corresponding shift in the representation of the relationship between the colonies and the metropolitan space, emerging notably out of the resignification and pluralization undergone by the concept of civilization(s).²⁷ Previously, France’s civilizing mission had acted as republican universalism’s key shibboleth of self-description and self-legitimation in relation to the colonies, which were viewed as structurally inferior. The history textbooks of the 1960s, by contrast, figure the relationship between the colonies and the metropolitan space in the context of a new paradigm of plurality and diversity, based on acknowledgement of the civilizations existent in the colonized countries – a view that nevertheless failed to dispense completely with the historically derived notion of a privileged position for Western civilization.²⁸ The event of decolonization, then, goes beyond its significance as a political caesura to mark a profound epistemological rupture in national self-description and the complementary description practised upon the (former) colonies. In this way, the concomitant sense of elemental crisis arising within Western civilization exerts a defining influence on the self-descriptions and descriptions-of-others formulated in history textbooks. With the loss of status of a colonial power, and the loss of (former) colonies, the topics of decolonization and recourse to one’s own civilization began to feature prominently in the content of school textbooks as new nations, with their own historical agency, under the monumental heading of the “Third World” (*tiers monde*), as a separate world within an emerging new world order. The epistemological grounding of these history textbooks thus arose from what was known as the “program of civilizations” (*programme des civilisations*), which was influenced directly by the corresponding approach to historiography propagated by

the *Annales* historians. The textbooks drew on the same notion of civilization or civilizations, and proposed a fundamental critique of, while perceiving crisis in, Western universalism; colonialism and decolonization were a central part of this critique.

The historiographical distinction, expressed in normative terms, between (nation-)state and civilization, which forms the basis of this approach, was part of a wider discourse around the political and epistemological crisis of the universalism displayed by Western civilization in general and by the French nation in particular, a discourse which attached itself principally to the two world wars and the subsequent event of decolonization and which eventually made its mark on curricula and textbooks in history teaching. In this context, the 1950s and 1960s marked a profound historical caesura in France, signifying not only the end of the Fourth and the start of the Fifth Republic (1958), but also, simultaneously, the demise of France's colonial empire. To the extent to which colonialism was not least an epistemological project in which a universalist (republican) subject of civilization, existing within a colonialist world view, represented and simultaneously took possession of the world, decolonization inevitably impacted upon the logic of colonial forms of representation. "The appearance of these new phenomena overturned received ideas: the years 1950 to 1960 are years in which knowledge and representations constituted in colonial times were called into question."²⁹ Arising from this sense of crisis, and reflected in the prism of decolonization as an event, colonialism itself began tentatively to be defined as a contingent historical event, in contrast to the previous view of it as an integral component of France's universalist republican self-image, which appears particularly evident in the textbooks of the Third Republic with their positively legitimizing discourse of colonialism.³⁰

This notwithstanding, the interpretation outlined here of decolonization as the expression of a crisis in (Western) civilization began during the 1960s and 1970s to increasingly interact with the paradigm or theory of modernization, which enjoyed considerable predominance in this period primarily in the social sciences and gradually emerged on the political scene. This paradigm, applied to the Third World, which was perceived variously as the result and the agent of decolonization and on occasion as both simultaneously, was to attain central importance in the form of "development" as a semantic category. The previously diagnosed crisis of Western civilization in general and France in particular was to undergo a paradigmatic revaluation corresponding to France's renewed self-description in the light of what were retrospectively called the Thirty Glorious Years (*trente glorieuses*).³¹ In this context, new key discourses made themselves heard, accordingly activating other structural couplings; this process played out in the knowledge contained in school textbooks as well as in other arenas.

Decolonization, the Third World and the Paradigm of Modernization since the 1960s

From the 1960s onwards, the tropes of modernization and development, drawing upon theories of modernization³² which emerged from the social sciences and politico-economic field that were ubiquitous at the time, and within a representation of the modern world in the second half of the twentieth century which drew explicit links to the present, advanced to become key categories of the self-description of the former colonial powers and their discourse on their ex-colonies. This was by no means a chance development. In France, as Ross has demonstrated, the effective discourse of social modernization emerged in evident interconnection to the process of decolonization.³³ In this view, France's farewell to its colonies and its empire went hand-in-hand with a social and cultural renewal, the welcoming of a new France. The key influences upon this discourse, which eventually manifested itself in the knowledge transmitted in textbooks, were the Thirty Glorious Years between 1946 and 1975, the move toward a national economic plan (*planification*)³⁴ in the political management of economic growth, and the epistemological success of the social sciences. In addition to these factors, this discourse was engaged in structural correspondence, within the structural coupling between the educational, political and academic systems, with the education and curriculum reforms undertaken since the 1970s. As time passed, these structural interactions made their mark in the reforms, inspired by ideas from the social sciences, conducted under what was known as the Haby plan (1981) and in the history textbooks emerging from it (1982-1988).

In the world view brought to bear in this context, the division of the world into various civilizations ceded to a geopolitical and economic reordering of the world into three worlds, which also engendered an authoritative new interpretation of decolonization as principally the historical process which created the Third World. It was in this context that some textbooks first included a single chapter entitled "Decolonization" (*La décolonisation*), or "Decolonization and the Emergence of the Third World" (*La décolonisation et l'émergence du Tiers Monde*),³⁵ in which decolonization, defined to encompass the political formation of the Third World, was presented as a discrete event with global historical repercussions. In the context of the world's reordering after the Second World War, these textbooks generally follow such sections with a chapter about the continuing formation of the Third World as a consequence of decolonization, elucidating the issues of decolonization, the Third World, underdevelopment and the North-South divide, which collectively constituted a central,

complex issue in the contemporary world.³⁶ The upshot of this development was that the schematic division of the world, which previous textbooks executed primarily on the basis of the primarily cultural category of civilizations, was eventually transplanted as a whole into a differentiation between three worlds, a division of a more political/economic nature emerging substantially from the social sciences. Overall, , at this stage, decolonization as an event of global history was dealt with as a discrete phenomenon, albeit contextualized within the post-World War Two reordering of the world. This approach involved the replacement of the notion of “civilization/s”, derived from historiography and the humanities, with the term “world” (*monde*), which was influenced more strongly by the social sciences, and encompassed the specific prominence given to the term Third World. This linguistic transformation corresponded to an epistemological shift in the principles governing the division of the world into categories (that is, the schematic key differentiations used) also and especially in the representation of the contemporary world. The key differentiation fundamentally underlying the segmentation of the world into the First, Second and Third World after the Second World War was that of tradition/modernity; this differentiation can be said to have overlaid and thus essentially replaced the previously dominant distinction between civilizations. According to this view, whereas the former colonial powers have undergone a largely successful process of modernization since the post-World War Two reordering, decolonization has primarily cast the erstwhile colonies in the category of underdevelopment. In this light, decolonization presents itself as a process generating ambivalent results, with partial modernization offset by the economic underdevelopment of the former colonies. In the light of these considerations, we may observe in France that decolonization has been integrated into a narrative of modernization which counterbalances the loss of Empire with the success story of what was primarily socioeconomic modernization during the Thirty Glorious Years. Further, textbook chapters on the history of France in the 1950s and 1960s present decolonization, particularly the Algerian War, as a decisive factor in the crisis-like “transition” from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic.³⁷ In this context, the originarily French coinage *tiers monde* – which initially, it must be noted, arose as an explicit analogy to the historical term Third State (*tiers état*),³⁸ made it possible to work within the global paradigm of modernization and effectively excise the consequences of decolonization from French national history and project them into the global arena of the new international world order. In this retrospective view, which evidently still drew substantial inspiration from the ideas of power and “do-ability” underlying politico-economic *planification* (notwithstanding the contemporary crisis which was shaking these very ideas), decolonization appeared on the one hand as a project of the *tiers monde* which, in the political and economic

sense, had substantially failed, and on the other as, if nothing else, the starting point for a modernization of France which enjoyed at least partial success.

Against the backdrop of the view expressed by Lyotard,³⁹ which was widely discussed in the 1980s, that the metanarrative of modernity had reached its end, ushering in a fundamental crisis of the legitimacy of knowledge in the postmodern condition, the omnipresence we have described of the categories of modernization and development appears as a last residue of universalist metanarratives manifesting themselves not least in the knowledge transported by twentieth-century textbooks. Viewed in light of the challenge, played out in history textbooks, to integrate the event of decolonization into a twentieth-century historical narrative, this circumstance produces paradoxical results. There is increasing criticism of the metanarrative, emerging from the social-science arena, of the modernization of a series of areas of society and in particular of the political project of the Third World and its inherent critique of European colonialism. In the course of the 1980s, by contrast, a return to a republican master narrative of national history, which began to be referred to as the “national story” (*roman national*), became apparent in public debate on history teaching in general and on reforms to the Haby legislation in particular. Nonetheless, the critical or ironic use of the term “national story” in scholarly debate, picking up on the connotation it transports of the stylized character of a fictional narrative – a “story” of “history” – effectively confirms the essential delegitimization, put forward by Lyotard, of master narratives altogether.

Consequences of Decolonization? The Discourse of Republican Integration since the 1980s

Since the close of the 1970s, and continuing into the 1980s, school history curricula and textbooks drew increasing political criticism, which aroused considerable public attention and inspired extensive coverage in the mass media, for having divided a coherent historical narrative in general, and French national history in particular, into academic categories drawn from social-science disciplines. Such criticism, leveled at French history teaching principally by historians and proponents of a nationally based republican historiography, was seized upon and rearticulated in the 1980s by policy-makers, with Jean-Pierre Chevènement (who at that time was minister of education in the Mitterrand administration and later the founder of a new party focused upon republican renewal) at their head. The debate might be encapsulated in the famous exclamation issued in 1978 (in advance of the main course of the debate) by the

historian Alain Decaux, who is known for his popular films and television programs about history: “We don’t teach our children history anymore!” (“*On n’apprend plus l’histoire à nos enfants!*”).⁴⁰ From this perspective, history curricula and textbooks, as technocratic entities or even expressions of a Marxist world view, stood in opposition to a rediscovered ideal revolving around a living, breathing depiction of history whose purpose crucially included the provision of a response to contemporary challenges such as the sense of crisis in French national identity, immigration policy and republican national renewal – a response that concretely generated meaning and identity. This critique engaged both with the diagnosed crisis of history as an academic discipline⁴¹ within the humanities and social sciences, and also, in terms of policy and epistemology, with historical revisions whose expressions in the mass media encompassed and indeed centered on the colonial past and its current relevance.⁴²

The National Conference on History and History Teaching (*Colloque national sur l’histoire et son enseignement*) held in 1984 was to become emblematic of the gradual translation of this critique into reform of school curricula and the accompanying discourse, which drew its inspiration from republican ideas⁴³ and which eventually, in 1987, resulted in the introduction of a new history curriculum, the Chevènement program (*Programme Chevènement*), whose objective was to (re)establish a national narrative, a *récit national*, in history textbooks.⁴⁴ In this light, then, the textbooks which came into being in the context of this program can be characterized as expressions of a discourse of republican integration. To a large extent, this discourse incorporated the rupture in historical narrative constituted by decolonization into the narrative of France’s modernization and republican renewal; this representation, however, came under increasing attack in the context of current societal conflicts. The view of modernization outlined here continued to appear in some textbooks in and after the 1990s. This continuity is nevertheless accompanied by discontinuities and emerging emphases in the predominant self-descriptions of former metropolitan powers and their descriptions of their erstwhile colonies after and arising from decolonization. The violent course of decolonization in the Indochina and Algerian Wars in particular is presented as a historical caesura in French history,⁴⁵ a depiction which, however, is followed by the transformation of decolonization under the highly memorable heading of “From Empire to Europe” (*De l’Empire à l’Europe*),⁴⁶ from a narrative of loss of colonial empire to the success story of a Europe with France among its key movers. Simultaneously, in a development commencing at the end of the 1980s, consequences of decolonization such as postcolonial immigration, and issues of national identity and republican integration, have been increasingly placed in the context of a contemporary history of France since the 1980s as a history of problems;⁴⁷ this tendency has continued into the most recently published textbooks. The

depiction of French history, including that of its colonial past, has thereby advanced to become what one might view as a central aspect of civic education that relates strongly to the present, with the concomitant thorough, and relatively continuously intensifying reflection on the implications for France of its history of colonialism and decolonization, with particular emphasis on the Algerian War in light of current difficulties in French society relating to immigration and national identity. Discussions about contemporary national politics of memory have entailed the identification of echoes of historical conflict in present-day issues, often raising them explicitly and taking the case of the Algerian War as an exemplar.⁴⁸ These reflections have given rise to ongoing and recurring debate about the appropriateness of a homogeneous, linear, and Eurocentric national narrative or “national story” (a term generally used with critical intent) in the depictions of history presented in textbooks in the light of the heterogeneity of French society occasioned not least by postcolonial immigration.

The status of history in education, in national culture, its public usage, is a heritage which no longer allows us to content ourselves with merely cultivating tokens. The nation is no longer what it was, the nation of kings that made France, the nation of the spirit of universalism emerging from 1789, the nation of the “greater France”. Our national narrative does not speak to populations which have come to our country from the four corners of the earth. Society now is plural, marked by globalization. One of the conditions on which our development toward a common future depends is that we share a past which has emerged from communication and conflict, a past which has transformed its protagonists.⁴⁹

The insistent challenge of decolonization finds expression in the present in translations of the republican semantics of assimilation, which are discredited due to their colonialist connotations, into a positively obsessive discourse of republican integration.⁵⁰

This translation thus reflects not only the crisis undergone by the narrative of modernization since the 1970s,⁵¹ but also the emergence of new challenges facing the nation’s republican self-description. The paradigm of modernization drawn from the social sciences enabled the extensive “outsourcing” of the consequences of decolonization from France in the form of the Third World. These consequences nevertheless returned, arising principally from postcolonial immigration and their concomitant re-entry into discourse of the differentiation between metropolitan space and colonies, to constitute a fundamental challenge to the republican self-description and self-assertion of the French nation. One of the key issues in which this challenge manifested itself was the highly charged, ongoing debate about the Algerian War which sprang up at the end of the 1980s, turning the conflict into what we might consider to be the key historical paradigm of decolonization within the nation’s politics

of memory and likewise the crucial exemplar of a controversial “burning issue” in the knowledge transported in school textbooks.⁵² Curricula have undergone numerous revisions, differentiations and reformulations over the years; this alone acts as an indication of the extent to which public debate about postcolonial politics of memory has impinged with increasing directness on curricula and textbooks during this time. Recently, following on from this development, we have seen increasing echoes of such burning issues in textbooks. This is an expression not least of the degree to which decolonization and its consequences have undergone a transformation from historical events into objects of present-day politics of memory. Newer textbooks, particularly those which appeared since the turn of the millennium, increasingly deal with burning contemporary issues relating to cultures of memory and to related political questions arising primarily from the Second World War, the Algerian War and colonialism per se.

Transformation from a Medium to the Object of the Politics of Memory? Controversies about the Memory Law of 23 February 2005

In modern-day society, the knowledge transported in textbooks is continually subject to the influence of interactions between policymakers, academia, and the public as reflected and represented in the mass media, and which concern the politics of memory. History textbooks in particular frequently become media of republican politics of memory when stakeholders from various areas of society – from interest groups across the political spectrum to historians and “public intellectuals” – try to influence the way in which they present issues. This circumstance indicates that politics of memory are inherently connected to issues of societal conflict, issues which concern the knowledge transported via textbooks in the form of “burning issues” or “questions of high social relevance”. The event/fact of colonialism (*le fait colonial*) and, emerging from the debate around the Algerian War, the history of decolonization, are issues of this kind. The postcolonial politics of memory is therefore a prominent field among the arenas of ongoing social conflict relating to postcolonial immigration, republican integration and the perceived threat to national identity from what are termed, usually with polemical intent, “communitarian identity politics”. Multiculturalism and communitarianism, that is, the cultural, political or legal recognition of diverse collective identities, are regarded in France as a fundamental threat to republican universalism and unitarianism. For this reason, communitarianism in particular functions as a polemical reverse shibboleth that is employed to accuse the speaker’s political opponent of prioritizing

particular values and the interests of specific groups over the principles on which the republic is founded. The discourse of republican integration, and therefore public debate on a postcolonial politics of memory, dwells at times obsessively on the dangers of communitarianism, which thus stalks this discourse like a phantom.

An observer of the current discussion therefore experiences the transformation of the history of colonialism and decolonization into the object of a postcolonial politics of memory as one which is potentially highly conflictive.⁵³ Discourses around history teaching and textbooks since the 1990s have been primarily characterized by antagonism between the focus on heritage in national history and what is referred to as the duty of memory (*devoir de mémoire*), with its objective of recognizing and legitimizing the collective memory of a range of groups within society.⁵⁴ The central controversy in this antagonism flares up in relation to the issue of the extent of France's accountability to those who identify themselves as victims in French history and their descendants. This is also, and indeed precisely, the context in which debate about the presentation of France's colonial past in history teaching and textbooks is to be located. An exemplar of the manifestation of the concomitant politicization experienced by the event of colonialism is the Taubira law of 2001, which declared the colonial slave trade to be a crime against humanity and explicitly addressed school curricula by stating that, "Programs of school education and of research in history and the humanities will accord to the slave trade and slavery the prominent place they deserve."⁵⁵

In the first decade of the new millennium, public controversy surrounding postcolonial politics of memory engaged directly with issues of history teaching, curricula and textbooks. The overarching politicization of these issues which arose with these debates culminated in the discussion around the memory law of 23 February 2005, which was initiated, not coincidentally, by nostalgic lobbyists of erstwhile French Algeria; one might almost consider these debates as the redeclaration, or continuation, of the Algerian War by other means – the means of memory politics. As we have seen, the Taubira law already referred explicitly to history curricula. However, whereas the 2001 law passed with very little debate, the 2005 memory law, with its prejudged, decidedly positive representation of French colonization in north Africa in particular, gave rise to intense, highly politicized public controversy, due not least to its fourth article, which states that, "School curricula will acknowledge in particular the positive role of the French presence overseas, particularly in north Africa, and accord to the history and sacrifices of combatants in the French army originating from these territories the important place to which they have a right."⁵⁶

After the law was passed in the National Assembly with relatively little fanfare, it was this fourth article which drew highly controversial public attention and attracted the vehement

protests of various voices in society. The greatly politicized, enduring public debate that ensued was conducted principally by historians, teachers' associations, groups representing migrants' interests, lobbying organizations and public intellectuals from across the political spectrum; in other words, it emerged and developed in spaces of resonance between policy, academia (historiography), the education system and public discourse as formulated in the mass media. Additionally, the new law occasioned a fundamental public debate about the perceived threat to the autonomy of historical research and history teaching by the overbearing nature of official republican history (*histoire officielle*) dictated by the state. Simultaneously, the public debate on the new law went beyond its immediate context to become the site of a far-reaching discourse in society which, acting in the name of republican integration, obsessively evoked the dread phantom of communitarianism, cast as a fundamental threat to the republic and its national identity. We may perceive in this circumstance the manner in which profound political and social conflicts make themselves heard in postcolonial politics of memory – a phenomenon particularly evident in 2005, when the debate surrounding the memory law coincided with the violence that flared up in the deprived housing estates on the edge of major cities in November of that year, and which those involved and observers alike interpreted not least in a (post)colonial context.

Conclusion

Decolonization not only represents a political and epistemological rupture,⁵⁷ but also continues to make its presence felt as a challenge to France's self-description as it is presented and transmitted not least in history textbooks. These are, in their representation of decolonization on the basis of discourses predominant at the time of their publication, no longer merely media of national self-description and republican self-assertion. Instead, they have themselves become objects of postcolonial politics of memory, as demonstrated by the explicit references to educational programs in schools (*programmes scolaires*) to be found above all in the memory laws of 2001 (with reference to the acknowledgement of slavery and the slave trade) and of 2005 (in relation to the explicitly positive presentation of French colonization it prescribed). The most recent school curricula are impacted most evidently by the concomitant politicization of these issues, situated between an official republican history and the demands for acknowledgement and memory expressed by a number of stakeholders in French society.⁵⁸

Public debate and social controversy surrounding the memory law of 2005 arose on the basis of political and epistemological spaces of resonance which in turn played a decisive role in constituting the discourse of postcolonial memory itself: interpretations of the colonial past propagated by historiography and the mass media; the perceived threat to the autonomy of research and teaching in history emanating from the political will to create an official history; and the explicitly ideological discourse of republican integration, with its obsession with the phantom of communitarianism, whose focal point might be located in the republican institution of the school⁵⁹ and the education system. From this perspective, France's conflicts over memory (*guerres de mémoires*) represent a manifestation of the degree to which its colonial past and the political and epistemological challenge of decolonization have once again taken on profound relevance to the nation's present in the context of its postcolonial condition.

¹ Cf. Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, "Das Schulgeschichtsbuch – Gedächtnis der Gesellschaft oder Autobiographie der Nation?" *Geschichte, Politik und ihre Didaktik* 26 (1998): 26-35.

² Cf. Dino Costantini, *Mission civilisatrice. Le rôle de l'histoire coloniale dans la construction de l'identité politique française* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008).

³ Cf. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Les enjeux politiques de l'histoire coloniale* (Paris: Agone 2009).

⁴ The fundamental formulation of this theory is in Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme. Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1984) and Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997).

⁵ Cf. Niklas Luhmann, *Das Erziehungssystem der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), 59f.

⁶ This notwithstanding, the self-referential constitution of societal function systems implies by no means that these systems operate completely independently of their societal environment. In this context, Luhmann differentiates between systems' operative closure and structural openness. Operative closure means that individual systems structure their communications around a specific key differentiation, a system-internal code. In this way, function systems combine their particular functional specification with a universal social validity. In other words, all their communications can be monitored and made the subject of discussion from the specific codified perspective of each function system. In addition to this, the combination of operative closure and structural openness that characterizes function systems generates inherent structural couplings between different function systems. This, however, does not mean that boundaries between systems become permeable or indeed disintegrate; individual systems continue to monitor particular facts or circumstances from the specific perspective of their key differentiation and therefore construct them as such, meaning these circumstances or facts are not identical, but differ from system to system due to the systems' specific internal constructions.

⁷ This structural coupling between the education system and the political system, related here to textbooks as a medium, is thus institutionalized in implicit or explicit procedures for the approval or monitoring of textbooks.

⁸ Structural couplings with other function systems can be reconstructed analogously to this. For instance, within the economic system, whose central code is the differentiation solvent/insolvent, textbooks are primarily of

interest as products sold – or not sold – on the market, leading to profit or loss, or to the reproduction of solvency or insolvency.

⁹ Cf. Luhmann, *Gesellschaft*, 1100f. and Luhmann, *Die Realität der Massenmedien* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996).

¹⁰ Cf. Luhmann, *Gesellschaft*, 1096ff.

¹¹ We can also situate here the role of textbooks in those school subjects considered as generating meaning and identity (history, geography, social studies and religious education), as, for instance, media of reciprocal self-description and description of the other at the level of different nation states, and in international research into and review of textbooks, which responds (historically) to this role and attempts and has attempted to bring its influence to bear.

¹² On the definition of such “textbook knowledge”, see also Thomas Höhne, *Schulbuchwissen. Umriss einer Wissens- und Medientheorie des Schulbuchs* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität 2003), and Gerd Stein, *Schulbuchwissen, Politik und Pädagogik. Untersuchungen. zu einer praxisbezogenen und theoriegeleiteten Schulbuchforschung* (Kastellaun: Henn, 1977).

¹³ Refer here to the extended discussion in Patricia Legris, “Les programmes d’histoire en France (1980-2010),” *Histoire de l’Education* 26 (2010).

¹⁴ Cf. Françoise Lantheaume, *L’enseignement de la colonisation et décolonisation de l’Algérie. État-nation, identité nationale, critique et valeurs. Essai de sociologie du curriculum* (PhD diss., University of Paris, 2002), 223ff.

¹⁵ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization. The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 271f.

¹⁷ See Marcus Otto, “Das Subjekt der Nation in der *condition postcoloniale*. Krisen der Repräsentation und der Widerstreit postkolonialer Erinnerungspolitik in Frankreich,” *Lendemains. Etudes comparées sur la France* 39, no. 144 (2011): 54-76, also Christoph Kalter and Martin Rempe, “La République décolonisée. Wie die Dekolonisierung Frankreich verändert hat,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 37 (2011): 157-197. Kalter and Rempe investigate the impact of decolonization in various areas of society; this piece complements this work by drawing upon school textbooks to pose the question of how decolonization has been given expression and (re)described since the 1960s in the context of a number of key societal discourses and their traces in the knowledge transmitted by textbooks.

¹⁸ The following passages are based primarily on our reading of history textbooks used in the final year of secondary education (*terminale*) and the corresponding curricula since the 1960s.

¹⁹ Cf. in this context the both programmatic and polemical essay by Lucien Fèbvre, “L’histoire, c’est la paix?” *Annales. Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 11, no. 1 (1956): 53ff.

²⁰ Cf. Lantheaume, *L’enseignement*, 225ff.

²¹ Highly apposite examples are *Le monde actuel. Histoire et civilisations, classes terminales* (Paris: Belin, 1963), 127 and 137; *Le monde contemporain. Histoire, Civilisations, Collection d’Histoire* (Paris: Bordas, 1962), 501f.; *Le monde contemporain, cours d’histoire, classes terminales* (Paris: Delagrave, 1962), 170.

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- ²² Cf. Belin 1963, 137f. and *Le monde contemporain* (Paris: Hachette, 1962), 126f.
- ²³ Cf. Delagrave 1962, V: “The book [...] conforms rigorously to the letter and the spirit of the new history curriculum in its classes. The intent of the curriculum program is to allow young people completing their schooling [...] to acquire some simple yet robust notion of the world in which they are going to live. This is why [the program] makes deliberate insistence on the contemporary nature of the major civilizations, by only presenting that of their past which sheds light on their present.”
- ²⁴ Cf. Lantheaume, *L’enseignement*, 141f.
- ²⁵ For detailed discussion of this, see Lantheaume, *L’enseignement*, 225-268.
- ²⁶ For an exemplary discussion, cf. Hachette 1962, 13ff. , and *Histoire contemporaine. Classes terminales* (Paris: Dunod, 1963), 389ff.
- ²⁷ Cf., in particular detail, Hachette 1962, 190, and *Le monde contemporain, classes terminales* (Paris: Hatier, 1962), 289ff.
- ²⁸ Cf. Hatier 1962, 305f.
- ²⁹ Claude Liauzu, *Race et civilisation. L’autre dans la culture occidentale* (Paris: Syros, 1992), 444.
- ³⁰ Cf. Eric Savarèse, *L’ordre colonial et sa légitimation en France métropolitaine. Oublier l’autre* (Paris: Harmattan, 1998), 137.
- ³¹ Cf. Jean Fourastié, *Les trente glorieuses ou la Révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1979).
- ³² Cf., among others, Christoph Kalter, *Die Entdeckung der Dritten Welt. Dekolonisierung und neue radikale Linke in Frankreich* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2011), 49ff.
- ³³ Cf. Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies. Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995).
- ³⁴ On *planification*, see, among others, Peter Wagner, *Sozialwissenschaften und Staat. Frankreich, Italien, Deutschland 1870-1980* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1990), 375.
- ³⁵ Cf., among others, *Histoire, terminales. Aujourd’hui le monde* (Paris: Delagrave, 1983), 64, and *Histoire, classe terminale. De 1939 à nos jours* (Paris: Hatier, 1983), 302.
- ³⁶ See, for example, *Histoire, terminales. Le monde de 1939 à nos jours* (Paris: Hachette, 1983), 170ff.
- ³⁷ Pertinent examples are Hachette 1983, 265ff., and *Histoire, classes terminales. De 1939 à nos jours* (Paris: Nathan, 1983), 268ff.
- ³⁸ Cf. Alfred Sauvy, “Trois mondes – une planète”, *L’Observateur*, 14 August 1952, 118, 14.
- ³⁹ Cf. Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Edition de Minuit, 1979).
- ⁴⁰ Cf. Patricia Legris, “‘On n’enseigne plus l’histoire à nos enfants!’ Retour sur la polémique de l’enseignement de l’histoire en France au tournant des années 1970-1980,” in *Les Figures de l’Etat éducateur*, Julien Barroche, Nathalie LeBouedec, and Xavier Pons (eds), (Paris: Harmattan, 2008), 197-224.
- ⁴¹ See Gérard Noiriel, *Sur la “crise“ de l’histoire* (Paris: Belin, 1996).
- ⁴² See, for example, Pascal Bruckner: *Le sanglot de l’homme blanc. Tiers Monde, culpabilité et haine de soi* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1983).
- ⁴³ Cf. *Colloque national sur l’histoire et son enseignement. 19-20-21 Janvier 1984* (Montpellier, Paris: Centre National de Documentation Pédagogiques, 1984).

⁴⁴ Cf. Laurence de Cock et al (eds), *La fabrique scolaire de l'histoire. Illusions et désillusions du roman national* (Marseille: Agone, 2009).

⁴⁵ Cf., for example, *Histoire, classe terminale. Le monde actuel* (Paris: Hatier, 1989), 108f., 204f., and *Histoire, terminales* (Paris: Nathan, 1989), 79, 310f.

⁴⁶ Examples are *Histoire, terminale* (Paris: Hatier, 1993), 260; *Histoire, terminales* (Paris: Nathan, 1991), 364f., and *Histoire, terminales*, Paris: Bordas 1989, 431.

⁴⁷ Cf., for example, Bordas 1989, 428ff.; Hatier 1989, 248ff; *Histoire, terminale* (Paris: Hatier, 1993, 265ff.; *Histoire, de 1945 à nos jours, classes de terminales* (Paris: Hachette, 1992), 404ff.

⁴⁸ Examples are *Histoire, terminales. Le monde contemporain de 1945 à nos jours* (Paris: Magnard, 2008), 124f., and *Histoire, terminales* (Paris: Bréal, 2004), 370f.

⁴⁹ Claude Liauzu, "L'histoire idéologique entre révisionnisme 'nostalgérique' et schématismes culpabilisants," *Colloque pour une histoire critique et citoyenne. Le cas de l'histoire franco-algérienne*, 20-22 juin 2006, Lyon, ENS LSH, 2007, http://w3.ens-lsh.fr/colloques/france-algerie/communication.php3?id_article=209 (accessed 27 April 2012).

⁵⁰ In this context, see also Vincent Geisser, "L'intégration républicaine, Réflexion sur une problématique post-coloniale," in *Culture post-coloniale 1961-2006. Traces et mémoires coloniales en France*, eds Pascal Blanchard and Nicolas Bancel (Paris: Edition Autrement, 2006), 145-164.

⁵¹ Christoph Kalter, *Die Entdeckung der Dritten Welt. Dekolonisierung und neue radikale Linke in Frankreich* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2011), 65ff.

⁵² An exemplary event in this context was the conference entitled *Mémoire et enseignement de la guerre d'Algérie. Actes du colloque, 13-14 mars 1992* (Paris: La Ligue, 1993).

⁵³ Cf., among others, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Les enjeux politiques de l'histoire coloniale* (Paris: Agone, 2009); Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, *Les guerres de mémoires. La France et son histoire. Enjeux politiques, controverses historiques, stratégies médiatiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), and Claude Liauzu and Gilles Manceron (eds), *La colonisation, la loi et l'histoire* (Paris: Editions Syllepse, 2006).

⁵⁴ There is a detailed discussion in Johann Michel, *Gouverner les mémoires. Les politiques mémorielles en France* (Paris: PUF, 2010).

⁵⁵ Cf. also Claude Liauzu and Gilles Manceron (eds), *La colonisation, la loi et l'histoire* (Paris: Editions Syllepse, 2006).

⁵⁶ *Journal officiel du 24th Februaury* (Paris, 2005), cited in Liauzu and Manceron, *Colonisation*, 166.

⁵⁷ In this context, see Marcus Otto, "Das Subjekt der Nation in der *condition postcoloniale*. Krisen der Repräsentation und der Widerstreit postkolonialer Erinnerungspolitik in Frankreich", *Lendemains. Etudes comparées sur la France*, 39, no. 144 (2011), 54-76.

⁵⁸ Cf. Patricia Legris, "Les programmes scolaires d'histoire dans l'enseignement secondaire," in *La fabrique scolaire de l'histoire. Illusions et désillusions du roman national*, eds Laurence de Cock and Emmanuel Picard (Marseille: Agone, 2009), 28-56.

⁵⁹ Cf. also Corinne Bonafoux, Laurence de Cock, and Benoît Falaize, *Mémoires et histoire à l'école de la République. Quels enjeux?* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2007).

The End of Empire: Colonial Heritage and the Politics of Memory in Britain

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Abstract • Taking as its starting point the current debate over the significance of history in the National Curriculum for England, this article examines the place of the country’s colonial past in its national culture of memory. In the context of debates about educational policy and the politics of memory concerning Britain’s colonial heritage, the author focuses on the transmission and interpretation of this heritage via school history textbooks, which play a key role in the politics of memory. This medium offers insight into transformations of the country’s colonial experience which have taken place since the end of the British Empire. School textbooks do not create and establish these transformations in isolation from other arenas of discourse about the culture of memory by reinventing the nation. Instead, they reflect, as part of the national culture of memory, the uncertainties and insecurities emerging from the end of empire and the decolonization of the British nation’s historical narrative.

Keywords • colonialism, education, England, empire, memory politics, history, history curriculum, school history textbooks

Asked to name the favorite book of his school days, Britain’s prime minister David Cameron responded by mentioning the popular history book *Our Island Story. A History of Britain for Boys and Girls, from the Romans to Queen Victoria* by Henrietta Elizabeth Marshall, published in 1905 and reprinted time and again until well into the 1960s.¹ Not only did this book shape the encounter with history experienced by generations of Britain’s schoolchildren, it spread beyond Britain’s borders by finding its way into the teaching of English as a foreign language, and thus helped to influence other nations’ view of the Empire.² To mark the hundredth anniversary of its initial publication, the book was reissued and a copy donated to all UK primary schools with the support of conservative daily newspapers and a think tank. *Our Island Story* represents an embodiment of childhood memories and unsullied nostalgia for the days of empire; it is a synecdoche for traditional methods of teaching history, centering on historical dates and deeds and perpetuating the narratives of “splendid isolation” and European exceptionalism.

In the context of the current debate about the future direction of the teaching of history in UK schools, the prime minister's choice set the scene for a move toward a conception of history whose purpose would be to transmit an unambiguous image of the British Empire, an image that fosters and promotes a sense of identity. The UK Department for Education plans to commence the academic year 2014 with the launch of a revised version of the National Curriculum, which was initially introduced in 1988 with the Education Act and overhauled in 1995 and 1999.³ The Secretary of State for Education intends to ensure that the new curriculum affords greater significance to the teaching of history in general; above all, however, its purpose is to restore importance to traditional elements of history education and present the history of Britain as a self-confident national narrative. This intention in particular is not uncontroversial, emerging as it does from a conflict between opposing ideas of the relationship between nation and empire. Is the Empire a constituent component of Britain's national history, with a formative influence on the culture and identity of the domestic space, or is the task of history teaching to figure the nation as a territorially and culturally homogeneous community which, while its significance on the global political stage may stem from the Empire, is not in its essence impacted by it? The rise of "new imperial history" heightened this controversy, which has left its mark on both the politics of memory and educational policy.

Bearing this in mind, I take the debate surrounding the National Curriculum as the starting point from which to demonstrate the modalities in which Britain's colonial past is discussed in the arena of the politics of memory and remembered in school textbooks.⁴ I will begin by focusing on the debate about Britain's colonial heritage in educational policy and the politics of memory, then examine the transmission and interpretation of this heritage in school textbooks with reference to the transformation undergone by the historiography of the British Empire since the 1980s. The article aims to demonstrate the manner in which the suppression of and engagement with the colonial experience filters through into school textbooks. I argue that, while textbooks may be able to make visible the insecurities surrounding the interpretation of national history that arose from the end of empire, they are not able to simply eliminate these insecurities by providing a new master narrative. The epistemic authority which is frequently assigned to school history books does not confer upon them the power to reinvent the nation independently of other arenas of discourse. Instead, school textbooks are a part of and implicated in the controversies surrounding the interpretation of Britain's colonial past that have unfolded in the contexts of the nation's culture of memory and its memory politics; as such, they not only register and reflect changes in schemata of interpretation, but may also contribute to the decolonialization of the nation's history.

Controversies in Educational and Historical Policy Concerning Britain's Colonial Legacy

A central focus of controversy in educational policy in present-day Britain is the question as to how much significance should be ascribed to history, and specifically to the nation's imperial heritage, in schools.⁵ In its planned revision of the National Curriculum, the UK Department for Education, in Conservative hands under Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Education of the coalition government, will seek to boost the proportion of national history taught in history lessons. This government is therefore retreating from a case study approach to teaching and returning to a greater sense of chronology and the creation of a framework in which national identity can be formed. The plans, which critics have referred to as a throwback to the "kings and queens approach,"⁶ contrast with the hitherto liberal thrust of the National Curriculum, which introduced history as a compulsory subject for pupils up to the age of fourteen (Key Stages 1-3) relatively late (in European terms) with the Education Act of 1988, and which avoided making stringent stipulations on the content of the teaching.⁷ The few topics which must be taught include the slave trade, the two world wars, the Holocaust and decolonization.

The Historical Association, in which teachers of history seek to promote and further the study and teaching of the subject, hopes that the new National Curriculum will strengthen history education in general. History is currently not compulsory from Key Stage 4 onwards, that is, for pupils aged fourteen to eighteen. Teachers of history perceive a marginalization of the subject within schools insofar as, increasingly frequently, non-specialist teachers are called upon to teach the subject, while the number of history lessons pupils take each week is falling, with history and citizenship classes rolled into one.⁸ They have called for history to be given a higher value in schools and to be included in the core curriculum for at least two further years, that is, to pupils up to the age of sixteen. Presently, only thirty percent of pupils aged fourteen to sixteen attend history lessons; the Historical Association is concerned that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in particular may have insufficient access to history teaching due to the increasing tendency of secondary schooling to focus on vocational skills. If this concern is founded, history may be in jeopardy of evolving into a subject that is taken primarily by pupils who intend to go to university. The subject is already more prevalent at today's (largely selective) grammar schools than at (often non-selective) academies.⁹ For the majority of pupils, the danger is that history may dwindle in importance.

The UK government is attempting to counter this development by planning to both extend the reach of history as a subject in schools and overhaul the content of the history curriculum. To this end, it has appointed a committee of renowned historians, headed by Simon Schama, to

prepare recommendations on the future direction of the history curriculum. Schama, who advocates a narrative approach to history, centered on the nation, holds that the mission of history teaching is to raise pupils' awareness of their nation's heritage and strengthen national identity.¹⁰ Fellow historians such as Richard Evans criticize his views about the history curriculum as essentially reverting to a long-past "Whig" interpretation of history.¹¹ Two further members of the committee are Niall Ferguson and David Cannadine. In 2003, the publication of Ferguson's account of the history of empire had triggered a major debate on how we are to perceive British imperialism; he followed it up in 2011 by presenting the Empire as a success story and defending the superiority of Western civilization in a book targeted specifically at young people.¹² Evans has suggested that Gove, Schama, Ferguson and other proponents of a nationally focused concept of history equate history with memory; arguing against this perception of history, he suggests that, rather than constructing national myths with a view to forging a canonical identity, the task of history is to challenge such myths.¹³

In the same critical vein, a review written by Bernard Porter notes with irony that Ferguson's book *Civilization* "furnishes an almost perfect illustration of why children need to be taught analytical skills, more than 'big stories' or facts."¹⁴ Porter opposes the placing of history in the service of a narrow, restricted concept of national identity and the reduction of the history curriculum to a vehicle for the transmission of a sense of Britishness. In his view, this would run the risk of presenting British history as a teleological success story and block out the substantially more crucial question as to what such a sense of British identity might consist in and whether it would include, for instance, migrants to the country. David Cannadine has been the only member of the government-appointed committee to attempt to historicize the current controversy and locate it in an ongoing series of debates, within educational policy circles, about the aims and content of history teaching. He concludes from his analysis that history should become a compulsory subject in schools up to the age of sixteen, but that the curriculum should remain unaltered.¹⁵ Many educationalists and history teachers concur; while they welcome the plans to strengthen the position of history teaching in the curriculum, they reject the notion of a curriculum which would present pupils with a closed canon of historical dates and facts which aim to reinforce a sense of common national identity.¹⁶

The polarization of views on the task of history teaching in schools increases in direct proportion to changes in the ethnic makeup of the pupil population. Many argue that the continuously rising heterogeneity of school classes only increases the urgency of the need for a normative national narrative which would, they believe, promote the integration of a range of ethnicities, strengthen social cohesion and foster a collective identity – especially in light of the

fact that postcolonial migration has given rise to classrooms that are shared by children with extremely diverse ethnic and national origins, all of whom have their own view of British national identity.¹⁷ They are quite literally the Empire's legacy. These multiethnic classrooms, however, simultaneously embody the dilemma in which the former Empire finds itself. An emphatically self-confident idea of national history which would affirm and build upon the imperial colonial past is no longer acceptable in light of the inevitable and inescapable repercussions it would generate. A view of history which displayed its discontinuities and ruptures and reflected the burden of Britain's colonial past would seem equally untenable, for it would fail to provide reassurance and stabilization of national identity in the face of the complexities of the postcolonial era.

The intensity of the controversy surrounding the reform of the history curriculum arises in part from its intimate connection to questions of national identity and cultures of national memory, both of which are facing increasing challenges from the postcolonial heterogeneity of British society. As early as the 1960s, Britain experienced inner-city riots stemming from racial discrimination perceived by a rising generation of black Britons – an experience shared by France since the 1980s, with repeated unrest in its suburbs. Such conflicts called into question the time-honored image of a mission, crowned with success, to civilize foreign lands, in the very arena in which that image was supposed to exercise its unifying power. Further cracks appeared in this self-image as revelations emerged about how much blood had been spilt during the handover of colonial power to the previously subject peoples; the brutality applied in response to the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya (1952-60) is a notorious example of this. At the dawn of the new millennium, accounts of human rights abuses such as torture, incarceration of rebels in prison camps and extrajudicial killings shook the previously dominant image of the end of empire to its core.¹⁸ Certainly in the public arena, decolonization had largely been perceived as Britain's turning away by choice from its imperial past, in contrast to France, which had attempted to retain its colonies by waging war.¹⁹

In 2007, events marking the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade provided an opportunity for the country's dominant culture of memory to face up to the Empire's legacy and overcome collective amnesia. Indeed, Britain's process of coming to terms with slavery provided an arena for public discourse to cautiously approach the traumatic side of empire. The abolition of the slave trade is largely amenable to inclusion in the Empire's success story, such that this chapter in the Empire's history is less fraught with conflict than other aspects of Britain's colonial past. When communicating these difficult issues to their pupils, teachers find

support in teaching materials which present the history of slavery as a sensitive subject, in line with the treatment of the Holocaust.²⁰

New museums, such as the International Slavery Museum which opened in Liverpool in 2007, have joined the movement to engage with the country's legacy of slavery and colonial rule. In 2003, six museums formed the Understanding Slavery Initiative and developed a national education and teaching resource project which engages with the issues from a decidedly global perspective: "The history of transatlantic slavery does not belong to any one cultural group, or nation. It is a global history whose legacy can be seen and felt in various areas of today's societies"²¹ This approach emphasizes the central place of the experience of slavery and colonialism in metropolitan societies and locates the roots of social problems experienced today in these societies' colonial past. It nevertheless stops short of claiming a specifically national responsibility for the collective remembrance of slavery.

Thus British policy on education and on the remembrance of sensitive phases of the past finds itself increasingly confronted with the vexed question as to how to handle a legacy which can no longer be swept under the carpet. The nation cannot sustain a post-imperial amnesia which screens out the consequences of colonial rule; the heritage of empire is unavoidably present in Britain's metropolitan space. Since the 1980s, historians have dealt with these issues in the context of their reassessment of colonial history. The titles of works such as *At Home with the Empire* or *When Empire Hits Home* are indicative of the extent to which research in this area has shifted its focus from presenting the Empire in isolation to examining the impact of the colonies on the domestic space, combining this scrutiny with a call to historians and the nation to become accustomed to living with an awareness of this impact.²² This historiography demonstrates how closely interlaced the metropolitan center is with the periphery, locating empire with both its positive and negative aspects as a constituent part of the nation's history. It was in this spirit that David Cameron, on the occasion of a visit to Pakistan in 2011, became the first British leader to cautiously accept a degree of responsibility for the country's colonial legacy. "As with so many of the problems of the world," he claimed, "we are responsible for their creation in the first place."²³

The Memory of Colonialism as Reflected in School Textbooks

We now turn to the question of how this controversy about educational policy and memory politics concerning Britain's colonial heritage finds itself reflected in school history textbooks,

which are a unique point of interaction between educational policy and the politics of memory.²⁴ We will approach this question via the analysis of two selected examples of history books geared towards pupils at the end of their secondary education. Our reading of a textbook from 1981, published several years prior to the 1988 National Curriculum, and a book published in 2006 and in current use, reveal the changes in postcolonial cultures of memory during this period.²⁵

The imagery found in the 1981 textbook consists of maps showing Britain's presence overseas, images of urbanization, railroads, research expeditions and the signing of treaties.²⁶ The images and maps draw the reader's attention to the Empire's geographical extent²⁷ and to its allegedly positive impact and achievements in urban and infrastructure development, science and law. The idea of empire transmitted by this imagery is at first glance balanced and matter-of-fact; it rejects recourse to imagery featuring the great figures of Britain's colonial history, such as the imperialist Cecil Rhodes or the abolitionist William Wilberforce, and to any hint of a triumphalist national self-presentation.

This notwithstanding, the images emphatically illustrate the fact that the Empire was founded on a passionate belief in European modernity and the European mission to civilize. Their representation of empire is that of a success story, excluding colonial violence, racism and the waging of war. The textbook's imagery transmits an uncomplicated, untroubled concept of empire. Its text, by contrast, comments on colonial imbalances of power, resistance to colonialism, the exploitation of indigenous peoples as labor and rivalry among colonial powers. Nevertheless, the textbook makes very little connection between these matters and the nation's power to act, preferring instead to discuss Leopold II's exploitation of the "Independent State of Congo": "King Leopold II of Belgium created a private empire in the Congo Basin which he was forced to hand over to the Belgian parliament after revelations of appalling treatment of native Africans on his rubber plantations."²⁸ This book depicts objectives pursued by Britain as strategic goals formulated in response to European challenges; Britain, the text tells us, needed to protect its interests in Egypt in order to keep the Suez Canal out of danger in 1867, while Britain's involvement in colonial expansion was a response to the ambitions of its European rivals to obtain commodities, sales markets and "fighting men."²⁹ In this view, it was not the desire for land and power, but rather a strategic long view and the wish to protect free trade which motivated British colonial policy: "British governments in the 1860s and 1870s showed no desire whatever to occupy land in Africa for its own sake."³⁰

Conversely, the textbook does emphasize Britain's active role in promoting the abolition of the slave trade. The text states that Livingstone, as a missionary and medic, publicized "the continuing horror of the slave trade in the heart of Africa,"³¹ listing the London Missionary

Society, the Colonial Office and finally the 1833 Emancipation Act as key forces in this development and thus framing the abolition of slavery as a success of empire.

Overall, the textbook's narrative and iconography present a picture of a benevolent, paternalistic, civilizing empire – “the ruling power responsible for millions of native Africans, hitherto organized in numerous tribal kingdoms.”³² As we have seen, the images used in the book place one-sided emphasis on the achievements of modern European civilization, while the text, although it does take the darker side of colonialism into account, blames them on rival European colonial powers, such as (in the example cited) Belgium, or figures them as unavoidable corollaries of expansion. In this view, the use of colonial troops in the First World War, commanded by the metropolitan power, appears not as a function of colonial exploitation, but as effectively the reverse, a comprehensive demonstration of loyalty to the Empire by its colonial subjects. “The Crown was also an admirable focus of the loyalty of the 420 million people (some 350 million of them coloured) of the British Empire, which was virtually at its greatest extent in 1914.”³³

This idea of empire rests on and is sustained by a view of history which distinguishes fundamentally between national and imperial history. It narrates the history of Britain chronologically, focusing on the nation and structuring its discussion in accordance with the British prime ministers' terms of office. The textbook approaches the global dimension of British history, its colonial or imperial history, as a separate entity, in a section dedicated to the history of British foreign policy and diplomacy encompassing the book's last three chapters – as an appendix, so to speak, or a territorial excursus from the national history narrated in the remainder of the work. This treatment implicitly defines the history of empire as a history apart; not a constituent component of national history, but rather a collection of developments and events occurring overseas, of marginal significance to the domestic, metropolitan center of power.

This approach to Britain's colonial history is characteristic of history textbooks and teaching in general until the advent of the 1988 National Curriculum and beyond. The A Level examinations, which had until that point consisted of two separate papers in British and European history, are among the evidence embodying the ubiquity of this concept of history. Well into the 1980s, the historiography of British colonialism and the Empire likewise enacted this separation, treating the history of the colonies as one which is largely independent of “domestic” history. In its differentiation between “the British overseas” and “the British at home”, the textbook is able to both present the Empire as a great and highly significant entity and pursue a narrative of national history that remains largely unbroken by the revolution that was decolonization. Its juxtaposition of British and imperial history as two effectively unconnected entities releases it

from the necessity of engaging in any depth with the consequences of the nation's colonial past. In this way, the division dominating the textbook's structure reflects the national "imperial amnesia" we have identified,³⁴ a memory lapse fostering an image of a freely chosen, peaceful relinquishing of the Empire – an image from which the oppressive nature of colonialism was excised.

Another reason for the retention in textbooks of an affirmative, occasionally nostalgic idea of empire was the fact that history as an academic discipline initially showed little interest in decolonization and the colonial past. Furthermore, the historiography of empire was suspected of having promoted the interests of colonialism or being in the hands of former colonial officials intent on promulgating apologia.³⁵ British research on contemporary history, the cradle of the 1970s Schools History Project³⁶ which pressed for a new generation of history books, and the field of postcolonial studies, which emerged soon thereafter,³⁷ also helped to transcend the "traditional distinction between 'empire' and the 'home front' in British historiography."³⁸ Ethnic heterogeneity in the nation's metropolitan centers and the increasing numbers of migrants from former colonies challenged the closed, nationally focused presentation of empire.

It is in this context that textbooks in current use came into being, among them the 2006 publication to be discussed here.³⁹ The textbook, which emerged from the Schools History Project, deals with British history from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the First World War, closely interlacing the history of imperialism in its heyday with the development of British domestic and foreign policy. In contrast to the 1981 textbook, the 2006 publication places imperial history at the center rather than appending it to the main historical presentation. By identifying empire as a constituent part of British history and discussing it in the context of the domestic political situation, the more recent book's structure both does justice to a chronological approach and marks a shift in the interpretation of the issues. The book examines the impact of the Empire on British politics and society, placing particular emphasis on the imperial imagery which embodied and propagated colonialism in the British domestic environment. Its analysis of newspapers and magazines, advertising and books for children and young people, and the performances given in theaters and music halls, highlights the extent to which the Empire's colonial periphery defined domestic cultural and social life at its heart. "Public schools, which taught upper- and middle-class boys, emphasized how good team games were for physical fitness and character training – just the qualities needed to build the empire. Cadet corps and rifle clubs gave pupils military training, and there were plenty of school visits by explorers and old boys who had distinguished themselves in the empire."⁴⁰

Textbooks currently in use take account to a greater degree than their predecessors of the experience of ethnically diverse societies by making explicit the connection between decolonization and migration. For instance, a history book (published in 2011) about history of the twentieth century to the present day uses its chapter “Moving and Travelling” to make a connection between the end of British rule in India and the streams of refugees to which it gave rise. The same chapter also investigates long-term changes in British society whose origins lay in postcolonial immigration after the end of the Second World War or the independence of the former African colonies in the 1960s.⁴¹ The book chooses this form of presentation, which both reveals and reflects the interconnectedness and interdependence of the events it discusses, over the inclusion of a separate chapter on colonialism or decolonization. In a similar manner, other history books also seek new ways of explaining European colonialism to pupils with non-European backgrounds and relating current issues in society more closely to the colonial past.⁴²

Another feature characteristic of newer history textbooks is their avoidance of general chronological presentations of periods in history⁴³; they prefer to focus on specific themes which throw issues in British history into relief. The prevalence of this approach may be attributed to the current history curriculum, which has been criticized as “fragmentary” and “presentist.”⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it also reveals a pragmatic mode of engagement with history focusing on problematic issues. Questions such as “Was Britain involved in the slave trade?” and “Should Britain make up for its role in slavery?”⁴⁵ show that these textbooks indeed address burning issues. The “imperial amnesia” of the 1980s has been replaced by an “imperial revival”, a growth in interest among historiographers in colonial history, which in some cases has seen the “imperial amnesia” completely reversed, culminating in the discovery of an “omnipresence of colonies in national life.”⁴⁶ The new generation of school history textbooks certainly engages explicitly with Britain’s colonial past, as the following citation illustrates.

British imperialism is still a live issue today in many parts of Africa and Asia and in Britain itself. British historians cannot be neutral about it. It arouses pride, shame, anxieties about racism or nostalgia for past greatness depending on a person's viewpoint. Left- and right-wing approaches differ markedly, and we view popular imperialism more emotionally than most history topics.⁴⁷

This view of history has ceased regarding nation and empire as separate entities; it lays bare the relationship between the metropolitan centers and the periphery, enabling it to engage critically with the history of the colonies as an integral part of national history.

The End of Empire

The history textbooks cited above embody key modalities of British postcolonial memory. In the thirty-year space of time we have analyzed here, between the early 1980s and the first decade of the new millennium, British society's interaction with its colonial legacy has seen clear change. This notwithstanding, the cultural shift from "imperial amnesia" to "imperial revival" is by no means complete, and has not reached the same stage in every field; it is doubtless further advanced in academic historiography than in public memory or in educational policy or school textbooks. Of course, the repression or glossing over of the colonial past is not an exclusively British phenomenon, but rather a European one. Those states whose exercise of colonial rule was brief or which did not hold the formal status of a colonial power exhibit similar patterns of interaction with their colonial past. Switzerland, for example, regards itself as located, "to this day, largely outside colonial events", although more recent research has uncovered the diverse ways in which Switzerland was implicated in colonial attitudes and actions.⁴⁸

Overall, school history textbooks currently in use do not speak with one voice on these issues. The representation given by a thematic textbook about the history of empire varies from that appearing in a general history of Britain or an overview of European history. When looking even at comparable depictions, it becomes apparent how difficult it is to define the significance of empire in Britain's national history in the face of a clash of expectations between the need for a unifying, canonical, coherent narrative whose chronological nature provides orientation in an increasingly heterogeneous society, and the urgent call for a history which recognizes empire as an integral part of Britain's national history and which does not edit out its difficult past. This dilemma is played out within school history textbooks. Where they juxtapose or overlap colonial and postcolonial depictions and interpretations of empire, they serve to reflect the traumatic process of a nation's struggle to develop a postcolonial self-image. They also foster the process of decolonization where they take up controversies underway in other fields and contribute towards the debate with their own impetus.

Other European states are also the scene of incipient analogous controversies on colonialism's legacy. European societies are increasingly evolving into societies of immigration and many of the migrants arriving in Europe come from former colonies. These societies are therefore required to face up to the complexity of their history and accept their colonial past as an ineradicable part of their national narrative.⁴⁹ The debates surrounding cultures of memory which arise from such a critical stage in a nation's development are heavily influenced by conflicting definitions of collective memory. This struggle is revealed and reflected in textbooks. History

textbooks from Britain and other countries continue to present colonialism in discrete national contexts,⁵⁰ as if it had played out in each nation in isolated fashion, rather than being an overarching European phenomenon. The thesis that colonialism was a transnational venture which accordingly may only be understood properly by shedding light on transnational entanglements and interconnections is almost completely absent from British school textbooks to date. It is for this reason that, rather than conceiving of it as a highly connected part of a common European heritage, British colonialism is presented as a national issue and depicted as a national task which calls upon society to recognize, accept and come to terms with the colonial past.⁵¹ This notwithstanding, it is a process of coming to terms with the past that will ultimately resist any educational policy shortcuts which reissue schoolbooks from past pedagogical ages such as *Our Island Story* in a spirit which is nostalgic at best.

¹ Henrietta Elizabeth Marshall, *Our Island Story, a History of Britain for Boys and Girls from the Romans to Queen Victoria* (Cranbrook: Galore Park, [1905], 2005).

² Edition for use in German schools. Franz Vieth (ed.), *Our Island Story by Marshall. Mit Anmerkungen zum Schulgebrauch* (Bielefeld, Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1925).

³ The new history curriculum came into force at the beginning of the 1991 academic year. See also “National Curriculum Working Group Final Report,” in *Teaching History*, ed. H. Bourdillon (London: Routledge, 1995), 27-40 and Peter Lee, “Historical knowledge and the National Curriculum,” in *Teaching History*, ed. H. Bourdillon, 41-48.

⁴ Other European countries are experiencing similar debates on the significance of colonialism in national cultures of memory and in school textbooks; the debate is particularly intense in France. See Corinne Bonafoux, Laurence de Cock Pierrepont, and Benoît Falaize, *Mémoires et Histoire à l'École de la République. Quels enjeux?* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2007); Benoît Falaize and Françoise Lantheaume, “Entre Pacification et Reconnaissance. Les Manuels Scolaires et la Concurrence des Mémoires,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires. La France et son Histoire*, eds Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), 177-186; Laurence de Cock (ed.), *La Fabrique Scolaire de l'Histoire. Illusions et Désillusions du Roman National* (Marseille: Agone, 2009); Nicole Tutiaux-Guillon, “Mémoires et Histoire Scolaire en France. Quelques Interrogations Didactiques,” *Revue Française de Pédagogie* 165 (2008): 31-42. See also the article by Marcus Otto in this publication. A European comparison can be found in the special issue, entitled “Koloniale Vergangenheiten in europäischen Schulbüchern,” of *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 30 (2008); Tom Verschaffel and Kaat Wils, “History Education and the Claims of Society. A Historical Approach,” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 4, no. 1 (2012): 1-6;..

⁵ Terry Haydn, “‘Longing for the Past’. Politicians and the History Curriculum in English Schools, 1988-2010,” *Journal for Educational Media, Memory, and Education* 4, no. 1 (2012): 7-25.

⁶ David Sylvester used the term “great tradition” to refer to the once-established tendency, which in his view had predominated until the mid-1980s, to teach the history of political events and interactions; David Sylvester, “Change and Continuity in History Teaching 1900-93,” in *Teaching History*, ed. Hilary Bourdillon (London: Routledge, 1994), 9-23. Cf. Catherine McGlynn, Andrew Mycock, and James W. McAuley (eds), *Britishness, Identity, and Citizenship. The View from Abroad* (Bern: Lang, 2011) about the debate surrounding the role of history teaching in Britain and elsewhere. For a view of the situation in the Netherlands, see Maria Grever and Siep Stuurman (eds), *Beyond the Canon. History for the Twenty-first Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Linda Symcox and Arie Wilschut (eds), *National History Standards. The Problem of the Canon and the Future of Teaching History* (Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2009).

⁷ History had originally been designated as a compulsory subject for pupils to the age of sixteen. The first revision of the National Curriculum, which took place in 1995, lowered the age to which history was compulsory to fourteen, which meant that the subject was offered either as an alternative option to geography or as part of a single subject encompassing elements of history and geography, a move designed to reduce the amount of material covered overall. John Slater, *Teaching History in the New Europe* (London: Cassell, 1995), 81-83. Richard Aldrich (ed.), *History in the National Curriculum* (London: Kogan Page, 1991). Richard Aldrich, “A Curriculum for the Nation,” in *Lessons from History of Education. The Selected Works of Richard Aldrich* (London: Kogan Page, 2006), 129-142.

⁸ Katherine Burn and Richard Harris, “Historical Association Survey of History in English Secondary Schools 2011,” http://www.history.org.uk/news/news_1290.html (accessed 19 September 2012). 2010 report http://www.history.org.uk/resources/secondary_resource_3754_8.html (accessed 19 September 2012).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Simon Schama, “My Vision for History in Schools,” *The Guardian*, 9 November 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/nov/09/future-history-schools> (accessed 19 September 2012).

¹¹ Richard J. Evans, “The Wonderfulness of Us. The Tory Interpretation of History,” *London Review of Books* 33, no. 6, 17 March 2011, <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v33/n06/richard-j-evans/the-wonderfulness-of-us> (accessed 19 September 2012). The *LRB* was also the forum for a broad debate conducted via letters from readers, in which well-known historians as well as teachers and those engaged in curriculum development participated. See also contributions on “History, the Nation and the Schools,” *History Workshop Online* 19 March 2011, <http://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/history-the-nation-and-the-schools> (accessed 19 September 2012).

¹² Niall Ferguson, *Empire. How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Lane 2003). On the book’s reception, see J. E. Wilson, “Niall Ferguson’s Imperial Passion,” *History Workshop Journal* 56 (2003): 175-183. Niall Ferguson, *Civilization. The West and the Rest* (London: Lane 2011). On the book’s reception in Germany, see the review by Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Zeit*, 12 January 2012, <http://www.zeit.de/2012/03/L-P-Ferguson> (accessed 19 September 2012), and Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike Hirschhausen, “‘New Imperialism’ oder ‘Liberal Empire’? Niall Fergusons Empire-Apologiek im Zeichen der ‘Anglobalization’,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary*

History, Online-Ausgabe 3 (2006), <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/site/40208589/default.aspx> (accessed 19 September 2012).

¹³ “Gove, Shama and their allies are confusing history with memory.” Evans, “The Wonderfulness of Us”, 12.

¹⁴ Bernard Porter, “Civilization. The West and the Rest by Niall Ferguson – Review,” *The Guardian*, 25 March 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/mar/25/civilization-west-rest-niall-ferguson-review> (accessed 19 September 2012).

¹⁵ David Cannadine, Jenny Keating, and Nicola Sheldon (eds), *The Right Kind of History. Teaching the Past in Twentieth-century England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

¹⁶ Stakeholders participating in the debate included professional organizations such as the Historical Association, conservative think tanks such as Better History and Civitas, history educationalists and those engaged in educational policy and practice, representing a wide range of approaches. See Haydn, “Politicians and the History Curriculum,” and Ian Davies (ed.), *Debates in History Teaching* (London: Routledge, 2011).

¹⁷ A general view of the issues, including further reading, can be found in Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012); Wendy Webster, “The Empire Comes Home. Commonwealth Migration to Britain,” in *Britain’s Experience of Empire in the Twentieth Century*, ed. A. Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 122-160; Krishan Kumar, “Empire, Nation, and National Identities,” *ibid.*, 298-329; special issue about “National Identities in Retrospect,” *National Identities* 13, no. 4 (2011); Graham MacPhee and Prem Poddar, eds., *Empire and After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective* (New York: Berghahn, 2010); Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, Repr. 2011).

¹⁸ David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged. Britain’s Dirty War in Kenya and the End of the Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005); Caroline Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005). Raphaëlle Branche, *La Torture et l’Armée pendant la Guerre d’Algérie, 1954-1962* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), had an analogous impact in France.

¹⁹ The term “decolonization” is examined in Martin Thomas, Bob Moore, and L. Butler, *Crises of Empire. Decolonization and Europe’s Imperial States, 1918-1975* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 1-14. A comparative look at the approach taken by historians in Britain and France to the colonial past is given in Anne Friedrichs, *Das Empire als Aufgabe des Historikers: Historiographie in imperialen Nationalstaaten. Großbritannien und Frankreich 1919-1968* (Leipzig: Campus, 2010); Richard Aldrich and Stuart Ward, “Ends of Empire: Decolonizing the Nation in British and French Historiography,” in *Nationalizing the Past. Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, ed. S. Berger and C. Lorenz (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 259-281. Gerhard Altmann, *Abschied vom Empire. Die innere Dekolonisierung Großbritanniens 1945-1985* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005).

²⁰ TEACH. *A Report from The Historical Association on the Challenges and Opportunity for Teaching Emotive and Controversial History* 3-19 [2007], <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/pestalozzi/Source/Documentation/Workshops2011/Outcomes/CoE%202011%200228-0304%20UK13.pdf> (accessed 19 September 2012).

²¹ <http://www.understandingslavery.com> (accessed 19 September 2012). See also Nikki Spalding, “Learning to Remember Slavery. School Field Trips and the Representation of Difficult Histories in English Museums”, *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 3, no. 2 (2011): 155-172.

²² Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Catherine Hall (ed.), *Cultures of Empire. Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. A Reader* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Stuart Ward (ed.), *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001). Thompson, *Britain’s Experience of Empire*.

²³ “Is Britain to Blame for Many of the World’s Problems?” *BBC News Magazine* 7 April 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-12992540> (accessed 19 September 2012).

²⁴ William Marsden, *The School Textbook. Geography, History, and Social Studies* (London: Woburn Press, 2001). Jason Nicholls (ed.), *School History Textbooks Across Cultures. International Debates and Perspectives* (Oxford: Symposium Books, 2006).

²⁵ This sample is based on a larger project which examines English, French and German history textbooks for secondary education from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present day.

²⁶ Charles Peter Hill and John Charles Wright, *British History, 1815-1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981).

²⁷ Proponents of the spatial turn in academic history have highlighted the significance of maps, the spatial nature of colonial power and the interconnectedness of metropolitan and colonial spaces. See Robin Butlin, *Geographies of Empire. European Empires and Colonies c. 1880-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); James R. Akermann (ed.), *The Imperial Map. Cartography and the Mastery of Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

2009); John Brian Harley, *The New Nature of Maps. Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

²⁸ Hill and Wright, *British History*, 291.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 290.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 289.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 289.

³² *Ibid.*, 289.

³³ *Ibid.*, 297.

³⁴ Aldrich and Ward, "Ends of Empire," 269.

³⁵ Elisabeth Büttner, "Setting the Record Straight. Imperial History in Postcolonial British Public Culture," in *Hybrid Cultures – Nervous States. Britain and Germany in a (Post)colonial World*, ed. U. Lindner, M. Möhring, M. Stein, and S. Stroh (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 89-106.

³⁶ Cf. Slater, *Teaching History*, 112-117 on the project's origins and objectives; see also Sylvester, "History Teaching 1900-93", 15-16.

³⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1978). Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (eds), *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, [1989] 2007).

³⁸ Stuart Ward, "Introduction," in Stephen Howe (ed.), *New Imperial Histories Reader* (London: Routledge, 2010). Thompson, *Britain's Experience of Empire*. A key driver of this reorientation was the Studies in Imperialism series, originally edited by John MacKenzie and now by MacKenzie and Andrew Thompson. John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire. The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). John MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986). Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992). Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds), *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, [1997] 2009), is to this day a work of fundamental importance in its transcendence of conceptual boundaries between the periphery and the metropolitan center.

³⁹ Michael Willis, *Britain 1851 to 1918: A Leap in the Dark?* (London: Hodder Murray, 2006)

⁴⁰ Willis, *Britain 1851 to 1918*, 103. The work of the Manchester School, published since the 1980s in the Studies in Imperialism series, reflects the focus described here on the imperial imagination.

⁴¹ Stuart Clayton, Martin Collier, Steve Day, and Rosemary Rees, *1901-Present. History in Progress*, Book 3 (London: Heinemann, 2011), 158-183.

⁴² Dale Banham and Ian Duff, *History*, Year 9 (London: Hodder Education, 2009), 12-51.

⁴³ Some textbooks written for younger pupils adopted this method in the 1950s and 1960s. Marsden, *School Textbook*, 119.

⁴⁴ Cf. Gerdien Jonker, "Reflections on History Education. Easy and Difficult Histories," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 4, no 1 (2012): 95-110, on the issue of presentism in school history textbooks.

⁴⁵ Aaron Wilkes, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire: Depth Study KS 3 History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 18; 22.

⁴⁶ Aldrich and Ward, *Ends of Empire*, 269. MacKenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture*; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* and James A. Mangan (ed.), "Benefits Bestowed"? *Education and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); James Mangan, *The Imperial Curriculum. Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience* (London: Routledge, 1993) place particular emphasis on the impact of colonialism on metropolitan space. By contrast, Porter considers that this impact is less significant. See Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists. What the British Really Thought about Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). See also Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire. The Road to Decolonization, 1918-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006). On the ensuing debate about the domestic impact of British imperialism, see Bernard Porter, "Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-mindedness," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 1 (2008): 101-117. John MacKenzie, "'Comfort' and Conviction. A Response to Bernard Porter," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 1 (2008): 659-668. Bernard Porter, "Popular Imperialism. Broadening the Context," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39, no. 5 (2011): 833-845. Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact. A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires* (Malden, Oxford: Blackwell, 2008) attempts to unite the two positions.

⁴⁷ Willis, *Britain 1851 to 1918*, 105.

⁴⁸ Patricia Purtschert, Barbara Lüthi, and Francesca Falk, "Eine Bestandsaufnahme der postkolonialen Schweiz," in *Schweiz postcolonial. Formen und Folgen eines Kolonialismus ohne Kolonien*, eds P. Purtschert, B. Lüthi, and F. Falk (Bielefeld: Transkript, 2012), 14.

⁴⁹ Helma Lutz and Kathrin Gawarecki (eds), *Kolonialismus und Erinnerungskultur. Die Kolonialvergangenheit im kollektiven Gedächtnis der deutschen und niederländischen Einwanderungsgesellschaft* (Münster: Waxmann, 2005). Olivier Dard and Daniel Lefeuvre (eds), *L'Europe face à son passé colonial* (Paris: Riveneuve Editions, 2008). John MacKenzie and Giuseppe Finaldi (eds), *European Empires and the People. Popular Responses to Imperialism in France, Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2011).

⁵⁰ On the generally substantial degree to which school history textbooks in Europe focus on the national history of their country, see also Ann Low-Beer, "European History in Schools," in *Approaches to European Historical Consciousness. Reflections and Provocations*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (Hamburg: Körber Stiftung, 2000), 125-136. Werner Schiffauer and Thijl Sunier, "Representing the Nation in History Textbooks," in *Civil Enculturation. Nation-State, Schools, and Ethnic Difference in Four European Countries*, ed. Werner Schiffauer (New York: Berghahn, [2004] 2006), 33-59.

⁵¹ On the attempt to write European colonial history in light of the many transnational interconnections it features, as "entangled histories," see in Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria (eds), *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002); see also Andreas Eckert, "Der Kolonialismus im europäischen Gedächtnis," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 1-2 (2008): 31-38.

“We Need to Get away from a Culture of Denial”? The German-Herero War in Politics and Textbooks
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Abstract • The question whether the German-Herero War (1904-1907) may be called a genocide has been debated in German politics for over twenty years. This article explores the representations of this event in the context of this ongoing debate. Textbooks are not merely the end product of a negotiation process. Rather, as media and objects of memory politics, they are part of the negotiation process. Changes made to textbooks in relation to this controversial topic take place in very short periods of time and often go beyond what appears to meet with mutual agreement in the political sphere.

Keywords • colonial past, genocide, German-Herero War, history of knowledge, memory politics, textbook

Introduction

In March 2012, the German *Bundestag* debated a proposed resolution “To recognize the German colonial crimes in former German South-West Africa as a genocide and make reparations for them.” During the debate, Uwe Kekeritz from the Green Party (*Die Grünen*) argued, “We must therefore also ensure that the foundations for a responsible culture of remembrance are laid in our schools.” This brought him applause from across party boundaries, and he continued, “We need to get away from a culture of denial.”¹

The interpretation of the German colonial past – and in particular the German-Herero War in former German South-West Africa, now Namibia, from 1904 to 1907 – has been the subject of heated debate in recent years.² Attention has focused above all on the question as to how to interpret the war, and ultimately on the question whether it must be defined as a “genocide”,³ and to what extent there are consequences to be drawn from this. One aspect of these debates has also been the desire to raise awareness of the subject among the general public, and hence also in

schools.⁴ Although there are no attempts in Germany (as there are in France) to create a legal framework within which to address the colonial past,⁵ political actors nevertheless make historical interpretations of the German colonial era in Germany too, and thus actively engage in the politics of remembrance.

The following article examines two areas, politics and education, which deal with socially relevant knowledge. It considers how the German-Herero War is portrayed and focuses on the question of what knowledge about the German colonial past is included, and what place it is given. Because their development takes place at the meeting point between academic research, politics, business, and the school system, school textbooks are a revealing source in the history of knowledge. They must meet the needs of these various actors and in doing so they depict knowledge in a canonized and didactically reduced form. In addition, this knowledge is continuously adapted to current requirements. Textbooks gain the attention of a variety of actors above all because they are furthermore considered to have great potential impact.

Thomas Höhne points out that textbook knowledge is constructed in a process of negotiation between various actors in a kind of “arena of discourse,” with consensus being generated between the participants. These negotiation processes take time, with the result that the knowledge presented in textbooks is sluggish, lagging behind current media knowledge.⁶ From this perspective, textbooks are recognized not only as conveyors of information, didactic tools, and political entities, but also as bearers of socially constructed knowledge. Michael Apple also highlights these social debates when he refers to textbooks as media of “official knowledge”. He argues that the field of education is a highly political area, and that educational policy and practices can be regarded as the result of a struggle between a variety of groups and social movements.⁷ In the German context, the aspect of controlled and licensed knowledge must also be pointed out. Textbooks must keep to the syllabi of the respective federal states and are shaped by the demands of approval procedures.⁸

In the history of knowledge,⁹ “knowledge” is characterized by a variety of aspects and can thus be analyzed as a category. Knowledge must, for example, circulate between social spheres, differing disciplines and different individuals. In doing so it is always tied to a specific context, in this case to a medium. For this reason, however, it is also linked by material practices, and thus to power practices. Furthermore, knowledge is always hybrid. As it circulates it is placed in new contexts, combined in new ways, and continuously altered.

This, then, gives an indication that politics and education do not represent two strictly separate areas, but are linked in manifold ways. Thus, alongside the political frameworks for teaching and the production of textbooks (syllabi and the approval of textbooks at federal state

level), the two areas are closely connected in terms of content, as this article aims to demonstrate. After a brief review of the treatment of the German-Herero War in historical research and the problems associated with the term “genocide”, the article considers the political debate in which no consensus on an interpretation of the German-Herero War has been achieved in the past twenty years. The first part of this section deals with efforts to address the subject at the federal level, where the most significant debates have taken place. Reflecting Germany’s educational federalism, the second part on educational policy also makes reference to state policy. Textbooks from secondary education stage I (*Sekundarstufe I*) are then analyzed with the aim of establishing what knowledge they judge to be relevant to the next generation, and how they integrate it.

The German-Herero War, 1904-1907

For a long time, the German colonial past played almost no part at all in public debate in the Federal Republic. This changed around 1990, significantly encouraged by two factors. On the one hand, historians (strongly influenced by approaches used in cultural history and postcolonial studies) began to pay greater attention to colonial history. And on the other hand which is (particularly significant for the discussion surrounding the events of the German-Herero War) Germany was required to engage politically in a general way with Namibia after the state became independent on 21 March 1990. Furthermore, Namibia has developed into a dialogue partner with whom it is both possible and necessary to talk about the shared (colonial) past. After the Federal Republic had, for a long time, portrayed itself as free from any colonial legacy (citing above all the brevity of German colonial rule, which, furthermore, had come to an end during the First World War) it was recognized that colonial thinking could not be considered synonymous with colonial rule. Particularly in the period following reunification, questions concerning the German colonial past were also treated in terms of the question of national identity.¹⁰

The genocide theory was first developed by Horst Drechsler, a historian in the GDR, in his 1966 historical study on German colonial rule in German South-West Africa.¹¹ Until the 1990s, however, it remained a marginal issue in historical research. Only then did a number of historians revive the genocide theory, though it is not uncontroversial.¹² Questions concerning the definition of the term then first had to be addressed.

The term “genocide” was introduced in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin, who also played an important part in its establishment in international law in the “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.”¹³ Both the coining of the term and the UN convention

were closely linked to the events of the Second World War and to the global political situation in its aftermath. The convention is characterized by three points: 1) the determining of a (national, ethnical, racial, or religious) victim group; 2) the intent to destroy; and 3) the destruction of that group in whole or in part.¹⁴ This legal definition proved to be problematic when applied to example cases from history. It was described by some as too narrow in relation to further possible victim groups, and the inclusion of political and cultural groups, for example, was called for. Others, on the other hand, considered the acts to be defined too broadly, and the question was raised as to whether the widely differing historical cases of mass killings should really be subsumed under one term.¹⁵ These debates led not only to the coining of a variety of new terms (for example, democide, femicide, ecocide), but also to the introduction of graduated variations such as genocidal massacre.¹⁶ The discussion was further complicated by the differing demands (academic, political, legal) made on the term, and by the strong moral charge of the subject.¹⁷

The individual criteria are, moreover, difficult to apply or verify in practice. In the case of the German-Herero War, this applies to the question of intent. The key source here is the following proclamation by Lieutenant General Lothar von Trotha:

The Herero are no longer German subjects. They have murdered and stolen [...]. I say to the people [...] the people of the Herero must [...] leave the country. If they do not, I will force them to do so with the *Groot Rohr* [big cannon]. Within the German borders any Herero with or without rifle, with or without cattle, will be shot, I will no longer shelter women or children. I will force them back to their people or let them be shot.¹⁸

This proclamation is often viewed as documentary evidence of the intent to destroy and a systematic approach. Together with the extreme brutality of the German-Herero War and the annihilation of a large proportion of the Herero, it is seen to indicate a genocide. Boris Barth points out, however, that the proclamation can also be understood as a call for ethnic cleansing.¹⁹ This interpretation does not deny the extreme violence, but argues that Trotha's primary goal was nevertheless one of annihilation. Although there was also an intent to destroy, this could not be pursued systematically because, among other things, Trotha met with political resistance. Furthermore, the destruction did not take place in a centrally controlled way, but rather an improvised one. Barth also stresses the hitherto lack of significant studies on comparable cases in a colonial context. Thus, he considers the classification as a genocide to be questionable and argues instead for the description "counter-guerilla in colonial partisan wars."²⁰ Matthias Häußler also sees no evidence in the proclamation of an intent to destroy. In his approach, he tracks the evolving nature of the violence in the German-Herero War and divides it into various phases. In doing so, he also gives particular attention to the various actors and incorporates a "bottom-up"

perspective. He concludes that the primary, but militarily unenforceable, goal was the expulsion of the Herero and views their destruction as an alternative plan stemming from improvisation after a failure to reach military goals. Nevertheless, he does not distance himself entirely from the term “genocide”, speaking of “genocidal escalation” and of a “genocidal war of pacification.”²¹

The considerable attention given to genocide research and research on colonialism has led in recent years to an intensified engagement with the German-Herero War, and above all to a less simplistic view of the events, showing itself particularly in sensitivity to the terms used. But it has not led to a generally recognized definition of genocide, nor, therefore, to terminological clarity on the interpretation of the German-Herero War. Thus, the question presents itself all the more strongly as to how the subject is addressed in other sections of society.

The Post-1989 Political Debate on the Interpretation of Events

The Federal Republic

The discussion in German politics, and particularly in the government, is heavily influenced by issues current at the time. Thus, the debate on 23 February 1989 was shaped significantly by the anticipation of Namibian independence. Across the parties, reference was made to Germany’s “special responsibility” for Namibia, which, along with the Federal Republic’s role in the Western Contact Group, was explained above all by the German colonial past. The motion proposed by the SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) went as far as to address the “colonial war” and pointed out that “more than a quarter of the people in the Herero tribe [were] wiped out, tens of thousands of Nama murdered, and the survivors entirely subjugated.”²²

Although the focus was on supporting the independence process, almost every speaker addressed the colonial past. Speaking first, the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation, Hans Klein (CSU, *Christlich-Soziale Union*), emphasized that the attention given to Namibia was rooted in a “historical and moral responsibility,” and went on to speak about the German colonial past. This, he said, had known both “impressive pioneer work” and “ruthless exploitation and murderous colonial wars.”²³ A speech by Günter Verheugen (SPD) is of particular note in relation to the discussion that followed. He summed up by saying “that the beginning of this unfortunate country’s recent history [was] marked by a genocide” for which German colonial policy was responsible, and that it was essential to counter the “dangerous myth” that this had been any better than that of the other colonial powers:

Not only was it not any better, it was in fact characterized by particular barbarity, particular inhumanity. This must be acknowledged here, for otherwise it is almost impossible to understand why, even today, we are bound by a really very special and indeed moral responsibility to this country, Namibia, and its people, and why this cannot be expressed in marks and pfennigs.²⁴

This quotation exemplifies the path on which the SPD was to remain in the years that followed. A focus on the barbarity of the events came to define the narrative of German colonialism, the “suppression of the Herero uprising” was described as a genocide, and a “special responsibility” was inferred from it which could not, however, be addressed in monetary terms. There was no mention of reparation payments at this point, but financial support for the new state was anticipated. The phrase “special responsibility” became characteristic of the relationship with Namibia and was used frequently. One expression of this responsibility was that Namibia became a focus of German development cooperation in the years that followed, and the African country with the highest donations per capita.²⁵

The question raised in the 1989 debate (whether the German-Herero War constituted a genocide, and whether there were consequences to be drawn from this) did not receive any immediate further attention in the public debate in the years that followed. One reason for this is to be found in the way Namibia itself dealt with the German-Herero War. The Herero represent only one group within the Namibian population, and it was not possible to interpret the war as part of a collective Namibian liberation struggle. In addition, there was also concern that any claims made against Germany might have an impact on the payment of development aid, which had hitherto benefited the national budget rather than individual population groups. Nevertheless, the Herero kept alive the memory of the war and, after 1990, demanded recognition and reparation.²⁶ Since their increasingly loud demands against Germany were not backed up by the Namibian state, the Herero decided to take legal action. Although this was not successful, it did at least arguably achieve the aim of generating publicity.²⁷ A speech initially interpreted as a first step toward the position of the Herero was given by the German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer (Green Party), at a conference in Durban, South Africa, in 2001. He spoke of slavery and of “exploitation by colonialism,” and argued that it was now essential to acknowledge its guilt and accept its responsibility, for in no other way would it be possible at least to restore to the victims and their descendents the dignity which had been taken from them.²⁸ However, it was not until the following legislative period that further steps were taken.

Prior to Heidmarie Wieczorek-Zeul (Minister for Development and Cooperation, SPD) attending the centennial memorial ceremony of the Battle of Waterberg, the governing parties

(SPD and Green Party) proposed a motion in the *Bundestag* entitled “In memory of the victims of the colonial war in former German South-West Africa.” This did not mention the term “genocide,” but did describe the deeds of the colonial forces.²⁹ Germany’s special “political and moral responsibility” was reaffirmed here “in the name of the now united German people.” With this support, Wieczorek-Zeul took part in the ceremony in Namibia and issued the first official apology as a member of the German government:

A century ago, the oppressors – blinded by colonialist fervor – became agents of violence, discrimination, racism and annihilation in Germany’s name. The atrocities committed at that time would today be termed genocide – and nowadays a General von Trotha would be prosecuted and convicted. We Germans accept our historical and moral responsibility and the guilt incurred by Germans at that time. And so, in the words of the Lord's Prayer that we share, I ask you to forgive us our trespasses.³⁰

Although Wieczorek-Zeul “only” used the term “genocide” in a qualified way, this was nevertheless a departure from previous practice, and one for which she received strong criticism from the CDU (*Christlich Demokratische Union*) and CSU members of the *Bundestag*.³¹ Some time later a “reconciliation initiative” followed, providing support to areas of the country “which [had] suffered particularly greatly under German colonial rule.”³²

An appeal by the Namibian parliament in 2006 to recognize the genocide as such, and to demand material reparations, was incorporated into a *Bundestag* motion by the Left Party (*Die Linke*).³³ In addition, they demanded an open dialogue and the establishment of a foundation aimed at strengthening the “historical awareness of colonial politics in Germany” and intensifying debate in youth work and education.³⁴ This did not, however, lead to any change in position by the German government.³⁵

After media reports in 2008 that so-called Herero skulls, that is, human remains which had been placed in German museums and archives during the colonial era, were in some cases still being kept there, the debate gained a further facet.³⁶ Pressure on the government from the opposition parties increased particularly in connection with the planning and controversial handover of the Herero skulls in 2011. Though this did not prompt any concrete steps, it did mean that the governing coalition of CDU/CSU and FDP (*Freie Demokratische Partei*) was forced to continue engaging closely with the question of the genocide. When asked explicitly why it refused to describe the “expulsion and annihilation of the Herero, Nama and Damara” as a genocide, despite “numerous specialist historians” and the then-minister Wieczorek-Zeul having done so, the government responded that the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide did not come into force until 1951/1955 and did not apply retroactively, but

that the federal government was committed to honoring its “historical and moral responsibility,” and that this was expressed in its provision of development aid.³⁷ In response to an enquiry which did not include the term “genocide,” but instead addressed the criteria by which it is defined, the government replied that this question was a matter of historical research and that it had no comment to make on the subject.³⁸

Interventions in Educational Policy

In their motion in the above-mentioned parliamentary debate of March 2012, the Left Party called not only for recognition of and reparation for the genocide, but also for increased efforts in youth work and education. The motion by the SPD and the Green Party spoke of a youth and cultural exchange and the goal of a “post-colonial culture of remembrance and a broader understanding of colonialism among the public and in schools.” The desire was to “work toward [making] the German colonial past an integral and permanent part of the syllabi of German schools.” The motion by the Left Party called additionally for the creation of a German-Namibian textbook commission – modeled on the German-Polish commission – to be charged with developing common textbooks. Thus, not only was the work of the commission portrayed unquestioningly as significant to reconciliation between two countries, but common textbooks were also interpreted as evidence of successful reconciliation. Over and above this, the involvement of the Standing Conference of the State Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*, KMK) was demanded in the hope of impacting on syllabi and textbooks via that route.³⁹ The motion by the Left Party thus touched on a fundamental problem by suggesting that educational federalism means that federal politics have no direct influence at all on the subject matter taught in German schools. However, textbooks nevertheless play a special role in the debate at a federal level, as an argument for greater involvement in this area. Various organizations have also pointed out that German colonial history is inadequately addressed in textbooks. In 2004, for example, the Society for Threatened Peoples (*Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker*) called on the government to recognize the genocide. In a report it writes that,

While other European colonial powers have begun to engage critically with their responsibility for human rights abuses in Africa, Germany is still some way behind. Textbooks which either make no mention at all of the annihilation of the Herero and Nama, or refer to the “Hottentot Wars”, demonstrate how little the general public has concerned itself with German colonial history.⁴⁰

Media reports have similarly used German textbooks to illustrate that colonial history does not figure in the German consciousness, or that it is not reflected “appropriately” there.

Concrete influence on teaching content in Germany is exerted above all via the syllabi at federal state level. The states issue the syllabi and supervise, at least in the majority of states, the approval of textbooks.⁴¹ Throughout the period studied, the topic of “imperialism” formed an integral part of the syllabi, though in general no specific mention was made of the German-Herero War. This is unsurprising inasmuch as the syllabi provide only an outline structure. One exception was the Bavarian grammar school syllabus, which named the “Herero uprising” as one of various “case studies.”⁴² Brandenburg-Berlin represented a further exceptional case, specifying that, “Genocides and state violence in the twentieth century” as a “longitudinal theme.” The inclusion of the “Armenian genocide” was the subject of particularly heated debate, while the two other genocides mentioned (German South-West Africa and Rwanda) were not discussed in any greater detail. The state institute responsible also noted a lack of teaching materials and hence arranged for the production of a supplementary teachers’ guide with additional material.⁴³

The subject was given greater attention in discussions about the teaching of history. In a 1988 article, Gunter Spraul discusses the “continuity theory,” that is, the idea that there is a connection between colonialism and the Holocaust, which has been much debated among historians. Spraul takes a skeptical view of this theory, as well as of the term “genocide”. The article nevertheless had a degree of influence, as it reproduced the Trotha proclamation and was later referred to by various textbooks.⁴⁴ Teaching journals offering background text and teaching material also made reference to Spraul. An example of this was the teaching journal *Praxis Geschichte*, which in 1993 was the first magazine to discuss the “Herero uprising” and its “suppression” explicitly as a genocide.⁴⁵

A number of textbook analyses also addressed this. Anne Kerber observed in 2005, for example, that the term “genocide” was used in some textbooks, but she took a critical view of the fact that the perpetrators and victims were not clearly named.⁴⁶ The 2006 recommendations for a “realistic portrayal of Africa” also noted firstly that “some textbooks” described the events simply as “war”, though the field of genocide research used the term “genocide”, This prompted efforts to provide sources which clearly emphasized the “planned intent to destroy.”⁴⁷ As in the political debate at a federal level, a consensus was established among academic specialists, which the textbooks were then expected to follow.

The Herero lawsuit, the speech by Wiczorek-Zeul, and subsequently the return of the so-called Herero skulls have also led to discussion of the German-Herero War at a broader social level. This has revealed clearly that no consensus on the historical interpretation of the events has

been reached in the past twenty years. The political debate does not take place independently of other discussions within society, but is connected with other actors in multiple ways. Not only do textbooks serve in the debate as indicators of the current approach to addressing colonialism, but changes to them are in fact clearly articulated as an aim at federal level, although this does not necessarily translate into opportunities to influence policy at a state level (syllabi). The debate is further complicated by the use of differing definitions of genocide and/or differing points of reference.

Textbooks

A survey of German history textbooks since 1990 reveals that the topic of the German-Herero war as a Herero uprising is discussed in almost every textbook, where it serves as an illustration of German colonial rule.⁴⁸ The following section, then, considers how the uprising is portrayed, and above all what position the textbooks take on the dispute at the political level.

Table 'Müller' here

Table 1. Usage of the concept 'genocide' in textbooks in relation to the German-Herero War (for the key to abbreviations see the list of "textbooks analysed" below).

The table illustrates how five educational publishers use the term "genocide" in the context of the German-Herero War. The textbook series selected were large ones published over an extended period of time. Textbooks were not chosen specifically on the basis of approval in the various states, since prior analysis had shown that very few differences exist in this respect. In some cases, the series were revised and updated annually (for different federal states on each occasion) making it possible to analyze incrementally what was considered to be in need of alteration each time.

Four aspects can be distinguished initially. First, the series decide on one description and do not vary the wording used from one state edition to another, that is, for each respective syllabus. Second, three textbook series describe the "suppression of the uprising" as a genocide from as early as 1997 or 1998, that is, from before the Herero lawsuit prompted intensive discussion of the subject at a political level. Third, there is a trend from non-use of the term "genocide" toward its use. The shift here does not necessarily take place when a book series is renamed, that is, when more substantial changes to its concept would be undertaken anyway. An

exception, fourth, is represented by the series MO and ZR, which only indirectly describe the suppression of the uprising as a genocide. The former does not mention it in the editorial text, but in the above-mentioned quotation by Wiczorek-Zeul,⁴⁹ while the latter refers to it in the editorial text as a “military campaign [...] which many historians in both African and Europe call the first genocide of the twentieth century.”⁵⁰ This indirect description as a genocide can be understood as a strategy by which to situate oneself in the political debate without adopting a definite position. But it is noteworthy above all because the word “many” is used to indicate to the students that there is no clear consensus on the subject.

An examination of the respective narratives before and after the introduction of the term “genocide” reveals firstly that the terminology of genocide was, in each case, incorporated into the existing editorial text. The focus here will therefore be on the depiction of the course of the uprising, and on the respective illustrations and integration via work assignments.

The causes of the uprising are addressed (both before the term “genocide” is used and afterwards) by most of the textbooks, though they give differing information and their explanations are of differing length. TG, for example, cites (until 1997) the consequences of cattle plague as the immediate catalyst. The construction of a railway through the Herero territory is also given as a reason.⁵¹ However, from 1998 onwards, after its renaming as DWZ, it (like most of the textbooks) makes only general mention of economic and legal causes, as well as referring to condescending treatment by the settlers.

Overall, the focus is on the Herero, and other population groups – or uprisings in other German colonies – play only a very minor role initially and later none at all.⁵² EUV points out clearly at the beginning of its chapter that the suppression of the uprising is only one example of the treatment of insurgents by the European powers. This disappears, however, with the introduction of a more detailed account of the Herero uprising after 2000. Overall, from the late 1990s onwards (as the Herero uprising gained increasing attention) there is a development away from discussing it in the context of other uprisings. These are either omitted entirely or portrayed separately.

The judgments made on the respective military strategies are not coupled to the use of the term “genocide.” The GUG series, for example, which does not use the term “genocide” at any point, refers in 1990 already to a “brutally suppressed” uprising. On a map, the route taken by the fleeing Herero is described as a “death march.”⁵³ Subsequent editions, too, speak of “great brutality” and “dying agonizingly of thirst.”⁵⁴ This is illustrated from the 1996 edition onwards by a photograph showing starving Herero. The photograph is also reproduced in subsequent editions and in some cases even serves on the introductory double-page spread as a possible way

into the topic of imperialism. The EUV series also describes the events in very emotional terms. Thus, for example, the Herero are described as “proud, freedom-loving tribes” and their “peaceable nature” emphasized. This is contrasted with “money-grabbing traders” and “robbery, murder and rape.” The situation of the Herero was “hopeless,” and after they were “encircled” at Waterberg the German forces “left them to their fate,” while survivors “eked out” “an existence under pitiful conditions.”⁵⁵ Trotha’s warfare is illustrated in particular also by two source texts (a contemporary witness account and a general-staff report). These are compared with a source text on the warfare of the Herero in which it is decided that the Herero will spare women, children, and missionaries. The students are then asked to re-enact “a gathering at which Herero chiefs are deliberating on how to proceed against the German colonial forces,” or to compare the warfare of the Herero and the German forces.⁵⁶ The narrative style used by TG and DWZ, in contrast, appears considerably more factual, though expressions such as “terrible consequences” represent clear value judgments here, too.⁵⁷

From the late 1990s onwards, it becomes common in the textbooks to express these “consequences” in figures. While GUG and KUV still get by without doing so in 1990 and 1996 respectively, subsequent editions and the other series for the most part specify a number of deaths or a percentage. These vary, however, from one series to another. TG/DWZ also point out the losses to the German forces.⁵⁸ Two textbook series mention the losses suffered by the German settlers. The number of deaths among the Herero and Nama form an important element in all of the textbooks, since no definitions of genocide are given. In some cases, the proximity between the death toll and the statement that the events constitute a genocide implies a connection. ZFG expresses this causal connection clearly in the statement, “The large number of victims demonstrates that the wars of the German colonial forces against the Herero and Nama were genocide.”⁵⁹ It is noteworthy in this context that this work is one of the few textbooks to provide a definition of genocide (“according to the international definition the attempt of a state or a ruling group to ‘destroy a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group in whole or in part’”).⁶⁰ A further criterion for genocide is considered to be the systematic character of the actions. None of the textbooks speaks of a systematic destruction of the Herero. However the wording suggests a methodical approach. MO and KON, for example, speak of “systematic driving into the desert,” and KON adds, “where they were doomed to die.” GE/TG/DWZ speaks of “forcing” the Herero into the desert, and GuG too, which does not use the term “genocide,” speaks of “driving back” the Herero (including the women and children) into the desert, “the remaining Herero [being] systematically pursued and taken to concentration camps where they were subjected to forced labor.”⁶¹

Trotha's proclamation plays a crucial role in the judgment of the events as a genocide, and is reproduced in most of the textbooks as far back as the early 1990s.⁶² In some cases, Trotha's order to shoot over the heads of the women and children is also reproduced. These sources are generally integrated via work assignments. TG/DWZ, for example, asks students to "Discuss in class whether the call and the order make it possible to speak of an intended genocide (M4)?"⁶³ The students' answers cannot be anticipated here, since they are subject to specific teaching conditions and to additional information available. It is probable, however, that they will come to the conclusion that the events do constitute a genocide, since it is stated in the editorial text on the preceding page (and with a reference to the source texts) that, "The uprising became a war, which degenerated into genocide."

Three textbook series address the current debate. EUV simply adds to the editorial text the remark that in 2004 a "representative of the German government asked the descendents of the survivors for forgiveness."⁶⁴ MO gives this greater attention, reproducing the above-mentioned quotation by Wiczorek-Zeul and asking the students to deduce from it "how attitudes to colonialism have changed."⁶⁵ There is no mention here, however, of the fact that the statement is controversial. DWZ goes even further. In the 2004 edition, internet links to further information – among others to the Society for Threatened Peoples – are included in the editorial text, and an additional page of source material is also introduced. This contains an excerpt from the 2000 press conference of the Society for Threatened Peoples with an appeal to the *Bundestag*, an excerpt from Fischer's speech at the conference in Durban, an excerpt from a press agency report on the Herero lawsuit, and a 2001 press cutting from a Namibian newspaper. Samuel Maherero's grave is also shown. The work assignment calls on the students to engage with these various perspectives by writing a newspaper article of their own, and to carry out additional relevant research. In addition to this, they are to hold a pro and contra debate ("Should German companies and the federal government pay compensation?"). This thus constitutes the first call in the textbook sample studied to engage explicitly with the question of reparations.⁶⁶ In the 2006 edition, the quotation from Fischer's speech was replaced by an excerpt from the speech given by Wiczorek-Zeul in Namibia in August 2004. Thus, the apology much argued over at the political level and its potential consequences were incorporated into the textbook within a relatively short time. The answer, or rather the outcome, of the student debate cannot be anticipated, since it is greatly dependent on the teaching situation and the additional information available. It is noteworthy, however, that the book does not give a definition of genocide, nor reproduce any sources which argue against the genocide theory or compensation payments.⁶⁷ In the 2009 edition, the extra page of source material disappears again from the chapter.⁶⁸

Overall, no uniform portrayal of the topic can be identified in the textbooks. The Herero uprising is dealt with in more detail from the late 1990s onwards and is usually no longer described in a general editorial passage, but given a separate section of its own. Although most textbooks use the term “genocide,” they nevertheless attach differing degrees of significance to it. In EUV (“The Herero Genocide,” from 1998) and ZFG (from 2010), it comes to serve as the main introduction to the topic and is reflected in the heading. KON (throughout) and DWZ choose the African perspective and give their sections the headings “Herero and Nama fight back” and “The oppressed fight back.”

While the topic began to evolve in the 1990s already, the centennial year in 2004 led again to significant changes in the way it was portrayed. It thus becomes clear that these textbook changes were not a response to changes in the syllabi – for to a large extent these offered no new input in the subject area. A simple line of reasoning from a political negotiation via the inclusion in syllabi to inclusion in the textbooks is too limited here. Rather, it has become apparent that knowledge about the German-Herero War circulates between social actors and textbooks too, with the textbooks incorporating new aspects at an early stage and politics referring back to the textbooks to support its arguments. Meanwhile, the failure over the past twenty years to achieve a social consensus – in part because of the above-outlined problems relating to the term “genocide” – is also reflected in the heterogeneity of the textbook portrayals.

Conclusion

The textbook analysis has demonstrated the extent to which textbooks are media of the politics of remembrance. Just as parliamentary motions or debates do, they situate the colonial past within a larger narrative, and in doing so furnish it with meaning accordingly. While the political debate makes selective references to historical events in the context of current ones (Namibian independence, compensation claims, the return of the Herero skulls), these are nevertheless active political interventions. Textbooks take a different approach. They situate (national) history in one large narrative, with connections to the present (Herero lawsuits, apologies, reparations) playing an important role. At the same time, textbooks are subject to the politics of remembrance. The discussion on textbook content has shown that various actors endeavor to anchor their view of the past in them.

It follows too, therefore, that textbooks cannot be viewed purely as the final product of a negotiation process. Rather, in the case of controversial subjects each edition can only ever

represent one very brief moment, giving an indication as to what is considered “sayable” in a given situation. At the same time, the textbooks are not simply bearers of socially constructed knowledge, but are themselves part of the social debate. Knowledge about the German-Herero War circulates between various actors. Thus, textbook authors make reference to the political discussion on the subject, and in the social debate textbook portrayals – or, more generally, the anchoring of particular views in the textbooks – are cited as an argument. It has been shown that textbook portrayals are influenced by both the social debate and the respective preceding volumes. Other than the adaptations necessary to each respective situation (approval in each federal state), only very minor changes are made. For the most part, the units are simply put together differently and the editorial text slightly revised. This demonstrates above all, however, that – at least in the case of socially controversial subjects – portrayals change within relatively short spaces of time. Nevertheless, the textbooks do not necessarily reproduce socially negotiated consensus knowledge with a time lag, but in describing the suppression of the Herero uprising explicitly as a genocide in fact move beyond what appears possible in terms of a cross-party consensus at a political level. Traces of the social debate are nevertheless discernible in the textbooks, though in some cases the dispute is also deliberately picked up and incorporated, for example by including sources which make it possible to treat the current debate itself as a subject of study.

The analysis has shown that the textbooks increasingly tend toward the use of the term “genocide”. It cannot, however, be concluded from this that the remaining books trivialize German colonial history. GUG is a prime example of one which nevertheless points out the brutality of the German colonial forces, the high death toll and the systematic approach. Neither, conversely, can it be concluded from the textbooks which describe the suppression explicitly as a genocide that a common narration exists across the various textbook series, since the term “genocide” as it appears in the books is not generally based on any fixed definition, but is used for the most part simply because of the high death toll.

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Textbooks analyzed

(GUG) Hans-W. Ballhausen, et al., *Geschichte und Geschehen: Ausgabe N Gymnasien* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Schulbuchverlag, 1990).

(GUG) Hans Hans-W. Ballhausen, et al., *Geschichte und Geschehen A3: Geschichtliches Unterrichtswerk für die Sekundarstufe I* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Schulbuchverlag, 1996).

(ZFG) Dorothea Beck, et al., *Zeit für Geschichte: Geschichtliches Unterrichtswerk für Gymnasien, Band 3: Ausgabe B* (Hanover: Schroedel Verlag 2002).

(EUV) Thomas Berger, Karl-Heinz Müller and Hans-Gert Oomen, eds., *Entdecken und Verstehen: Geschichtsbuch für Hauptschulen in Baden-Württemberg Band 3 – 8. Schuljahr* (Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag, 1990).

(EUV) Thomas Berger, Karl-Heinz Müller and Hans-Gert Oomen, eds., *Entdecken und Verstehen, Geschichtsbuch für Rheinland-Pfalz – Saarland, Band 3* (Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag, 1990).

(EUV) Thomas Berger, Karl-Heinz Müller and Hans-Gert Oomen, eds., *Entdecken und Verstehen 7/8: Von dem Zeitalter der Entdeckungen bis zum Imperialismus: Geschichtsbuch für Brandenburg* (Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag, 1998).

(EUV) Thomas Berger, Karl-Heinz Müller and Hans-Gert Oomen, eds., *Entdecken und Verstehen 2* (Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag, 1998).

(EUV) Thomas Berger von der Heide and Hans-Gert Oomen, eds., *Entdecken und Verstehen, Geschichtsbuch für Berlin, Von der Reichsgründung bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag, 2004).

(EUV) Thomas Berger von der Heide and Hans-Gert Oomen, eds., *Entdecken und Verstehen 7/8: Vom Zeitalter der Entdeckungen bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag, 2008).

(EUV) Thomas Berger von der Heide and Hans-Gert Oomen, eds., *Entdecken und Verstehen 2: Vom Zeitalter des Absolutismus bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag, 2009).

(GUG) Ludwig Bernlockner, et al., *Geschichte und Geschehen F4 Thüringen: Geschichtliches Unterrichtswerk für die Sekundarstufe I* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Schulbuchverlag, 1996).

- (GE) Harro Brack, ed., *Geschichte für die 9. Jahrgangsstufe der Realschulen: Neuzeit 3* (Bamberg: Buchners Verlag, 1990).
- (TP) Harro Brack and Dieter Brückner, eds., *Treffpunkt Geschichte: Band 3 für die 9. Jahrgangsstufe der Realschulen: Vom Zeitalter der Nationalstaaten bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Bamberg: Buchners Verlag, 1997).
- (TP) Harro Brack and Dieter Brückner, eds., *Treffpunkt Geschichte: Band 3 für die 9. Jahrgangsstufe der Realschulen: Vom Zeitalter der Nationalstaaten bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Bamberg: Buchners Verlag, 2001).
- (KON) Gregor Brendel, *Geschichte konkret 2. Ein Lern- und Arbeitsbuch* (Hannover: Schroedel 1996).
- (DWZ) Dieter Brückner, ed., *Das waren Zeiten: Unterrichtswerk für Geschichte an Gymnasien und Gesamtschulen* (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 1997).
- (DWZ) Dieter Brückner, ed., *Das waren Zeiten 3: Unterrichtswerk für Geschichte an Gymnasien und Gesamtschulen Sekundarstufe I* (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 1998).
- (DWZ) Dieter Brückner, ed., *Das waren Zeiten: Unterrichtswerk für Geschichte an Gymnasien: Sekundarstufe I: Ausgabe B* (Bamberg: Buchners Verlag, 2001).
- (DWZ) Dieter Brückner and Harald Focke, eds., *Das waren Zeiten – Schleswig-Holstein, Unterrichtswerk für Geschichte an Gymnasien, Sekundarstufe I: Band 3 für die Jahrgangsstufen 8/9 (G8) oder 9/10 (G9)* (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 2001).
- (DWZ) Dieter Brückner and Harald Focke, eds., *Das waren Zeiten Ausgabe C: Unterrichtswerk für Geschichte an Gymnasien und Gesamtschulen Sekundarstufe I* (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 2004).
- (DWZ) Dieter Brückner and Harald Focke, eds., *Das waren Zeiten – Ausgabe Nordrhein-Westfalen: Unterrichtswerk für Geschichte an Gymnasien, Sekundarstufe I* (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 2009).
- (DWZ) Dieter Brückner and Harald Focke, eds., *Das waren Zeiten – Schleswig-Holstein, Unterrichtswerk für Geschichte an Gymnasien, Sekundarstufe I: Band 3 für die Jahrgangsstufen 8/9 (G8) oder 9/10(G9)* (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 2011).
- (ZR) Dieter Burkard, et al., *Zeitreise 3* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Ernst Klett Schulbuchverlage, 2006).
- (MO) Joachim Cornelissen, et al., eds., *Mosaik: Der Geschichte auf der Spur B8* (Munich, Düsseldorf and Stuttgart: Oldenbourg Schulbuchverlag, 2006).
- (MO) Joachim Cornelissen, et al., eds., *Mosaik: Der Geschichte auf der Spur D2: Vom Mittelalter bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008).

(MO) Joachim Cornelissen, et al., eds., *Mosaik: Der Geschichte auf der Spur E3: Vom Deutschen Kaiserreich bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: OldenbourgSchulbuchverlag, 2010).

(EUV) Hans-Wilhelm Eckhardt, et al., *Zeit für Geschichte: Geschichtliches Unterrichtswerk für Gymnasien 9/10* (Braunschweig: Schroedel, 2010).

(ZR) Michael Epkenhans, et al., *Zeitreise 3. Geschichtliches Unterrichtswerk für die Realschule* (Leipzig: Ernst Klett Verlag, 2000).

(GUG) Michael Epkenhans, et al., *Geschichte und Geschehen* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Ernst Klett Schulbuchverlage, 2006).

(GUG) Michael Epkenhans, et al., *Geschichte und Geschehen* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Ernst Klett Verlag, 2007).

(KUV) Hans-Georg Fink, et al., *Geschichte – kennen und verstehen: 9. Jahrgangsstufe* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1989).

(KUV) Hans-Georg Fink, et al., *Geschichte kennen und verstehen B9* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996).

(ZR) Markus Freundorfer, *Zeitreise 3 Bayern Realschulen* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Ernst Klett Schulbuchverlage, 2010).

(ZR) Helmut Heimbach, et al., *Zeitreise 2: Geschichtliches Unterrichtswerk für die Sekundarstufe: Nordrhein-Westfalen* (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1998).

(KON) Hans-Jürgen Pandel, ed., *Geschichte Konkret 2: Ein Lern- und Arbeitsbuch* (Braunschweig: Schroedel, 2006).

(KON) Hans-Jürgen Pandel, ed., *Geschichte Konkret 3: Ein Lern- und Arbeitsbuch* (Braunschweig: Schroedel, 2006).

¹ Minutes of *Bundestag* plenary proceedings 17/168, 19993.

² This article focuses – as do portrayals in the political debate and in textbooks – on the Herero.

³ The terms “*Völkermord*” and “*Genozid*” are largely used interchangeably in German, though their meanings do not overlap entirely. See Boris Barth, *Genozid: Völkermord im 20. Jahrhundert. Geschichte, Theorie, Kontroversen* (Munich: Beck, 2006), 29. Textbooks generally only use the term “*Völkermord*,” while in the political debate both terms are used, with the term “*Völkermord*” being the more common. In the following article both are translated as “genocide”.

⁴ On this, see for example the resolution “*Völkermord verjährt nicht!*” by *AfricAvenir* and over 100 other co-signatory initiatives, organizations and institutions, March 2012, http://www.africavenir.org/fileadmin/downloads/Restitution_Namibia/Resolution_Voelkermord_verjaehrt_nicht.pdf (accessed 29 October 2012).

⁵ Andreas Eckert, “Der Kolonialismus im europäischen Gedächtnis,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 1-2 (2007): 31-38.

⁶ Gerd Stein, *Schulbuchwissen, Politik und Pädagogik: Untersuchungen zu einer praxisbezogenen und theoriegeleiteten Schulbuchforschung* (Kastellaun: Henn, 1977); Thomas Höhne, *Schulbuchwissen: Umriss einer Wissens- und Medientheorie des Schulbuches* (Frankfurt am Main: Goethe-Universität, 2002).

⁷ Michael W. Apple, ed., *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1-15.

⁸ Bernd Schönemann and Holger Thünemann, *Schulbucharbeit: Das Geschichtslehrbuch in der Unterrichtspraxis* (Schwalbach: Wochenschau-Verlag, 2010), 99-110; Heike Hessenauer, “Die Produktion von Schulbüchern: Zwischen rechtlichen Vorgaben und unternehmerischem Kalkül,” in *Geschichtsdidaktische Schulbuchforschung*, ed. Saskia Handro (Berlin: LIT, 2006), 265-82.

⁹ The following remarks on the history of knowledge are based on Philipp Sarasin, “Was ist Wissensgeschichte?,” *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 1, 36 (2011): 159-172; Daniel Speich Chassé and David Gugerli, “Wissensgeschichte: Eine Standortbestimmung,” *transverse. Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 1 (2012): 85-100.

¹⁰ Ulrike Lindner, “Neue Kolonialgeschichte und Postcolonial Studies,” *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, April 2011; Andreas Eckert and Albert Wirz, “Wir nicht, die Anderen auch: Deutschland und der Kolonialismus,” in *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, eds Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002); Eckert, 2007.

¹¹ Horst Drechsler, *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft: Der Kampf der Herero und Nama gegen den deutschen Imperialismus (1884-1915)* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966). Bley speaks two years later in his work published in the Federal Republic of a “policy of annihilation”: Helmut Bley, *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1894-1914* (Hamburg: Leibniz-Verlag, 1968).

¹² For current portrayals of the colonial war, including further literature, see Jürgen Zimmerer, “Der erste Genozid des 20. Jahrhunderts: Der deutsche Vernichtungskrieg in Südwestafrika (1904-1908) und die Globalgeschichte des Genozids,” in *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust*, Jürgen Zimmerer, ed. (Berlin: LIT, 2011), 40-70; Jan-Bart Gewald, “Herero Genocide in the Twentieth Century: Politics and Memory,” in *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History*, eds J. Abbink, M. de Bruijn and K. van Walraven (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 279-304; Dominik J. Schaller “‘Every Herero Will Be Shot’: Genocide, Concentration Camps, and Slave Labor,” in *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial, and Memory*, ed. René Lemarchand (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 51-70.

¹³ Anson Rabinbach, “Genozid: Genese eines Konzepts,” in Anson Rabinbach, *Begriffe aus dem Kalten Krieg: Totalitarismus, Antifaschismus, Genozid* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), 43-72.

¹⁴ Birthe Kundrus and Henning Strotbek, “‘Genozid’: Grenzen und Möglichkeiten eines Forschungsbegriffs – ein Literaturbericht,” *Neue Politische Literatur* 51 (2006): 397-423, 402.

¹⁵ Kundrus and Strotbek, “Genozid,” 402; Barth, *Genozid*, 19.

¹⁶ Barth, *Genozid*, #29#, 40.

¹⁷ On this, see Kundrus and Strotbek, “Genozid”; Barth, *Genozid*.

¹⁸ Trotha also issued an order of the day to the soldiers that they were to shoot over the heads of the women and children.

¹⁹ See Barth, *Genozid*, 128-136.

²⁰ Barth, *Genozid*, 134.

²¹ Matthias Häußler, “Brutalisierung ‘von unten’: Kleiner Krieg, Entgrenzung der Gewalt und Genozid im kolonialen Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Mittelweg* 36, 3 (2012): 57-89; Matthias Häußler, “From Destruction to Extermination: Genocidal Escalation in Germany’s War against the Herero, 1904,” *Journal of Namibian Studies* 10 (2011): 55-81.

²² *Bundestag* printed papers 11/3934, 11/3396, and 11/4039.

²³ Minutes of *Bundestag* plenary proceedings 11/129, 9495. At this point, an interjection by Ursula Eid indicated that the Green Party was not in agreement about the “positive side” of the German colonial past, but this received no response.

²⁴ Minutes of *Bundestag* plenary proceedings 11/129, 9494-9511.

²⁵ <http://www.auswaertiges->

[amt.de/sid_D5BCF919199ECA3E91E9E1918E938887/DE/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/Namibia/Bilateral_node.html#doc352362bodyText3](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/sid_D5BCF919199ECA3E91E9E1918E938887/DE/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/Namibia/Bilateral_node.html#doc352362bodyText3) (accessed 29 October 2012).

²⁶ Karie L. Morgan, “Remembering against the Nation-State: Hereros’ Pursuit of Restorative Justice,” *Time & Society* 1, 21 (2012): 21-38; Reinhart Kößler, “Genocide, Apology and Reparation: The Linkage between Images of the Past in Namibia and Germany” (paper presented at the Second AEGIS European Conference on African Studies, 2007), <http://freiburg-postkolonial.de/Seiten/Koessler-Linkages-2007.pdf> (accessed 29 October 2012).

²⁷ The lawsuit was first filed in The Hague in 1999, and then in a United States court in 2002. This contributed to igniting the discussion on whether Germany can be held liable for the colonial crimes. Janntje Böhlke-Itzen, “Die bundesdeutsche Diskussion um die Reparationsfrage: Ein ‘ganz normaler Kolonialkrieg’?”, in *Genozid und Gedenken: Namibisch-deutsche Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Henning Melber (Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel, 2005), 103-120; Rachel J. Anderson, “Redressing Colonial Genocide Under International Law: The Hereros’ Cause of Action Against Germany,” *California Law Review* 93 (2005): 1155-1189; A. D. Cooper, “Reparations for the Herero Genocide: Defining the Limits of International Litigation,” *African Affairs* 106, 422 (2006): 113-126; Jörn Kämmerer and Jörg Föh, “Das Völkerrecht als Instrument der Wiedergutmachung? Eine kritische Betrachtung am Beispiel des Herero-Aufstandes,” *Archiv des Völkerrechts* 42, 3 (2003): 294-328.

²⁸ http://www.zeit.de/reden/deutsche_aussenpolitik/fischer_durban_200136 (accessed 29 October 2012).

²⁹ *Bundestag* printed paper 15/3329.

³⁰

http://www.windhuk.diplo.de/Vertretung/windhuk/en/03/Commemorative__Years__2004__2005/Seite__Speech__2_004-08-14__BMZ.html (accessed 29 October 2012).

³¹ See the press statement “Gefühlsausbruch der Entwicklungsministerin kann Steuerzahler Milliarden Kosten – Überraschende Aussage vor den versammelten Hereros und ihren Rechtsanwälten,” 17 August 2004.

³² For further information on the project, see the government’s response to a parliamentary question: *Bundestag* printed paper 17/6227.

³³ “Anerkennung und Wiedergutmachung der deutschen Kolonialverbrechen im ehemaligen Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Bundestag* printed paper 16/4649.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ On the rejection of the motion, see *Bundestag* printed papers 16/6822 and 16/8418.

³⁶ For an overview of the discussion, see the *iz3w* special issue “Koloniale Sammelwut – die Restitution geraubter Gebeine,” *iz3w* 31 (2012).

³⁷ *Bundestag* printed papers 17/8057 and 17/6813.

³⁸ *Bundestag* printed paper 17/8057.

³⁹ *Bundestag* printed paper 17/9033 (new) and 17/8767.

⁴⁰ Society for Threatened Peoples, “100 Jahre Völkermord an Herero und Nama,” *Menschenrechtsreport* 32 (2004): 16-17. A more recent example is the resolution by AfricAvenir, which calls among other things for the establishment of a federal foundation aimed at promoting a “post-colonial culture of remembrance.” This should include, among other things, a “critical engagement with the genocide and with German colonialism as a whole,” and the ensuring of a “broader understanding of colonialism, racism and their consequences in the German public and in schools.” AfricAvenir, March 2012, see note 4.

⁴¹ Berlin, for example, abandoned the approval procedure in 2004, however most federal states continue to use it in lower secondary education. Cf. the Georg Eckert Institute’s synopses of the approved textbooks published in the course of the entire period studied.

⁴² Only in the grammar school syllabus “G8 Geschichte,” 2009.

⁴³ Arne Lietz, “Der Armenische Genozid als Unterrichtsgegenstand in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” in *Aufklärung, Bildung, “Histotainment”?* *Zeitgeschichte in Unterricht und Gesellschaft heute*, eds M. Barricelli and J. Hornig (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2008), 237-46. The guide was produced by LISUM (the State Institute for Schools and Media in Berlin-Brandenburg) and the Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Research; various other violent crimes of the twentieth century are also addressed. LISUM Berlin-Brandenburg, *Völkermorde und staatliche Gewaltverbrechen im 20. Jahrhundert als Thema schulischen Unterrichts* (Ludwigfelde-Struveshof, 2005).

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- ⁴⁴ Gunter Spraul, "Der 'Völkermord' an den Herero: Untersuchungen zu einer neuen Kontinuitätsthese," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 39 (1988): 713-739.
- ⁴⁵ Willi Nikolay, "Der Hereroaufstand von 1904 in Südwestafrika: Das Deutsche Reich als Kolonialmacht," *Praxis Geschichte* 1 (1993): 38-43. Here, he refers back among other things to Spraul und Drechsler's texts.
- ⁴⁶ Anne Kerber, "Kolonialgeschichte in deutschen Schulbüchern: Kritisch oder kritikwürdig?," in *Kolonialismus und Erinnerungskultur: Die Kolonialvergangenheit im kollektiven Gedächtnis der deutschen und niederländischen Einwanderungsgesellschaft*, eds H. Lutz and K. Gawarecki (Münster: Waxmann, 2005), 81-93.
- ⁴⁷ Three Trotha quotations and a German general-staff report are offered. Anke Poenicke, *Afrika realistisch darstellen: Diskussionen und Alternativen zur gängigen Praxis - Schwerpunkt Schulbücher*, Zukunftsforum Politik 55 (Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2003).
- ⁴⁸ The years around 1990 were still a period of transition. During this time, the topic began to establish itself in the textbooks. Two editions of EUV were published in 1990, one which makes no mention of the events, and one which devotes (with sources) a double-page spread to the topic. In the years that follow, every textbook in the sample addresses the Herero uprising.
- ⁴⁹ MO, 2006, 137.
- ⁵⁰ ZR, 2006, 42.
- ⁵¹ TG, 1997, 94. EUV also provides an opportunity to address the construction of the railway line throughout, since it is illustrated by a map. However the editorial text contains no information on it. A similar map is sometimes also reproduced in KON.
- ⁵² One exception is GUG, which continues to refer to East Africa even in later editions. The death toll among the Nama is sometimes also given.
- ⁵³ GUG, 1990, 214, 218.
- ⁵⁴ GUG, 1996, 754; 2007, 239.
- ⁵⁵ EUV, 1998, 244-245.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.* These tasks were also included in 2009, 162-163.
- ⁵⁷ E.g. DWZ, 1998, 106.
- ⁵⁸ TG/DWZ, 1997-2001.
- ⁵⁹ ZFG, 2010, 64.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.* One of the few other textbooks to offer a definition of genocide is the 2006 edition of ZR, 42: "Mass extermination, even to the point of eradication, of people belonging to a national, ethnic or religious group." Examples given are the "persecution of the European Jews during the Second World War" and the "mass murder the Tutsi people in Rwanda." In the text, ZR chooses an indirect description for the Herero (cf. note 50). The definition disappears again in the later editions.
- ⁶¹ MO, 2006, 136. KON, 2006, 126. GE, 1990, 189. DWZ, 2009, 213. GUG, 2006, 122.
- ⁶² Exceptions are EUV, which instead reproduces a general-staff report (1998, 182-3), and GUG throughout. Sources are not always attributed, though some books point out that they have used sources from Drechsler or Spraul, regardless of whether or not they support their theories.
- ⁶³ TG/DWZ, 1997, 96. The question features, with variations, until the 2011 edition. In some cases the order of the day is included, in others not. At least one edition adds that the Emperor retracted the order one month later.
- ⁶⁴ From the 2008 edition, 209.
- ⁶⁵ Included for the first time in 2006, 137, and also reproduced in later editions.
- ⁶⁶ DWZ, 2004, 163.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.* The newspaper article from Namibia deals only with the fact that the Namibian government does not support the demands.
- ⁶⁸ DWZ, 2009.

The Image of Italian Colonialism in Italian History Textbooks for Secondary Schools

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Abstract • This article reconstructs the evolution of the representation of Italian colonialism in history textbooks for upper secondary schools from the Fascist era to the present day. The textbook analysis is conducted here in parallel with the development of Italian historiography, with special attention being paid to the myth of the “good Italian,” incapable of war crimes and violence against civilians, which has been cherished by Italian public opinion for a long time. Italian historians have thoroughly reconstructed the crimes perpetrated by the Italian army both in the colonies and in Yugoslavia and Greece during the Second World War, and this issue has slowly entered history textbooks.

Keywords • Eritrea, Ethiopia, history textbooks, Italian colonialism, Libya, Omar al-Mukhtar, war crimes

A Short History of Italian Colonialism¹

Italy's colonial history began in Eastern Africa in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. In 1882 the Italian government bought the bay of Assab from the Italian shipping company Rubattino, which in turn had bought it in 1869 from the sultan of Raheita with the aim of creating a post en route to the East. A few years later, in 1885, Italian troops occupied the port of Massawa further north on the Eritrean coast, from where they tried to enlarge their area of control in Ethiopia. This was the start of a long lasting phase of tensions that culminated in two battles, Dogali in 1887 and Adwa in 1896, in which Italian troops were heavily defeated. By 1889 Italy had created a zone of influence in Somalia by establishing protectorates in the sultanates of Hobyo (Obbia) and Majeerteen (Migiurtinia) and by negotiating the lease of the Banaadir ports from the sultan of Zanzibar. Italian influence

gradually turned into full and direct control. Banaadir became the Italian colony of Somalia in 1908, to which Hobyo and Majeerteen were annexed in 1927 as a result of military intervention.

Italy's second area of interest was the Mediterranean; after a war against the Ottoman Empire from 1911 to 1912 they occupied Libya. The subsequent peace treaty did not result in the pacification of the new colony; guerillas lead by the Senussi, the political-religious organization which had had *de facto* rule over the hinterland under the Ottoman empire, continued to strenuously resist Italian rule, and Italian control was subsequently limited to Tripoli and a few places on the coast. Therefore the Italian government came to a series of agreements with local leaders during and after the First World War, which gave them great autonomy. This settlement was, however, short lived; in 1923, shortly after Mussolini came to power, a military campaign was launched to gain control over the whole of Libya. This war lasted nine years, during which the Italians resorted to severe measures, such as the destruction of livestock, reprisals and mass deportations of civilians to concentration camps. The casualty rate was high, and the guerrillas were eventually defeated in 1932 with the execution of their leader Omar al-Mukhtar.

The colonial endeavors both in Eastern Africa and in Libya met with strong domestic opposition in liberal Italy, in particular from Republicans, Socialists and Anarchists, because in their opinion these endeavors diverted and wasted the scarce resources necessary for the development of Italy, and because they were wars of conquest, therefore morally unacceptable. On the opposing side, besides the usual European rhetoric on the civilizing mission of the white man, there was a particularly Italian addition, the demographic argument. Italy was in fact experiencing a heavy and constant outward migratory flow, in particular to the Americas, and the idea was to redirect this flow towards Italian colonies in order for national manpower not to be dispersed and lost. Giovanni Pascoli, one of the most important Italian poets at the time, celebrated the occupation of Libya with a speech called "The great proletariat has risen" (*La grande proletaria si è mossa*),² where he said that Italians were now no longer obliged to emigrate to countries where they were exploited and despised, and he also saw the brave and successful Italian army as a means to achieve national interclass unity. Meanwhile German-Italian sociologist Robert Michels theorized on the demographic specificity of Italian colonialism, which he defined as "poor people's imperialism" (*l'imperialismo della povera gente*),³ a definition which was picked up by Lenin⁴ in an contrasting, rather more critical analysis of Italian colonial ideology. Hence the unmistakably derogatory concept of "ragged imperialism" (*imperialismo straccione*), which has become popular among anti-colonialist Italian scholars.

The Second Italo-Ethiopian War from 1935 to 1936 (known in Italy as *Guerra d’Etiopia*) was supported by general consensus and popular enthusiasm. The fascist regime had long since silenced any opposition and was highly skilled in organizing a massive, pervasive and efficient propaganda machine. During the campaign the Italian army used chemical weapons (including mustard gas) extensively against troops and civilians, despite the fact that Italy had signed the Geneva Protocol of 1925 prohibiting their use. *Negus* Haile Selassie denounced these war crimes at the League of Nations and was widely supported in the international press.⁵ Resistance continued after the end of the war and was brutally repressed by Italians. However, Italian rule in Ethiopia was very shortlived. Italian colonies became battlefields during the Second World War: Eastern Africa was soon lost in 1941. In Libya the conflict lasted longer, and the colony was lost in 1943. Under the terms of the peace treaty at the end of the Second World War all Italian colonies immediately gained independence, with only Somalia remaining under Italian trusteeship until 1 July 1960.

History Textbooks during the Fascist Era

During the Fascist rule, history textbooks clearly reflected the regime’s propaganda, with particular focus on the conquest of Ethiopia. I will provide examples of this by examining two of the most important textbooks for secondary schools (*Licei and Istituti Magistrali*), one by Alfonso Manaresi and the second by Niccolò Rodolico. These books are important because they passed through the school defascistification process and comparison of the editions before and after the war clearly shows how the authors reacted to the political changes.

Alfonso Manaresi started work as a textbook author in the late 1920s and his books were still being published in 1963. In the 1940 edition he was critical of the first Italian colonial enterprises, citing the lack of knowledge, experience and will which accompanied them. The defeat of Dogali, he wrote, provoked in “the listless Italy at the time much more sorrow than outrage.”⁶ Only Prime Minister Francesco Crispi attempted a “stronger and worthier policy,”⁷ driven by “his dream of a great Italian colonial empire,”⁸ but he failed at Adwa because of mistakes made by the military, and the subsequent political opposition made any retaliation impossible. This attitude had a negative effect on public opinion, which remained hostile for quite some time to any colonial enterprise, until a new national attitude contributed to the conquest of Libya in 1911 and 1912. Manaresi did not hide the violent side of this campaign, on the contrary, he celebrated it as Italians’ reaction against the deceitful conduct of the enemy, who he held fully responsible:

Some units of ours, encouraged by the feigned kindness of the Arabs, moved too far into the oasis behind Tripoli and were slaughtered. Our reaction was immediate: we captured the culprits of the treachery, executed the chiefs, commanded respect for our flag and defeated the Turkish-Arab advance that followed.⁹

To the next war against Ethiopia, Manaresi devoted a twenty-one page chapter, which he opened with a description of the history of the country after Adwa. He depicted Ethiopia in very negative terms, as a country incapable of becoming civilized because of incompetent leaders and hostile people:

The *ras*, powerful feudal lords, extorted money savagely from the subjugated peoples, impoverished them with recurrent raids, robbed them of their harvest and livestock, enslaved whole tribes and acted cruelly against everybody. Ethiopia thus entered the twentieth century as primitive country, where civil progress was impossible, where slavery was openly practised and where barbarism triumphed in the most offensive way.¹⁰

The civilizing mission of Italy and the reiterated demographic argument was used as the Italian justification for the occupation, unleashed ultimately by the hostile attitude of the *negus* Haile Selassie towards Italy. The occupation ended in a violent confrontation at Welwel (Ual Ual), on the Somali border. Manaresi devoted much space to the diplomatic context, underlining the fundamental role of the United Kingdom, which backed Ethiopia and eventually managed to persuade the League of Nations to impose sanctions on Italy for its aggression towards Ethiopia. Manaresi then described the military events in great detail, and in particular celebrated the occupation of Adwa with these words: “the martyrs of 1896 had been avenged!”¹¹ The proclamation of the Italian Empire in Ethiopia was then extolled with extensive quotations from Mussolini’s speeches, and the chapter ended with an illustration of the projects for the economic valorization of the country. Especially interesting is how Manaresi dealt with the reports of war crimes from international observers. He mentioned these charges (keeping silent about the use of chemical weapons), but totally discredited the observers, and turned the accusation by denouncing Ethiopian crimes and British involvement in the delivery of forbidden weapons:

Foreign journalists nested in Addis Abeba bustled about inventing news of absurd Abyssinian victories, telling fantastic stories of Italian bombings on Red Cross hospitals, fiercely distorting our every action, and carefully hiding from their gullible readers that Abyssinians used expanding bullets (*dum dum*) against Italians that were made in English factories and forbidden by international law, and that they also horrendously mutilated prisoners.¹²

A more sober note can be found in Rodolico's textbook published in 1938. In his presentation of the events in Eastern Africa at the end of the nineteenth century he played down the defeat of Adwa, which he mentioned without giving details and simply defined as "a military failure,"¹³ which had been followed by other Italian military successes that had prevented Ethiopians from taking further advantage. The Italian counter initiative was not stopped by a lack of military prowess, but by the action of defeatists, and here Rodolico joined Manaresi in blaming the politicians and society of the time. The subsequent occupation of Libya was presented by Rodolico as a sign of the arrival of Italy on the international stage, "the best way to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Kingdom,"¹⁴ but he gave no information about the campaign. Then came the chapter "Italy and its Empire" on Fascist colonial policy. Rodolico opened it by commenting on the reconquest of Libya, criticizing the "unwise policy of transferring democratic systems"¹⁵ to this colony, which was practised by successive liberal governments and which the Fascist government had soon replaced with a policy of "forceful submission"¹⁶ and repression of the revolt. Then Rodolico came to the Second Italo-Ethiopian war, differing from Manaresi in the propagandistic presentation. Among the motivations he included demographics, but he also evoked the myth of African colonization perpetrated by Ancient Rome, a strong and recurrent element in Fascist propaganda. Unlike Manaresi, Rodolico did not insist upon the depiction of Ethiopian barbarism and backwardness, with the exception of an incidental reference to slavery. Instead, he focused only on the volte-face of Haile Selassie, who after an initially friendly and collaborative attitude towards Italy had started an aggressive policy with the aim of getting access to the Red Sea through Italian Eritrea. Moreover, unlike Manaresi, Rodolico did not mention either the accusations made by foreign observers against Italy, or Italian accusations of Ethiopian war crimes: a strategy of silence instead of denial.

The First History Textbooks of Republican Italy

After the end of the Fascist regime, Manaresi fundamentally changed his narrative on the Second Italo-Ethiopian War¹⁷ in order to comply with the new antifascist vision, whilst the presentation of the previous colonial enterprises remained the same. In the new version, released in 1949, he still used the demographic argument as the main reason for the colonial enterprises, but only an isolated reference to the “slave driver government” survived from the previous propaganda against Ethiopian barbarism. No information on the course of the war or on war crimes was provided. The most significant feature of the Ethiopian war was now a negative one. Manaresi wrote that it had brought about the end of the League of Nations and the “enslavement” of Italy to Germany, thus preparing the way for the Second World War.

In the 1963 edition of his textbook Rodolico still gave the demographic argument as the main motivation for Italian colonialism, part of the civilizing mission of European powers in Africa, in which Italy had to participate. But after conquering Libya and Somalia, according to Rodolico, Italian colonialism became excessive because of the will to create an empire without fully considering the obstacles and difficulties, in particular the hostility of the great powers. An aggressive Ethiopian policy against Italy was no longer referred to, rather Rodolico wrote that the initial incident could not be resolved because Italy lacked the necessary good will.¹⁸ From both authors there was therefore a condemnation of the war against Ethiopia, but a positive evaluation of the previous colonial enterprises.

But not every history textbook author who had been active under Fascism changed his mind so fundamentally after the establishment of the Republic. Francesco Calderaro, writing in 1954, developed a demographic argument to unhesitatingly defend and praise Italian colonialism. He defined it as “symbiotic” and totally different from the “parasitic” colonialism practiced by France and Great Britain. Italian colonialism was in his words the “expression of a truly democratic vision of human society,”¹⁹ because via emigration it created richness and civilization for the colonized peoples, without exploitation but with mutual benefit. He therefore vehemently protested against the loss of the colonies forced upon Italy by the peace treaty. At least those colonies conquered before Fascism by Italian “demo-liberal” governments should have been kept, consistent with the declarations made by the Allies during the war, when they pretended to be against Fascism only and not against Italy. According to Calderaro the Great Powers were already paying the price for their egotistic policy against Italy because in their colonies independence movements were already stirring. This led him to expect the end of parasitic colonialism. But for the good, symbiotic Italian style colonialism, Calderaro foresaw a new, brilliant future:

Symbiotic colonialism, temporarily suppressed, can only start again. It will happen, because this is the age of labor, and the stable forces of labor will find their way sooner or later. And then our turn will come, the turn of our great population of workers.²⁰

This great diversity of visions in history textbooks is explained by the fact that in Republican Italy state control on textbooks had been abolished; apart from Fascist apologetics, which was universally forbidden by a law of 1952. Textbook authors had therefore, and still have, great freedom of presentation and interpretation.

In this context it is interesting to observe some relevant aspects of the defascistification of schools. The Control Commission, established by the Instrument of Surrender after the Italian armistice in September 1943, decided to screen all existing textbooks in order to disinfect schools from fascist ideology. Those which were considered infected were withdrawn; the neutral ones were kept; those only partially infected were amended. This was the case for history textbooks, from which only the pages dealing with the period after the First World War, obviously permeated by Fascist propaganda, were removed. This measure was intended to be provisional, whilst waiting for new history textbooks to be published,²¹ but instead it lasted until the end of the 1950s. In fact the Democrazia Cristiana party, after breaking the government alliance with the Communist and Socialist parties in 1947 and definitively turning to the center, preferred this sensitive part of Italian contemporary history not to be taught, because it also included the controversial Italian resistance movement (*Resistenza*), in which the role of the left wing parties had been especially important. At the time, therefore, the history curricula ended with 1918, and the teaching of history after that period was only reintroduced in 1960, when the Democrazia Cristiana party had to accept the support of the Socialist Party.

During this time, however, not all history textbook authors strictly followed the curricula, as shown by the above cases of Maresi and Calderaro (whilst Rodolico,²² in his edition of 1951, stopped at the end of the First World War). Some of the new history textbook authors also decided not to shy away from telling the history of Fascism and of the Second World War. Among them, Raffaello Morghen justified Mussolini's colonial policy as the necessary "outlet of the natural demographic pressure of a people who could find in their fatherland neither bread nor work,"²³ and did not mention any violence, either in Libya or in Ethiopia. Totally different was the attitude of Armando Saitta, a prominent Marxist historian, who in his textbook published in 1954 condemned the conquest of Ethiopia as a "fruit out of season."²⁴ Whilst during the nineteenth century, he wrote, this enterprise would have been

neither more meritorious nor more blameworthy than the many other colonial enterprises, at that moment it had a totally different meaning, not only because the time of colonization was in decline but also because Ethiopia was a member of the League of Nations and the war challenged the international order. Saitta also mentioned the use of poison gas, which killed “thousands... [of] poorly armed Abyssinians.”²⁵

The Controversial Issue of Italian Crimes

Saitta’s attention to this war crime is especially noteworthy because at that time it was absent from public opinion and from historical research. The whole issue of Italian war crimes, perpetrated not only in the colonies but also in Yugoslavia and in Greece during the Second World War, was actually concealed or denied for a long time, because it destroyed the widely accepted and cherished myth of the “good Italian” (*Italiani, brava gente*), incapable of atrocities. This sanitized vision of the Italian military was made possible primarily by the absence of trials against Italian war criminals after the Second World War, which would have provided evidence of crimes and informed public opinion. Ethiopia, in fact, was excluded from the competences of the United Nations Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes at the insistence of the British Foreign Office, whose public argument was that this commission was only to deal with crimes perpetrated during the Second World War, but whose underlying intention was not to spoil relations with Marshal Pietro Badoglio. As the commander in chief during the war against Ethiopia, Badoglio was responsible for the use of chemical weapons, but he succeeded Mussolini as prime minister in July 1943 and collaborated with the Allies in negotiating the Italian armistice and also afterwards, when Italy became co-belligerent. Contrary to the wishes of the Foreign Office, the peace treaty signed by Italy in 1947 established the Italian government’s responsibility for the apprehension and surrender of persons accused of war crimes and crimes against peace or humanity including during the war against Ethiopia. Ethiopia therefore asked for the surrender of Badoglio and Marshal Rodolfo Graziani, responsible for the reprisals when he was viceroy of Ethiopia, but met with British resistance and Italian refusal, and soon dropped this initiative in order not to jeopardize its more important diplomatic action to annex Eritrea.²⁶ Similar fortune met the Italians who were requested by Yugoslavia and other countries to be judged as war criminals. Italy was in fact supported in its refusal to surrender them by the US and the UK, due to the emerging cold war.²⁷

Colonial studies developed slowly in postwar Italy. In 1952 the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs created a commission for the documentation of Italian activities in Africa

(*Comitato per la documentazione dell'opera dell'Italia in Africa*), mostly set up by former colonial officials and by historians, like Raffaele Ciasca and Carlo Giglio, who were sympathetic to Italian colonialism.²⁸ They produced many volumes rich in information on specific topics, like legislation, justice, civil administration, archeological discoveries, ethnological research, cartography and military operations, but hid the sensitive issues of repression and the use of chemical weapons in Ethiopia.²⁹ The first major and independent research of high scientific quality concerning Italian colonialism before (and including) the battle of Adwa was published in 1958 by Roberto Battaglia.³⁰ Francesco Malgeri published a well-documented book in 1970, on the war in Libya where he also wrote about the repression of the indigenous peoples after the heavy Italian defeat at Sciara Sciat.³¹ The seminal contribution on Ethiopia was written by Angelo Del Boca, with a volume³² published in 1965, where he proved the use of chemical weapons. In 1973 Giorgio Rochat gave a precise account of the repression in Libya,³³ and Carlo Zaghi reported extensively on the atrocities in Libya and Ethiopia.³⁴ Between 1976 and 1987, Del Boca published a set of four volumes on Ethiopia.³⁵ The first of these covered the period from the beginning of the rise of Fascism, and the second one, published in 1979, dealt with the 1935 to 1936 war, and extensively reported the use of chemical weapons. Del Boca also published two volumes on Libya.³⁶ Meanwhile British historian Denis Mack Smith, in his successful book *Le guerre del Duce*, published in Italian in 1976,³⁷ also gave a precise account of Italian violence in Libya and Ethiopia.³⁸

Immediately after its publication in 1965, Del Boca's denunciation of the use of chemical weapons provoked outraged reactions from the right-wing public, who denied that it had happened and accused him of defamation of the military personnel who had participated in that campaign. Particularly long and relevant was the controversy with Indro Montanelli, one of the most influential conservative journalists, who was an officer during the campaign in Ethiopia and who fiercely denied the use of chemical weapons on the basis of his own experience and who in general supported a positive vision of Italian colonialism. Finally in 1996, very late indeed, came the official declaration when General Domenico Corcione, Minister of Defense in the "technocratic" government led by Lamberto Dini, answered a question put by a group of MPs and acknowledged that archival sources proved the use of chemical weapons in Ethiopia.³⁹

The debate on Italian war crimes also involved the popular media. There was an important television documentary about the second Italo-Ethiopian war, "Empire. an adventure in Africa" (*L'Impero, un'avventura Africana*), whose screenplay was written by director Massimo Sani with the help of Del Boca. It was aired by the first channel RAI, the Italian state broadcasting company, on 3 October 1985, which coincided with the fiftieth

anniversary of the beginning of the war.⁴⁰ In this documentary much proof of the use of chemical weapons and of other Italian war crimes was presented clearly and extensively as never before to a wide public. But the issue of war crimes and of colonial wars continued to be uncomfortable and still proved able to stir up denial and controversy. In 1981 the Libyan government funded *The Lion of the Desert*, a film depicting the life of Omar al-Mukhtar which was directed by Moustapha Akkad and had a cast of famous actors such as Oliver Reed, Anthony Quinn, Raf Vallone and Rod Steiger. However, the film was banned in Italy as it was deemed disparaging to the honor of the Italian army.⁴¹ At the end of the 1980s, another television documentary called *Fascist Legacy* (which was aired on 1 and 8 October 1989) addressed the issue of Italian war crimes in Ethiopia, in Libya and in the Balkans during the Second World War. It was produced by the BBC and directed by Ken Kirby with the collaboration of US journalist Michael Palumbo, who was the first to work in the archives of the United Nations War Crimes Commission.⁴² The documentary illustrated, using an abundance of documents, videos and interviews, the repression in Libya in the 1920s and 1930s, the use of chemical weapons in Ethiopia as well as the bombing of Red Cross hospitals and the reprisals after the attack against Graziani, as well as the deportation of Slovenian civilians to the concentration camp on the island of Rab, where there was a high death toll, and finally explained the reasons why Italian war criminals had not been surrendered. The Italian embassy in London immediately protested to the BBC director-general, and accused the documentary of damaging the image of Italy by focusing only on its crimes and ignoring those committed by other belligerents.⁴³ This negative reaction seems to be connected not with the crimes in Ethiopia, which had been already shown to the Italian public by RAI, but rather with the crimes perpetrated during the Second World War and possibly above all with the immunity granted to Italian war criminals, which was rather embarrassing for the Italian republican ruling class because it was evidence of complicity with the Fascist rulers. The opposition to this documentary was persistent. In Italy the documentary was suppressed: RAI bought it, never to air it. It was only shown in Italian antifascist clubs, and only aired in 2004 by the private TV channel La7.

Meanwhile historical research into Italian colonialism has greatly developed as has, since the 1980s, research into the war in Yugoslavia. In fact in the new political climate after Tito's death many Yugoslavian sources were disclosed to historians as were many in Italy. An intensive and fruitful exchange took place among historians, which has clarified most aspects of that war.⁴⁴ A full picture of Italian war crimes could therefore be drawn.

Italian History Textbooks since the 1970s

Italian history textbooks, the great majority of whose authors were professional historians, gave a critical vision of Italian colonialism during the decades after the 1970s, but placed different emphasis on different events. The second Italo-Ethiopian war generally received more interest than the previous colonial wars. Although to varying degrees the authors tended to highlight the diplomatic context and the debates in Italy on colonialism and its economic aspects, and did not really conceptualize the issue of war crimes in Libya and Ethiopia as a feature of Italian colonialism, resulting in great discontinuity and gaps in their narratives. In addition references to war crimes were often too vague, without the necessary details which give a concrete idea of what happened and make the information really meaningful for the readers.⁴⁵ Some authors covered Libya but not Ethiopia, or vice versa. The use of chemical weapons in Ethiopia was generally mentioned, but certainly less often than the repression by Graziani. Giorgio Spini in 1976 included a 1911 article from the newspaper “La Stampa” among the documents in his textbook, in which the journalist Giuseppe Bevione related with satisfaction the executions and the deportation of Arabs after the battle of Sciarra Sciat.⁴⁶ Concerning the war against Ethiopia, he wrote nothing about the use of chemical weapons, but did mention the “cruel reprisals” carried out by governor Graziani against the guerrillas.⁴⁷ Unlike Spini, Franco Cardini and Giovanni Cherubini wrote in 1977 about the use of poison gas in Ethiopia,⁴⁸ but ignored the repression after the end of the war and also the repression in Libya. Similarly Massimo Bontempelli and Ettore Bruni⁴⁹ in 1983, Peppino Ortoleva and Marco Revelli in 1988⁵⁰ and Antonio Desideri⁵¹ in 1989 merely mentioned the use of chemical weapons in Ethiopia, with Desideri also adding two texts by Del Boca to the document section on the repression of the guerrillas and on Haile Selassie’s speech to the League of Nations.⁵² In 1998 the textbook by Andrea Giardina, Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto only made passing reference⁵³ to the use of poison gas in Ethiopia,⁵³ and no changes or additions were made to the following editions of this textbook in 1993⁵⁴ and 2000.⁵⁵ The textbook published in 1998 by Tommaso Detti and others only used the word “brutality”⁵⁶ concerning the war in Libya, and simply defined the war against Ethiopia as “merciless,”⁵⁷ without giving any details, not even on the poison gas. Augusto Camera and Renato Fabietti in 1980 wrote about the “large recourse to massacres and dishonoring atrocities”⁵⁸ during the reconquest of Libya, but totally ignored war crimes in Ethiopia. In the following edition of 1987 they added two pictures concerning the burning of a village in 1936 and the fusillade attack on a group of Ethiopians in 1937, which they defined as “atrocious episodes of the Italian invasion,”⁵⁹ but still wrote nothing about the use of poison gas. The following edition of 1999 contained similar comment on the war against Ethiopia, and as

regards Libya, only added information about the execution of the “heroic leader of indigenous resistance Omar al-Mukhtar.”⁶⁰ Adriano Prospero and Paolo Viola wrote in 2000 about the massive use of chemical weapons in Ethiopia, and echoing the latest controversies they stressed that this crime had long been denied by Italian authorities but “recently established by incontrovertible proofs.”⁶¹ Despite including this information they wrote nothing about the repression after the end of the war or in Libya.

A more comprehensive presentation was given by Corrado Vivanti who, in 1988, defined the war against Ethiopia as “one of the first ‘total’ wars of our time,”⁶² because of the large use of airplanes and chemical weapons against civilians. He also mentioned Graziani’s ferocious and merciless behavior both in Libya and in Ethiopia. The textbook published in 1992 by Carlo Capra, Giorgio Chittolini and Franco Della Peruta also contained information about Italian crimes both in Libya and Ethiopia. In the case of the former they also unveiled a propaganda fake by reproducing a picture which the Italian official caption described as “Italian officers taking care of wounded enemies,” but which, the authors remarked, actually represented Italian officers surrounding shot Arabs.⁶³ Graziani’s hard policy of deportation during the reconquest of Libya was also mentioned. The use of poison gas in Ethiopia was mentioned, but not Graziani’s repression.⁶⁴

Most textbooks published during the last decade have not shown much improvement. Gaps and discontinuity persist, as well as an overall lack of detail. Antonio Brancati and Trebi Pagliarani in their textbook published in 2007 devoted many pages to the conquest of Libya, with great attention to reverse propaganda, but wrote only that Italy reacted to the guerrillas with “heavy and brutal repression.”⁶⁵ The text on the war against Ethiopia said nothing about chemical weapons, only that the campaign was carried on with “extreme harshness.”⁶⁶ A picture showed some corpses lying in a street and the caption explained that “the Fascist deeds were tarnished by atrocities and massacres, as shown by this picture of the Italian occupation of Addis Ababa,”⁶⁷ an example of very superficial information. Alberto Mario Banti in 2008 wrote about “very hard military techniques”⁶⁸ that were also used in Libya after the end of the war against combatants and civilians, and with regards Ethiopia he mentioned poison gas and mass deportations,⁶⁹ but not Graziani’s repression. The textbook published by Massimo Cattaneo, Claudio Canonici and Albertina Vittoria in 2009 only wrote about Libya that resistance was defeated in the 1930s “by violence,”⁷⁰ but devoted much more attention to the conquest of Ethiopia. This textbook in fact not only mentioned the use of chemical weapons and the massacres against civilians, but focused above all on the reprisals after the end of the war, in particular the massacre of Addis Ababa after the attack against Graziani and another episode unveiled in 2006 by the young Italian researcher Matteo Dominioni: the

massacre of the cave of Debre Birhan in 1939. In that event Italian troops used chemical weapons to kill a large number of civilians who supported the guerrillas and had taken shelter in a cave.⁷¹ The text ended by explicitly denouncing the myth of the “civilizing mission” of Italian colonialism.

The textbook which best challenges the myth of the good Italian and well conceptualizes the issue of Italian war crimes is the one published by Pietro Cataldi and others in 2009. In a long box with the title “A Film and a Documentary: ‘Italians, Good People?’” (*Un film e un documentario: italiani brava gente?*),⁷² the authors use the cases of the film *The desert Lion* and of the documentary *Fascist Legacy* to illustrate Italian war crimes in detail both in the colonies and during the Second World War, and to denounce their persistent official denial. In their conclusion the authors not only deconstruct the positive self-image nurtured by Italians, but also point out the specific fascist character of these crimes by comparing them with the more infamous Nazis:

All that demonstrates that, during Fascism, the Italian military didn’t have much to learn from the *Wehrmacht*, the SS or the German police, and disproves the *cliché*, which was perpetuated after the end of fascism of “Italians, Good People”, who were able, unlike other colonizers, to establish friendly relations with the subjugated peoples.⁷³

Conclusion

The myth of the good Italian is slowly vanishing from Italian history textbooks and the awareness of war crimes perpetrated by Italians both in the colonies and during the Second World War is becoming more and more widespread. This is relevant not only for the vision of Italian history, but also, more generally, for a better understanding of violence in war and of the relationships between Europeans and their colonies. Concerning the latter issue, much is certainly still to be done. In fact, in Italian history textbooks, and they are not alone, even if a self-critical presentation of colonialism is becoming commonplace, the focus of the narrative is still Eurocentric; the experience of colonized peoples at the time of European domination and their perception of these events today are missing. Research is advancing on this issue,⁷⁴ and will hopefully become a matter for history teaching in the future.

¹ For an extensive bibliography of Italian colonialism, see Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2002), 477-547. There is overwhelming research by Italian historians, but foreign scholars are also contributing, especially recently. Among the most recent publications are Patrizia Palumbo, ed., *A Place in the Sun: Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Aram Mattioli, *Experimentierfeld der Gewalt: Der Abessinienkrieg und seine internationale Bedeutung 1935-1941* (Zürich: Orell Füssli Verlag, 2005); Jacqueline Andall, Derek Duncan, eds., *Italian Colonialism: Legacy and Memory* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005); Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Mia Fuller, eds., *Italian Colonialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Mia Fuller, *Moderns Abroad. Architecture, Cities and Italian Imperialism* (London: Routledge, 2007); Immacolata Amodeo, "In the Empire's Eyes. Africa in Italian Colonial Cinema Between Imperial Fantasies and Blind Spots," in *Empires and Boundaries. Rethinking Race, Class, and Gender in Colonial Settings*, eds. H. Fischer-Tiné, S. Gehrman (New York: Routledge, 2009), 166-178; Chiara Volpato, "La violenza contro le donne nelle colonie italiane. Prospettive psicosociali di analisi," in *DEP – Deportate, esuli, profughe*, vol. 10 (2009), 111-131; Daniela Baratieri, *Memories and Silences Haunted by Fascism. Italian Colonialism MCMXXX-MCMLX* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010); Giovanna Leone, Tiziana Mastrovito, "Learning About Our Shameful Past: A Socio-Psychological Analysis of Present-Day Historical Narratives of Italian Colonial Wars," in *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 4, no. 1 (2010), 11-27; Grazia De Michele, "A beautiful moment of bravery and hard work': Italian colonialism in post-1945 history high school textbooks," in *Modern Italy* 16, no. 2 (May 2011): 105-120. See also the special issue "Italian Colonialism: Historical Perspectives" of the *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 8, no. 3 (2003).

² Published in "La Tribuna," 27 November 1911.

³ Robert Michels, *L'imperialismo italiano: studi politico-demografici* (Milan: Società editrice libraria, 1914).

⁴ Vladimir Ilić Lenin, *Imperialism and Socialism in Italy*, in *Lenin Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), vol. 21, 357-366 (from "Kommunist", nos. 1-2, 1915).

⁵ Daniel Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War* (London: Maurice Temple Smith in association with the London School of Economics and Political Science, 1975), 73-76; Franklin Laurens, *France and the Italo-Ethiopian crisis 1935-1936* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1967), 363.

⁶ Alfonso Manaresi, *Storia Contemporanea per i Licei classici, scientifici e gli istituti magistrali* (Milan: Casa editrice Luigi Trevisini, 1940), 252 [all translations by the author].

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 351.

⁹ Ibid., 265.

¹⁰ Ibid., 352-353.

¹¹ Ibid., 361f.

¹² Ibid., 363.

¹³ Niccolò Rodolico, *Sommario storico ad uso dei Licei e degli Istituti Magistrali con letture di documenti contemporanei. Volume terzo quarta edizione prima ristampa* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1938), 293.

¹⁴ Ibid., 298.

¹⁵ Ibid., 402.

¹⁶ Ibid., 403.

¹⁷ Alfonso Manaresi, *Storia Contemporanea. Dal Congresso di Vienna alla proclamazione della Repubblica Italiana. per i Licei classici, scientifici e gli istituti magistrali* (Milan: Casa editrice Luigi Trevisini, [about 1949]), 417-418.

¹⁸ Niccolò Rodolico, *Sommario storico ad uso dei Licei e degli Istituti Magistrali con letture di documenti contemporanei. Volume terzo undecima edizione secondo i nuovi programmi* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1963), 338-339.

¹⁹ Francesco Calderaro, *Civiltà mediterranea, Corso di storia per gli Istituti tecnici con numerose letture inserite nel testo e tavole sinottiche di tutta la materia. In conformità con i programmi*

ministeriale dell'8 VII 1946 (Torino, Milano, Genova, Parma, Roma, Catania: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1954), 342.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 343.

²¹ Sotto-Commissione dell'Educazione della Commissione alleata in Italia, *La Politica e la legislazione scolastica in Italia dal 1922 al 1943, con cenni introduttivi sui periodi precedenti e una parte conclusiva sul periodo post-fascista* (Milan: Garzanti, 1947), 389.

²² Niccolò Rodolico, *Sommario storico ad uso dei Licei e degli Istituti Magistrali con letture di documenti contemporanei. Volume terzo ottava edizione rinnovata* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1951).

²³ Raffaello Morghen, *Civiltà europea, corso di storia per le scuole medie superiori. Età contemporanea, quarta edizione riveduta, corretta e ampliata* (Palermo: Palumbo, 1951), 353.

²⁴ Armando Saitta, *Il cammino umano, corso di storia ad uso dei Licei*, vol. III (Firenze, La nuova Italia, 1954), 912.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 913.

²⁶ Richard Pankhurst, "Italian Fascist War Crimes in Ethiopia: A History of their Discussion, from the League of Nations to the United Nations (1936–1949)," *Northeast African Studies* 6, nos. 1-2 (1999): 83-140.

²⁷ Filippo Focardi, "La questione della punizione dei criminali di guerra in Italia dopo la fine del secondo conflitto mondiale," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 80 (2000): 543-624; Effie Pedaliu, "Britain and the 'Hand-over' of Italian War Criminals to Yugoslavia, 1945-48," *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 4 (special issue about Collective Memory) (2004): 503-529.

²⁸ Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 442-443.

²⁹ See Vincenzo Liroy, *L'opera dell'aeronautica. 2, Eritrea, Somalia, Etiopia, 1919-1937* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, 1965).

³⁰ Roberto Battaglia, *La prima guerra d'Africa* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1958).

³¹ Francesco Malgeri, *La Guerra libica (1911-1912)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1970), 192-195.

³² Angelo Del Boca, *La guerra d'Abissinia 1935-1941* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1965).

³³ Giorgio Rochat, "La repressione della resistenza araba in Cirenaica nel 1930-31, nei documenti dell'archivio Graziani," *Il Movimento di liberazione in Italia*, XXXV (1973) no. 110, 3-39.

³⁴ Carlo Zoghi, *L'Africa nella coscienza europea e l'imperialismo italiano* (Naples: Guida editori, 1973), 408-421.

³⁵ Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa orientale. 1: Dall'Unità alla marcia su Roma* (Rome and Bari: Editori Laterza, 1976); 2. *La Conquista dell'Impero*, idem, 1979; 3. *La caduta dell'Impero*, idem, 1982; 4. *Nostalgia delle colonie*, idem, 1984.

³⁶ Angelo Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Libia. 1: Tripoli bel suol d'amore, 1860-1922: 2: Dal fascismo a Gheddafi* (Roma and Bari: Editori Laterza, 1986).

³⁷ Denis Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce* (Roma and Bari: Editori Laterza, 1976).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 53f, 97f.

³⁹ For a detailed reconstruction of this controversy, see Angelo Del Boca, *Una lunga battaglia per la verità*, in *I gas di Mussolini. Il fascismo e la guerra d'Etiopia, con contributi di Giorgio Rochat, Ferdinando Prediali e Roberto Gentilli*, ed. A. Del Boca (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1996), 17-48.

⁴⁰ Giuseppe Mayda, "Cinquant'anni fa, in Abissinia," *La Stampa*, 13 July 1985; Ugo Buzzolan, "Com'era buio quel posto al sole," *La Stampa*, 3 October 1985; Arminio Savioli, "Guerra d'Etiopia Vietnam italiano," *l'Unità*, 3 October 1985.

⁴¹ Armando Gnisci, *Una storia diversa* (Rome: Meltemi, 2001), 41, footnote 14.

⁴² Brunello Mantelli, "Gli Italiani nei Balcani 1941-1943: occupazione militare, politiche persecutorie e crimini di guerra," *Qualestoria* 30, no. 1 (2002): 19-35, 19 footnote 1; Filippo Focardi, *Criminali a piede libero. La mancata "Norimberga italiana"*, in *Memoria e rimozione. I crimini di guerra del Giappone e dell'Italia*, eds. G. Contini, F. Focardi, M. Petricioli (Rome: Viella, 2010), 187-201, footnote 11.

⁴³ Alfio Bernabei, "E Londra salvò quei criminali italiani", *l'Unità*, 9 November 1989; Mario Ciriello, "La 'BBC' processa i crimini italiani," *La Stampa*, 10 November 1989; Nicola Tranfaglia, "Tutti assolti ...," *la Repubblica*, 12-13 November 1989.

⁴⁴ See for example Tone Ferenc, *La provincia "italiana" di Lubiana. Documenti 1941-1942* (Udine: Istituto friulano per la storia del movimento di liberazione, 1994); Marco Cuzzi, *L'occupazione italiana della Slovenia (1941-1943)* (Rome: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito – Ufficio storico, 1998); Brunello Mantelli, "Die Italiener auf dem Balkan 1941-1943," in *Europäische Sozialgeschichte. Festschrift für Wolfgang Schieder zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. C. Dipper, L. Klinkhammer, A. Nützenadel (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 2000), 57-74; Davide Rodogno, *Il Nuovo Ordine Mediterraneo. Le politiche di occupazione dell'Italia fascista in Europa (1940-1943)* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2003); Costantino di Sante, ed., *Italiani senza onore. I crimini in Jugoslavia e i processi negati (1941-1951)* (Verona: ombre corte, 2005); Davide Conti, *L'occupazione italiana dei Balcani. Crimini di guerra e mito della "brava gente" (1940-1943)* (Rome: Odradek, 2008); Elena Aga Rossi, Maria Teresa Giusti, *Una guerra a parte. I militari italiani nei Balcani* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2011); Amedeo Osti Guerrazzi, *L'Esercito italiano in Slovenia 1941-1943. Strategie di repressione antipartigiana* (Rome: Viella, 2011).

⁴⁵ In a recent article Giovanna Leone and Mauro Sarrica analyzed the different reactions in a sample of university students confronted with two versions of a text on the Second Italian Ethiopian war, the first one written in a factual and detailed way and the second one in an evasive one. All the participants shared at the beginning a general lack of knowledge of the events. Those reading the detailed and factual text reacted more emotionally than the others and showed a stronger will to carry out restorative actions in favor of the former colony. See Giovanna Leone, Mauro Sarrica, "When Ownership Hurts. Remembering the In-group Wrongdoings after a Long-lasting Collective Amnesia," *Human Affairs* 4 (2012): 603-612. See also Silvia Mari, Luca Andrighetto, Alessandro Gabbiadini, Federica Durante, Chiara Volpato, "The Shadow of the Italian Colonial Experience: The Impact of Collective Emotions on Intentions to Help the Victims' Descendants," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 4, no. 1 (2010): 58-74.

⁴⁶ Giorgio Spini, *Documenti e profilo storico, per le scuole medie superiori, volume III, Età contemporanea, Documenti, terza edizione aggiornata* (Rome: Edizioni Cremonese, 1976), 185-187.

⁴⁷ Giorgio Spini, *Documenti e profilo storico, per le scuole medie superiori, volume III, Età contemporanea, Profilo storico, terza edizione aggiornata* (Rome: Edizioni Cremonese, 1976), 236.

⁴⁸ Franco Cardini, Giovanni Cherubini, *Storia. 3 Contemporanea, per le scuole medie superiori* (Florence: Sansoni, 1977), 347-349.

⁴⁹ Massimo Bontempelli, Ettore Bruni, *Storia e coscienza storica*, vol. 3 (Milan: Trevisini editore, 1983), 737.

⁵⁰ Peppino Ortoleva, Marco Revelli, *La società contemporanea* (Milan: Edizioni scolastiche Bruno Mondadori, 1988), 389.

⁵¹ Antonio Desideri, *Storia e storiografia, nuova edizione aggiornata e ampliata con la collaborazione di Mario Themelly, 3: Dalla prima guerra mondiale alle soglie del Duemila* (Messina and Florence: Casa editrice G. D'Anna, 1989), 637.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 656-660.

⁵³ A. Giardina, G. Sabbatucci and V. Vidotto, *Manuale di storia, 3. L'età contemporanea* (Rome and Bari: Editori Laterza, 1988), 621.

⁵⁴ A. Giardina, G. Sabbatucci and V. Vidotto, *Storia documenti storiografia. Il mondo contemporaneo* (Rome and Bari: Editori Laterza, 1993), 569.

⁵⁵ A. Giardina, G. Sabbatucci. V. Vidotto, *Infostoria, 3, Dal 1900 a oggi* (Rome and Bari: Editori Laterza, 2000), 221.

⁵⁶ Tommaso Detti, Nicola Gallerano, Giovanni Gozzini, Gaetano Greco, Gabriella Piccinni, *La società moderna e contemporanea, 4. L'età dell'imperialismo* (Milan: Edizioni scolastiche Bruno Mondadori, 1998), 158.

⁵⁷ Tommaso Detti, Nicola Gallerano, Giovanni Gozzini, Gaetano Greco, Gabriella Piccinni, *La società moderna e contemporanea, 5. Guerre, totalitarismi, democrazie* (Milan: Edizioni scolastiche Bruno Mondadori, 1998), 197.

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- ⁵⁸ Augusto Camera, Renato Fabietti, *Elementi di storia, 3, L'età contemporanea* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1980²), 271.
- ⁵⁹ Augusto Camera, Renato Fabietti, *Elementi di storia, 3, L'età contemporanea* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1987³), 1223.
- ⁶⁰ Augusto Camera, Renato Fabietti, *Elementi di storia, 3, XX secolo* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1999⁴), 1152.
- ⁶¹ Adriano Prosperi, Paolo Viola, *Corso di storia, Il secolo XX* (Milan: Einaudi scuola, 2000), 109.
- ⁶² Corrado Vivanti, *L'età contemporanea* (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1988), 558.
- ⁶³ Carlo Capra, Giorgio Chittolini, Franco Della Peruta, *Corso di Storia. 3. L'Ottocento e il Novecento* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1992), 476.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 686.
- ⁶⁵ Antonio Brancati, Trebi Pagliarani, *Il nuovo dialogo con la storia, Corso di storia per il triennio, 3, Il Novecento* (Milan: La Nuova Italia, 2007), 73.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 262.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ Alberto Mario Banti, *Il senso del tempo, Manuale di storia, 1870-oggi* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 2008), 168.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 416.
- ⁷⁰ Massimo Cattaneo, Claudio Canonici, Albertina Vittoria, *Manuale di storia, 3. Il Novecento e il nuovo millennio* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 2009), 81
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 263.
- ⁷² Pietro Cataldi, Ennio Abate, Sara Luperini, Lidia Marchiani, Cinzia Spingola, *Di fronte alla storia. Eventi, persone, luoghi fra passato e presente, 3. Il Novecento e oltre (dal 1914 a oggi)* (Palermo G. B.: Palumbo editore, 2009), 148-149.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁴ See Irma Taddia, *Autobiografie africane. Il colonialismo nelle memorie orali* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1996), an oral history research in Ethiopia and Eritrea; and Andall, Duncan, eds., *Italian Colonialism*.



Constructing Aboriginal Australians, 1930-1960: Projecting False Memories

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Abstract • This paper offers a critical exploration of social studies textbooks and allied curriculum materials used in New South Wales primary schools between 1930 and 1960, and of the way in which these texts positioned, discussed and assessed Aboriginal Australians. With reference to European commitments to Enlightenment philosophies and social Darwinian views of race and culture, the author argues that Aboriginal peoples were essentialized via a discourse of paternalism, cultural and biological inferiority. Thus othered in narratives of Australian identity and national progress, Aboriginal Australians were ascribed a role as marginalized spectators or as a primitive and disappearing anachronism.

Keywords • aboriginal peoples, enlightenment, identity, objectification, othering, paternalism, racism, social studies, textbooks

Introduction

School textbooks are a ubiquitous feature of classroom life and are recognized as powerful hegemonic resources in the processes of cultural transmission. As such, they reveal much of the culture, ideology and values of the times and societies within which they are manufactured. In their attempts to forge a connection between past and present social studies, textbooks present legitimated sets of filtered and reductive national narratives that socially reconstruct the past, often in ways designed to alleviate contemporary alarms and anxieties.¹ This process inevitably, and often deliberately, leads to the dominance of some historical narratives over others in ways that profoundly impacts upon what learners come to know and understand. One clear outcome is the emergence of cultural silences or what Michael Apple calls “mentioning,” where texts provide “... limited and isolated elements of the history and culture of less powerful groups...”² As Keith Crawford and Stuart Foster have argued, the results of this are seen in the social studies

textbooks of many nations that have at particular historical moments forgotten or marginalized particular social, cultural and ethnic groups and in doing so have written them out of the national past.³ This happens because central to the construction of an ideology of belonging is the act of imagining the outsider, the “other”, who is positioned in direct opposition to “us” and “our” values, beliefs and identities.⁴ Through a process of omission and exclusion, definitions of the “other” hegemonically help communities to define who they think they were, are and want to be by rejecting alternative and different cultural histories, identities, values and lifestyles and in doing so reduce the other to the extremities of public consciousness.

These principles have long tracked their way through Australian society and history, where the institutionalized othering of Aboriginal peoples has had a highly significant discursive power that for two centuries has been locked deep within the national psyche. At the heart of Australia's national identity and an Australian sense of belonging are Aboriginal peoples, the original owners of the land whose culture and history is etched into the physical, spiritual and emotional fabric of the continent.⁵ Unlike the history of Australia's colonial settlers, the history of Aboriginal peoples cannot be easily romanticized or sentimentalized when, for much of the last two hundred years, their place within dominant cultural discourses has been characterized either by the fleeting shadows they cast at the edges of European colonisation or by their sheer invisibility. Within this context the analysis offered here focuses upon representations of Aboriginal peoples and their culture in the popular media. It then goes on to focus on the manner in which Aboriginal Australians were positioned, debated and judged in a sample of social studies textbooks and allied curriculum materials used between the 1930s and 1960s, where self-identification with Great Britain as “home” was being eroded by an awareness of a distinctive Australian national identity and the emergence of new ideas, new ambitions and the writing of a new history.⁶

Sample

The sample used in this study consists of, first, a range of textbooks used for the teaching of social studies in primary schools in New South Wales and, second, an analysis of selected copies of *The School Magazine*, which was published monthly since 1916 and issued free to all primary school children. The textbooks selected for analysis were endorsed by the Department of Education and most commonly in use in New South Wales (NSW) primary schools. The sample of eight textbooks is small because social studies texts in NSW enjoyed a significantly long shelf-life.. Many of the textbooks analysed were based upon earlier editions that remained in use into the 1960s while their discourse, meanings and significance lasted noticeably longer. Authors whose

work is discussed, such as Orlando Hunt, William Morris, Sidney Lenehan and George Spaul, wrote social studies, English, geography and history texts for primary schools for decades. Orlando Hunt and Sidney Lenehan began writing English, social studies and history textbooks in the 1940s and William Morris in the 1930s. George Spaul began writing history and geography textbooks in 1922 and during the next forty years became Australia's most prolific school textbook author by reworking earlier editions of his texts in response to changes in the school syllabus.

Those attending primary schools could expect to be taught via the textbook. Some children had individual copies but more usually the text was used to structure the teacher's planning and pedagogy, from which few ever departed. School textbooks in the small and fractured Australian market were often badly written, full of errors and decades out of date. This situation was readily overlooked by publishers if a book continued to sell. Teachers often had to use what one commentator described as a "... load of rubbish which may have to be reissued to generation after generation of pupils."⁷ Many parents could not afford to purchase texts that rose in price and seemingly differed little in content from earlier copies.⁸ This was especially true during the 1940s as a consequence of a paper shortage and during the post-war period, when claims were made that, "Equipment and textbooks were out of date or were not provided at all."⁹

Far more common than the textbook as a source of historical understanding was *The School Magazine*. First published in 1916 within an emerging climate of pedagogical and curriculum reform, based upon greater understanding of children's cognitive, social and emotional development, *The School Magazine* replaced the increasingly hackneyed and archaic "school readers", some of which dated from the 1880s. At a time when school libraries were rare this monthly magazine issued free to all primary school children Australianized children's literature and encouraged reading for pleasure; its mixture of historical and contemporary fiction and non-fiction stories, songs, games and activities has, since 1916, consistently represented for thousands of children an introduction to an uncomplicated and uncontentious interpretation of Australia and its peoples.¹⁰

Methodological Framework

The methodological approach adopted in this study is based upon the claim that debates and controversies surrounding the construction of school textbook knowledge demonstrate how they habitually involve confrontations over the ideological manufacture and political maintenance of a nation's collective memory. Having been allocated the role of a legitimate form of knowledge, school textbooks become "... messages to and about the future"¹¹. As John Issitt has suggested, if we look hard enough the view that school textbooks are ideologically neutral is "... rarely sustainable and their apolitical veneer easily stripped off."¹² Francis FitzGerald has argued that the function of school textbooks is too "... tell children what their elders want them to know,"¹³ while Suzanne De Castell suggests that they represent "... a sanctioned version of human knowledge and culture."¹⁴ The Australian anthropologist William Stanner, writing about the marginalization of Aboriginal culture and society within history books, makes the important observation that,

... it cannot possibly be explained by absent-mindedness. It is a structural matter, a view from a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape. What may well have begun as a simple forgetting of other possible views turned under habit and over time into something like a cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale.¹⁵

Exploring this "cult of forgetfulness" where veils are drawn across selected historical landscapes makes school textbooks particularly amenable to analysis as instruments of socialisation and sites of ideological discourse. This is because in school textbooks nations rarely tell the truth about themselves and students encounter narratives that have been chosen as being emblematic of *the* national story.¹⁶ While there are many national stories, *the* national story is always constructed by powerful groups in pursuit of particular goals as a collective memory is shaped and reshaped to make it hegemonically useful in the present.¹⁷ A national past often contains "... kernels of historical fact, around which there grow up accretions of exaggeration, idealisation, distortion and allegory ..." ¹⁸ incorporating "false denials", "false blame" and "false claims" about the past.¹⁹ As Ernst Renan reminds us, "... forgetting, even getting history wrong, is a crucial element in the creation of nations."²⁰ In *Orientalism*, Edward Said asked how,

... does one represent another culture? What is another culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilisation) a useful one, or does it always get

involved either in self-congratulation (where one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the "other").²¹

These questions are fundamental to the manner in which history textbooks contribute to constructing the nation because they point to how identity is constructed through what Stuart Hall has called "...the marking of difference and exclusion."²² "We" are defined against "them", the other who we identify as an internal other such as a cultural, ethnic or political group or as an external other such as members of a different nation. Contrasts with the other are highly significant in teaching about the past and within textbooks. They (a) marginalize, exclude, dispose and oppress out-groups based upon social class, gender, disability, ethnic, cultural and religious heritages by essentializing these distinctions; and (b) acclaim the nation by perpetuating myths and stereotypes and promoting an affirmative national self-image via the oppositional representations of others.²³

The outcome of constructing social representation in this fashion is that it produces cultural suppressions or what Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux call "articulated silences."²⁴ By maintaining a dominant hegemony, this process is significant and subtle as silences are never entirely absolute, while the alternative histories of marginalized groups can be seen to occupy even the most modest of spaces within textbooks and the hegemony remains undisturbed, having channelled them into risk-free, ideological cul-de-sacs.

We can deconstruct the hegemonic power of othering and its impact on constructing national identity through the critical analysis of textbook discourses that enable us to unpack the system of meanings that are implicit within them. As a system of socially constructed representations mediated through language, the importance of discourse and its analysis is that it enables us to expose what lies behind a text and to see the structure of discourse as a social practice through the study of text *and* context. Within school textbooks, this allows for the analysis of the hegemonic impact of dominant discourses and the production of what counts as knowledge. Vivian Burr is helpful in articulating the hegemonic power that discourses have. "A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events."²⁵ The discourses contained in social textbooks and allied curriculum materials discussed here support a dominant hegemony by making discourses appear commonsense in ways that mask their hegemonic power and the origins of that power. As Edward Said has argued, "Discourses get things done, accomplish real tasks, gather authority."²⁶

Imagining Aboriginal Peoples

Indigenous Australians had occupied the continent of Australia for approximately 45,000 years before the permanent settlement of the British in 1788.²⁷ Upon their arrival colonists did not come into contact with a homogenous Aboriginal nation. Rather, spread across the land to which they were connected by a deep psychological association were hundreds of Aboriginal tribal bands of differing sizes. Each group was characterized by a shared language, the occupation of traditional lands bounded by rivers and mountains and by common cultural characteristics. The Aboriginal peoples were hunter gatherers and although semi-nomadic economically and culturally, they had long-established links and commitments to quite distinct geographical territories.²⁸ The total Aboriginal population on the eve of European colonisation is estimated to have stood at anywhere between 300,000 and 1,000,000.²⁹

School texts contend that the arrival of British colonists did little more than puzzle Aboriginal peoples, who are said to have reacted with a mixture of curiosity and ambivalence, kindness and occasional hostility.³⁰ In the immediate weeks after the “first fleet” landed the colonist-Aboriginal peoples relationship is described within texts as a gradual rapprochement where, despite small acts of unrepresentative and isolated violence borne of fear and misunderstanding, Aboriginal peoples lost their suspicion and met settlers on their own terms.³¹ Readers are told that Aboriginal peoples “... were treated kindly”³² and, as an example of restraint, that when Governor Phillip was struck by an Aboriginal spear he refused to punish anyone, a decision that resulted in the “blacks” becoming “... more friendly than they had ever been before.”³³

Texts describe Australia as *terra nullius*, a land belonging to no one, peopled by largely submissive “natives” or “black fellows” who, because they were nomadic, were said to have no legal claim to the land because they had no permanent homes.³⁴ While they occupied the land, Aboriginal people were said not to have exploited its potential through growing crops or rearing livestock.³⁵ This view was still being expressed in newspapers during the 1940s where it was argued that, while white Australia had a moral responsibility to “Christianize” Aboriginal people, “It may rightly be said that the original possessors were not using the land. It was, we might say, God's will that we Britishers should take possession of so fair a land ...”³⁶

Colonists legitimized their taking of Aboriginal land because of the dilemma Europeans had in categorizing Aboriginal culture. As the unknown flora, fauna and wildlife of Australia presented challenges to botanical, zoological and biological categorization, so too did Aboriginal peoples. Contemporary writers considered Aboriginal peoples to be an unknown race that could

not be classified against the standards of known human cultures.³⁷ Of significance in promoting this argument were Enlightenment philosophies represented in the work of Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes and Locke, who held in particular the idea that the world was emerging from centuries of ignorance into an age of logic, science and humanity. Key Enlightenment discourses of progress, reason and industry were used as measurements to argue that Aboriginal peoples flouted all the conventions of human development, particularly those of property ownership, government and progress towards a civic society that were said to be markers of progressive and enlightened nations. The notion that Aboriginal peoples had seemingly not progressed at all was a perspective that profoundly influenced the content and character of social studies textbooks well into the twentieth century.³⁸

A discourse of paternalism is a powerful feature of the texts. Aboriginal peoples are positioned within narratives as lacking self-determination and are ascribed child-like qualities; in the *School Magazine* they are "... compliant, infantile, and 'primitive' ..." ³⁹ Descriptions of early meetings with "submissive" Aboriginal peoples tell of colonists offering gifts that are rejected but then meekly accepted.⁴⁰ Having overcome their apprehensions, narratives acquaint readers with Aboriginal people who worked for colonists in a relationship of self-sacrificing service; readers are told that, "Our natives are really gentle and honest folk ... Many a white man, lost in the heart of Australia, has been saved by these kindly nomads..." ⁴¹ Stories of Aboriginal people's devotion to white "masters" are couched in the language of "faithfulness."⁴² Paternalism also appears in narratives of colonists protecting Aboriginal peoples and commonplace is the story of the anthropologist Daisy Bates who "... spent over fifty years of her life helping the blacks because she felt it was the duty of the whites in Australia to make the lot of the blacks easier and happier."⁴³

Following the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) and Herbert Spencer's *First Principles* (1862), imperial colonizers employed a crude and corrupted version of Spencer's "survival of the fittest" with its emphasis upon social evolution from simplistic tribal societies to complex industrial societies together with Darwin's biological theory of evolution.⁴⁴ This widespread populist distortion was offered as explanation for claims that Aboriginal peoples were genetically and socially inferior and primitive. Forms of social Darwinian racism survived in popular discourse and in school texts well into the twentieth century even though, throughout the 1930s and 1940s, studies discredited the myth of biologically inferior and child-like Aboriginal peoples.⁴⁵ But the evidence and opinion of those anthropologists and clergy who either studied Aboriginal people's culture or worked alongside them in community-based welfare projects had little impact upon the popular discourse of identification found in the media or in

curriculum materials. This empathy did not see the collapse of the underlying assumptions of inferiority, but gave rise instead to more powerful discourses of paternalism through increased state control of and intervention into the lives of Aboriginal peoples, including forced segregation on closed reserves that denied freedom of movement, freedom of association and the control of employment and lifestyle.⁴⁶

Aboriginal peoples are linked with primitive European societies; in claiming that they may be descended from the ancient Egyptians it is argued that, “The aboriginal should be defined as primitive, but not degraded,” and that, like children, if allowed to become idle they deteriorated into “... burden-some nuisances.”⁴⁷ A conclusion widely shared was that “Australia’s tribal aborigines are in an early new stone age state of development ...”⁴⁸ Others argued that Aboriginal peoples were “... the stone-age men of humanity, a living museum piece. Their study presents unending fascination.”⁴⁹ School texts echoed these sentiments by offering accounts of Aboriginal peoples described by explorers such as William Dampier as the “... most miserable people in the world,”⁵⁰ a portrayal that appeared, without comment or discussion, in school texts well into the 1960s. Aboriginal peoples were “... like the animals around them ... cut off from the rest of the world ... They were what we call a backward people,” they were “...poor, unfortunate people, who found life very hard.”⁵¹

Descriptions of Aboriginal people’s lives draw direct comparisons with the lives of readers who are reminded that Aboriginal children “... do not live in comfortable homes like you do” but in “rude huts,” and that “clothing never worries our aboriginal children, for they never wear any.”⁵² As for their diet, Aboriginal peoples “... eat snakes and lizards ... you see, almost every living thing in the bush is eaten by the Aborigines.”⁵³ Aboriginal peoples were, “Not like the white people, who could weave and sew and do a lot of other clever things.”⁵⁴ In addition, “The children, or piccaninnies as they were called, had no schools such as you have.”⁵⁵ Physically Aboriginal people are universally described as having “long, thin arms and legs”; “coal black skin with black curly hair,” “... great bottle noses, full lips and wide mouths, but no beards.”⁵⁶ In one text readers are informed that, “It was not easy to tell what was the real color of the skin of these “Indians” because their bodies were covered with a thick layer of dirt.”⁵⁷

Aboriginal people’s lifestyle is presented as an anachronism that had no place in contemporary society and could not be absorbed into it. Aboriginal peoples were “wild”⁵⁸ and their way of life “... as primitive as that of any people in the world.”⁵⁹ Aboriginal culture is juxtaposed against European culture, social norms, technologies and lifestyles.⁶⁰ Employing a fatalistic discourse of Enlightenment-based incomprehension, Aboriginal peoples are said to be incapable of surviving within the new Europeanized Australia; their fate was sealed and the

process of their eventual extinction was inevitable and irreversible;⁶¹ they represented a bygone culture whose traces were best found in museums.⁶²

Aboriginal peoples became the focus of numerous anthropological investigations. Like an endangered species of animal, they were to be protected and their culture studied before it disappeared altogether.⁶³ In school texts readers are informed that, “Since the coming of the first white men more than one hundred and eighty years ago, the tribes that lived round Botany Bay and many other places have died out. In fact, there are now very few left in the whole of New South Wales.”⁶⁴ Sidney Lenehan argues that the colonisation of Tasmania resulted in conflict with Aboriginals who fought back, those that survived “... were given a new home on Flinders Island, but they gradually died out and their race is now extinct.”⁶⁵ One farmer from the Northern Territory suggested that, because cattle stations relied upon Aboriginal labour, “... the breeding of full-blooded aborigines was to be encouraged,” and that when a “piccaninny” was born, “the aborigines be given a bag of flour and a bullock as a ‘Black Baby Bonus’.”⁶⁶

At the core of the objectification and marginalization of Aboriginal peoples is a discourse of European nation-building, albeit not the construction of a nation that could logically integrate into Aboriginal culture, but one that would ignore and eventually replace it. On the whole, texts present the growth of the Australian nation as one of spirited and courageous European settlement based upon the challenges of conquering a hostile physical environment rather than conquering hostile Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal peoples are othered and represented as spectators divorced from the processes of colonisation, they stand on the edge of events either as an irritating hindrance to the goals of settlement and progress or as marginalized groups with little role to play in the construction of the new nation. In the texts typical settlers are honest, hard working, calm, and brave in the face of danger. They possess a sound temperament and high personal qualities in a climate where character and moral fibre were central components of discourses surrounding what it meant to be a white Australian colonist.

Texts are replete with narratives of the resourceful white settler and explorer, the resilient and heroic pioneer taming the bleak and barren wilderness.⁶⁷ In 1938 on the 150th anniversary of European settlement, the Director of Education in NSW sent readers of *The School Magazine* a message reminding them that the development of Australia owed much to those settlers who “... faced danger and difficulty, and have worked unselfishly and hopefully.”⁶⁸ In celebration of Empire Day, the King sent a message to those “Makers of the Nation” pioneers and colonists who had “... showed endeavour, vision, courage, tenacity and self-sacrifice.”⁶⁹

Historical Silences

In her theory of the nature of history, Mary Fulbrook has asked, "... how do tales told in the present relate to the complex realities of the past"⁷⁰ In a similar vein, Edward Said suggests that the "art of memory" helps to shape populist views of nation and identity where invented and re-invented myths, exaggerations and falsehoods, fact and evidence, imagination and perception assume the status of a truth, albeit a contested one.⁷¹ We see the "art of memory" at work in the analysis of the texts studied here, where much has been ignored, marginalized or forgotten. We should therefore not be surprised at the cultural and educational silences of such absences.

The narratives in this sample disregard, and thus deny, the numerous conflicts that took place between colonists and Aboriginal tribes in many parts of Australia throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which, while the subject of much dispute,⁷² are supported by eye-witness accounts in newspapers, diaries, biographies and in evidence given to committees of enquiry.⁷³ The earliest days of colonisation saw countless acts of violence, brutality and murder around the settlement at Sydney Cove, where nearly 1,000 convicts, free settlers and soldiers, the rejected detritus of British town and country life, came into contact with Aboriginal peoples, killed game on their hunting grounds and infected them with diseases such as influenza and smallpox to which they had no resistance.⁷⁴ In response, Aboriginal peoples fought back by stealing food, animals, tools and by killing any stray soldier, convict or settler they found. Between 1790 and 1802, the Aboriginal leader Pemulwuy of the Eora tribe led a guerrilla war against the colonists which saw significant violence and death on both sides before he was killed in 1802. No text in this sample mentions Pemulwuy by name, or describes his exploits or his death.

Accounts of conflict from the earliest days of settlement in Tasmania speak of Aboriginal people attacking settlers in retaliation to the taking of their hunting grounds, the abduction of women and children as servants and sexual partners, and general violence against them. In what became known as "The Black War" (1828-1832), mass killings of Tasmanian Aboriginal people took place as the colonial government attempted to round them up and place them on a reserve.⁷⁵ In 1838, at Myall Creek in New South Wales, a group of twenty-eight Aboriginal men, women and children suspected of killing livestock for food were tied together, shot, mutilated and their bodies burned by a group of stockmen. Unusually, seven of the murderers were tried and hung for their crimes.⁷⁶ Bruce Elder has claimed that an estimated 60 percent of Aboriginal Tasmanians were killed in the twelve months following 1828.⁷⁷ It has been argued that there were approximately 10,000 Aboriginal people in 1836 living in what was then the Port Phillip district of Victoria, and that by 1853 the number had fallen to 1,907 as a result of disease and the impact

of colonialism.⁷⁸ More recent scholarship has suggested that the Aboriginal population in south-east Australia declined from 250,000 in 1788 to approximately 15,000 by 1850.⁷⁹

The last recorded major incident of the killing of Aboriginal people took place near Alice Springs in 1928. A group of police officers led by Constable William Murray which strove to arrest an Aboriginal accused of murdering a white farmer rode the hunting grounds of the Walbiri tribe for a week killing seventeen, all of whom it was claimed had been involved in the murder. Murray and his officers were exonerated of all wrong doing on the basis of “justified self-defence.”⁸⁰ While more Aboriginal people died from hunger and diseases such as smallpox than they did from settler violence, the number of deaths at the hands of colonists may be close to 20,000, with approximately 2,000 non-Aboriginal settlers killed.⁸¹

In spite of being widely known and understood, accounts of the killing of Aboriginal peoples do not appear within the sample of texts analysed in this study. It is difficult to turn the pages of many of Australia’s state and national newspapers throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries without being constantly reminded that Aboriginal peoples were considered a problem, were attacked, abused and killed or were arrested, imprisoned and hung for a range of crimes, chief among which were the theft of livestock and violence towards settlers.⁸² What is beyond doubt is that the benign and benevolent relationship said to exist between Aboriginal peoples and white Australian settlers found within the curriculum materials is at best only marginally true and at worst a complete fiction. No text presents violent occurrences between colonists and Aboriginal peoples as being anything more than minor, isolated and unrepresentative of a developing relationship between two fundamentally different cultures.

The dominant narrative of national progress and unity could not be corrupted by introducing the next generation of Australian youth to narratives of the past, and in some cases the very recent past, that were anything but positive in mythologising the growth and advancement of the nation. A critical element of that process was to “other” Aboriginal peoples by marginalizing a plurality of narratives, marking out those labelled as alien via oppositional representations. The aim was the manufacture of a distinctive national hegemony characterized by a profound psychological awareness of a common identity and belonging, where white colonial settlers (regardless of status, social class or gender) could view themselves as citizens of a national and imperial family tied by birth, duty and heritage.

Conclusions

Nations rarely tell the truth about themselves, and what constitutes the national past is little more than a hegemonically constructed and reconstructed anthology of carefully selected narratives manufactured over time. What becomes accepted as the legitimized past is emblematic of what a nation has chosen to remember as being representative of what it once was, what it has become and what it hopes to be. Forgetting is a critical part of remembering; in order to serve cultural, ideological and political ends, societies choose to forget as much about their past as they remember and in doing so reveal their innermost workings. We see this process at work in the manner in which Aboriginal peoples were portrayed. They were reduced to a set of colonially defined narratives of what it meant to be Aboriginal, which relegated their racial and cultural identity to a set of fixed and reductive descriptors, to an essential and static essence. Within the texts the rich linguistic and cultural heritage and diversity that exists within Aboriginal tribal culture is homogenized to manufacture a singular identity, culture and lifestyle that, when juxtaposed with European-based settler identity and culture, distorts and disfigures it and in doing so makes its rejection seem uncomplicated and justifiable.

Aboriginal peoples were allocated a universalized and stereotypical peculiarity that viewed them as primitive and uncultured; they are ascribed the status of a slowly fading historical relic, a people that had outlived their time and place. After telling the story of European colonisation, Aboriginal peoples largely disappear from the pages of school texts as critical actors in the process of nation building to be replaced by a procession of memorialized white pioneers, explorers and settlers carving out a new European nation in the image of the old. Where Aboriginal peoples appear, they are allocated a subservient place within the dominant narratives of settler progress as enthusiastic and obliging allies, as frustrating obstacles in the process of nation building or as marginalized spectators.

John Dewey's observation that, "Old ideas give way slowly" suggests that, although we eventually get over such ideas, they tend to linger because they represent "... habits, predispositions, deeply ingrained attitudes of aversion and preference"⁸³ John Dewey's remark reveals how core precepts of eighteenth century Enlightenment, social Darwinian theories of society and imperialistic ideologies of the nineteenth century retained their currency within social studies textbooks and allied curriculum materials well into the twentieth century, and how they set the parameters of the national imagination in the way in which they built and rebuilt hegemonic definitions of what Australia was and what it meant to be Australian.

As they respond to political, ideological and cultural change, historical narratives within textbooks are always unfinished projects as they are renegotiated and reinstitutionalized to cope with new demands. Because the construction and exercise of hegemonic power is reliant upon the

willingness of those who are its objects to respond in a manner favored by dominant groups, it becomes improbable when subordinate groups feel ignored, rejected or coerced. While crises in hegemony occur when dominant elites fail to provide environments within which consensus can be found, they also occur when those who feel alienated reject the status of political and ideological subservience allocated them and begin to organize and articulate demands that produce a counter-hegemonic response.

Thus, the 1970s witnessed a counter-hegemonic movement driven by new and powerful alliances supporting the growth of Aboriginal social and political movements as a force in Australian political and ideological life. Since the 1970s there have been significant and continuing changes in the manner in which Aboriginal peoples are described and discussed in social studies textbooks. Aboriginal Studies are intended to be an integrated feature of primary and high school education although there is no evidence of a coherent approach to curriculum development that might ensure that all children study Aboriginal history. Contemporary texts do not convey the overt and institutionalized racist stereotyping and paternalism of previous generations; Aboriginal culture and history stands on its own merits and not as a subservient and marginalized appendage to European colonisation.

However, the legacy of European colonisation remains a powerful one and elements of sorrow, anger and bitterness continue. Over two hundred years after the arrival of the “first fleet” in 1788, debates continue over whether European arrival was an “invasion” or a “settlement”, whether narratives of Aboriginal massacres are exaggerations, and over what is claimed to be “black arm history,”⁸⁴ accounts said to malign the Australian past by focusing too much upon exploitation, racism and discrimination. While in February 2008 the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made a public apology to Indigenous Australians for the grief, suffering and loss inflicted upon them since colonisation,⁸⁵ the narrative of colonisation is a tragic and deeply painful one for many Australians. In spite of the passage of time, it continues to affect the way in which they imagine Australia.

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Textbooks Analysed

George T. Spaul, *Social Studies for the Third Grade* (Sydney: William Brooks & Co, 1952).

Orlando W. Hunt, *Australia in the Making* (Sydney: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1964).

Barry J. Price, Robert Walshe and Enid Creyer, *A History of the World and Australia in the Twentieth Century 1901-1964* (Sydney: Dymock's Book Arcade Ltd, 1965).

Orlando W. Hunt, *Looking In On Social Studies, 3rd Grade* (Sydney: Whitcombe & Tombs Limited, 1961).

Orlando W. Hunt, *Looking In On Social Studies, 4th Grade* (Sydney: Whitcombe & Tombs Limited, 1961).

Richard L. Andrews *The Wide World of Social Studies: Grade 3* (Sydney: Brooks, 1968).

Robert C. Williams, *The Aboriginal Story* (Shakespeare Head: Sydney, 1955)

Sidney A. Lenehan, *Together in Social Studies* (Sydney: School Projects Limited, 1961).

William A. Morris, *New Social Studies for the Third Grade* (Sydney: Dymocks, 1952).

Notes

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2. Michael W. Apple *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age* (London: Routledge, 1993), 56.
3. Keith. A. Crawford & Stuart J. Foster *World War Two in History Textbooks: International Themes and Issues*, (Greenwich: Information Age Publishers, 2007); Stuart Foster and Keith A. Crawford (eds), *What Shall We Tell the Children: International Perspectives on School History Textbooks* (Greenwich: Information Age Publishers, 2006).
4. Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs Identity," Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996), 4.
5. Continent wide within this context does not include the Indigenous peoples of the Torres Strait Islands, who are culturally linked with the peoples of Melanesia and Papua New Guinea and are regarded as being distinct from the Aboriginal peoples of mainland Australia.
6. Lorna McLean, "The March to Nation: Citizenship Education, Education and the Australian Way of Life in New South Wales, Australia, 1940s-1960s," *History of Education Review* 37, no. 1 (2008): 34-47; Peter Musgrave, "How Should We Make Australians?" *Curriculum Perspectives* 14, no. 3 (1994): 11-18. For much of the twentieth century, Australian identity saw no place for non-white migrants. Under the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 customs officers were allowed to deny entry into Australia to all non-European migrants often by asking them to pass a language test in a language other than their own; if they failed, they were denied entry; this test continued to be employed until 1958. In the post-war period while entry was granted to non-European residents as part of the nation's post-war reconstruction programme, non-white migration was still discouraged and only possible in very particular circumstances. While it was

eroded during the 1960s the passing of the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975 saw the White Australia policy finally come to an end.

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21. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 325-326.
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24. Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux, *Education Still Under Siege* (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1999).
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26. Edward Said, "Foucault and the Imagination of Power", in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. D. Hoy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 152.
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42. Hunt, *Looking in on Social Studies*, 3rd Grade, 34.
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53. Spaul, *Social Studies For The Third Grade*, 71.
54. Robert C. Williams, *The Aboriginal Story* (Shakespeare Head: Sydney, 1955), 20.
55. Spaul, *Social Studies for the Third Grade*, 94.
56. Morris, *New Social Studies for the Third Grade*, 33. The term piccaninnies is an offensive derogatory term referring to children of black descent or a racial caricature of them.
57. Spaul, *Social Studies for the Third Grade*, 52; Hunt, *Looking in on Social Studies*.
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65. Lenehan, *Together in Social Studies*, 63-64.
66. "But Here is an Interesting Experiment," *The Argus*, 2 March 1940, 5. Piccaninny is an offensive derogatory term referring to children of black descent used to describe Aboriginal Australians.
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68. *The School Magazine*, 1 February 1938, 2.
69. *The School Magazine*, 1 May 1938, Empire Day; *The School Magazine*, 1 October 1938, 141-145. On Australia Day, 26 January 1938, the New South Wales Government decided to re-enact the arrival of the First Fleet and in pursuit of realism sought Aboriginal people to participate in a public role play. As Aboriginal organisations in Sydney refused to participate, the government transported twenty six Aboriginal men from a reserve in the west of the state, who prior to the event were imprisoned in police barracks. During the performance the Aboriginal men were instructed to run along a beach away from those playing the role of British soldiers complete with rifles and bayonets; later they were paraded through the streets on a float before next day being taken back to the reserve. See Parbury, *Survival: A History of Aboriginal Life in New South Wales*.
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The Ottoman Age in South-Central Europe as Represented in Secondary School History Textbooks in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia

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Abstract • Local populations in Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, and to a much lesser degree in the Czech Republic, experienced much interaction with Muslims throughout the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the Ottomans, as well as the Crimean Tatars, invaded the Kingdom of Hungary and waged wars against the Polish-Lithuanian state and Habsburg Hereditary Lands. The Ottoman era has usually been reflected in the history textbooks of these four countries under the headings “Turkish wars” or “Ottoman expansion”. Since the collapse of the Iron Curtain in 1989, all four ex-communist states have been involved in rewriting textbooks, although the perception of the Ottomans and Muslims has not changed in all cases. Without claiming to map the entire historical presentation of the Ottomans, this article demonstrates the polyphony found in the textbooks of this region. By analyzing secondary school educational materials in all four languages, it is possible to identify stereotypes, prejudices and distortions within the perception of the Ottoman Turks.

Keywords • Central Europe, history, Islam, Ottomans, perception, secondary schools, stereotypes, Turks

The Ottomans in East-Central Europe: Context and Concept

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, four so-called Visegrád countries (V4), gained full independence from the Soviet Union and communist ideology.¹ Naturally, the transformation that followed after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 had repercussions in textbook writing, since the Marxist approach was abandoned and history teaching was de-ideologized and de-politicized. An acute need to rewrite history textbooks appeared inevitable. However, in this period, rewriting has not been a priority for textbook authors. This analysis examines the most frequently used history textbooks for secondary schools published in the V4 countries from 1990 to 2010 as primary sources, and focuses on the perception of the Ottoman

Turks and their expansion into Central Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It should be understood, however, that we are not dealing here with the Hungarian-Ottoman wars between the second half of the fourteenth century and 1526, the Crusades, the Eastern Question or the Islamic civilization of the Arabs. By analyzing educational materials from secondary schools (known in German, Czech, and Slovak as *Gymnasium*, or as *lyceum* in Polish), it is equally possible to determine stereotypes, prejudices and distortions of the perception of the Ottoman Turks. I do not propose that every single sentence in every discourse should be examined with suspicion, but that key parts of the text should be subjected to careful analysis. By tracing the history of ideological images and stereotypes, we may contribute towards the study of historical mentalities, because the presentation of Ottoman Turks also shapes contemporary attitudes towards Turkish citizens of the Turkish republic. This article also deals with the presentation of Islam. This is necessary because, unlike Germany or France, where Islam is usually presented in history textbooks via the Crusades, in the V4 countries (as in Austria) an impression of Muslims is defined by the Turkish Wars. The Ottoman Turks have long been the personification of the Muslim religion itself, and in some local languages the expression “turn Turk” signified, even not so long ago, “to convert to Islam”. Bringing to attention the processes of interpretation helps to identify where these depend on knowledge of a particular cultural background, and where they are distorted by particular preferences and opinions.

We start with a simple question. What do the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, three medium-sized nations, plus one larger European country, Poland, have in common as far as the Ottoman conquests in Central Europe are concerned? For an insider, the answer is obvious. First, in all four countries the defence against the Ottoman invasion continued over roughly the same period from the early sixteenth to the late seventeenth centuries in the form of Habsburg-Ottoman and Polish-Ottoman wars.² Although all nations except the Poles defended their territories as Habsburg subjects, the Poles rose to fame when they saved the Habsburg capital from falling into Kara Mustafa’s hands during the second siege of Vienna in 1683. Finally, all these nations considered the Christian religion and culture in Central Europe to be superior to that of the invading Muslim Ottomans.

Traditionally, Muslim Turks and the Ottoman Empire were exemplary representatives of “the Orientals” for Central Europeans. Slovak or Hungarian folk songs, sayings, stories and poems are full of Turkish, or anti-Turkish, images. Moreover, the Ottoman-Turkish “other” has been widely used since the early nineteenth century by Slovak historians, composers and writers in order to create and strengthen new Slovak identity, albeit (in this case) in relation to Hungarians, Austrians and Czechs. Although the Ottoman threat was no longer a contemporary reality at that time, the ability to withstand foreign invasion was instrumental in the works of Slovak writers such as Samo Chalupka’s *The Turk from Poniky*, Jozef Ignác Bajza’s *The Adventures and Experiences of the Youth René* or Jan Cikker’s opera *Beg Bajazid*.³ The nineteenth and twentieth century difficulties

and dilemmas encountered during the emancipation of Slovaks from Hungarian and Austrian rule were thus displayed via historical and mythical themes relating to the “Turkish threat.”⁴ In Hungary, somewhat similarly, Reform Age Poetry (1825–1849) determined the place of the tragic battle of Mohács with the Ottomans (1526) in Hungarian collective historical awareness outdoing historical science. The poet Ferenc Kölcsey (1790–1838) and author of the Hungarian national anthem “A Himnusz” is worth mentioning, together with József Bajza, Sándor Petőfi or Mihály Vörösmarty. In addition, especially in the Czech national consciousness of the nineteenth century, the negative image of the Ottomans was reinforced by portraying “the Turk” as an oppressor of Bulgarian and Serb “Slav brothers” in the Balkans.

Though nowadays the Ottoman Empire in East-Central Europe represents a distant past, historical and textbook writing about the Turks is easily associated with the modern Turkish Republic, established in 1923. Textual discourse is often constructed in such a way that strengthens the negative image of the Ottoman Empire as well as the Muslims and Turks. Needless to say, this perception is then projected onto the modern Turkish Republic, thus reviving old fears of Muslim Turks. On the positive side, it was only after 1989 that discourse about the class “feudal” character of Islam in communist textbooks ceased to exist. In communist, anti-religious propaganda against remnants of the capitalist system, Islam was, together with other religions, bound to disappear in the communist society. Moreover, since 1989 the Turkish Republic with its Ottoman heritage is no longer considered as a capitalist enemy from the other side of the divided continent. In times when the integration of Turkey into the European Union seems closer than ever, the least textbook writers could do is to try to be less divisive, emotive and stereotyping, giving more emphasis to supranational elements as well as scientific language in order to help lay down the rudiments of our common Europeanness. The Ottoman case then is interesting for two reasons: the historical past that is both shared between the countries of the region, but varies with different political and religious backgrounds, and also, it directly shapes what students think of contemporary Turks and Muslims in general. The broader relevance and importance of this “pioneering” case study is also highlighted by the debate about Islam after 9/11 2001 and the debate of the early 2000s about a reference to Christian identity in the European constitution.

Defining Textbook Sampling and Research Methods

The main source of textbooks used for my research came from the library of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig, Germany. To these sources I added material acquired in capitals and bookshops of all four countries so that analysed textbooks represent a relevant sample from those used in the V4 countries. The textbooks are published both by state and private publishing houses. The authors and co-authors of textbooks are mostly

professional historians although, to my knowledge, without background in Turkish or Ottoman studies. I quickly realized that quantitative analysis is not an appropriate way to approach the issue, given the fact that the space devoted to this and similar topics in Czech and Polish textbooks is far more limited when compared to Hungarian or Slovak ones. Whereas for Slovaks and Hungarians Ottoman rule has become part of their national history, Czechs and Poles have never been forced to surrender to the Ottomans on a large scale.⁵ For example, the core Czech national memory is, in contrast to that of Hungarians, only superficially influenced by “Turkish” expansion and the Turkish era. Indeed, only once, in 1605, was Czech territory (more specifically Moravia) directly targeted by the Ottomans and Crimean Tatars, and even then the attack was a matter of only peripheral importance. For objective reasons, the present discussion quite often gives the impression that the debate is limited to Hungarian and Slovak textbooks.

When researching textbook presentations of the Ottomans, it makes sense to assess the present-day religious landscape of the region under scrutiny, since it provides an important glimpse of the environment that textbooks are designed for. The Czech Republic, with more than ten million inhabitants, is usually mentioned among the most atheist countries in the world, where believers in God are in the minority. Partly due to historical legacy, Czechs view “Church Christianity” and institutionalized religion in their majority with deep suspicion. On the other side, the Poles, of whom there are around 38 million, are still one of the most homogenous Catholic nations in the world and strong defenders of a Christian Europe. Hungary (ten million inhabitants), although split between Catholicism, Calvinism and atheism, strongly identifies with the West. In Slovakia, more than 84 percent of 5.3m inhabitants claimed religious affiliation in 2001.² The country has a clear Catholic majority which constitutes 68.9 percent of the population, followed by the Lutherans who represent 6.9 percent of inhabitants, while Byzantine Catholics make up more than 4 percent and Reformed Christian Church believers some 2 percent of the population.⁶

In general, Czech textbooks, unlike Slovak or Hungarian ones, do not include information about the Ottoman Empire in Central Europe in national history surveys, but in chapters on European or world history. In recent years, however, frequent attempts have been made to integrate European and national history into one volume in all four countries. The European and local history is then presented and taught in a single textbook, albeit in different chapters. Also, as the Ottomans have been shaping developments in the Hungarian Kingdom for two centuries, this period is dealt with in Slovak and Hungarian textbooks in lessons about national history. The teaching materials developed by various international projects, especially the workbooks of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe based in Thessaloniki (CDRSEE) were useful for this study, although they contain only a few examples relevant to the region of our focus.⁷

In one case I included the most recent history textbook provided specifically for the Hungarian national minority in Slovakia, in which material covering the Ottoman period bears far closer resemblance to textbooks used in Hungary than in the rest of Slovakia (they even have

a chapter on Romanian Transylvania, for example).⁸ What sets the Hungarian minority in Slovakia apart from Slovaks is that it was mostly Slovakia's territories now inhabited today by the Hungarian minority that were occupied during the Ottoman period. It is also noteworthy that this particular textbook, written for the Hungarian minority in Slovakia by Hungarian authors, deals with developments in greater detail than textbooks for Slovak students. All in all, the Hungarian perspective's influence remains essential also for Hungarians living outside of Hungary, so that it has a considerable significance for current issues of national identity and ethnic tensions.

In some cases, new history textbooks perform even worse than the old ones. In addition to being of poor quality, with no more than a list of battles and political history, they use the term "Turkish" for everything Ottoman.⁹ Relying on a narrow national perspective often hampers most efforts to elaborate and advance appropriate post-nationalist strategies in history textbooks. Indeed, "Turkish" wars are occasionally firmly in the grip of nationalism. Consequently, we are sometimes faced with writing that is closer to nationalism studies than pure history. There is still much to be done to produce a less ethnocentric and more exact and balanced perspective of the Ottomans in history textbooks for secondary schools. In Slovak and Czech textbooks many elements fall into a category that can be described as "stimulating negative stereotypes" about the Ottomans, as well as being quite clearly pro-Habsburg and pro-Catholic. The majority of textbook writers in Slovakia appear to take for granted the fact that any sign of cooperation with Turks is a "sin," something that the authors seem not to value except in negative terms. Hungarian textbooks, on the other hand, are much more sophisticated as far as the balance between negative and positive pictures of the Ottomans is concerned. But due to the very different span of space devoted to the issue, the comparison between four countries is also a delicate matter. Czech and Polish textbooks present these issues in a much more fragmented way and therefore lack the depth and subtlety of their Hungarian counterparts. Whereas in Hungarian classes between eight to ten lessons are devoted to the Ottoman period, Czech students have to make do with a single one.

In general, the accounts of Ottoman history concentrate more on heroic images of military commanders and battlefields than on everyday life or social history. Economic history, everyday life, historical demography or cultural issues are of interest only to Hungarian textbooks, which are the least positivist of all and more heavily influenced by postcolonial theory. Overall, the space devoted to battles and wars in connection with the Ottomans is carefully balanced with other areas of life only in Hungarian textbooks, as opposed to others, in which political, military and diplomatic history strongly predominates. However, I found no powerful statement that political and military interests are often more important than religious and civilisational differences and clashes.¹⁰ The old view of depopulation of the Hungarian Kingdom in the Ottoman period has already been revised, albeit not in textbooks, Hungarian ones included. Also, with the exception of some of Hungarian textbooks, we find almost no quotations from the Ottoman written sources.¹¹

The blatant anti-Turkish bias is inconspicuous, although open debates from a

multiperspective point of view are rare. The textbooks contain only a few outright negative characteristics about the Turks and overtly dismissive terminology is very hard to find. Whereas the Czech textbooks tend to be descriptive, the Hungarian ones are much more explanatory, nuanced and investigative. The Hungarian textbooks are also more diverse with regard to the Ottoman period than Slovak or Czech textbooks, and their treatment of the Ottomans tries to be as unbiased as possible. It seems to me that, because Hungarian historiography has always been more divided over the issues concerning Ottoman rule, Hungarian textbooks reflect this, albeit to a smaller degree.¹² This comes as no surprise since, besides following the pro-Catholic Austrian tradition, an influential but idealised pro-Turkish current of the Ottoman rule in Hungary (beginning with nineteenth century Hungarian historiography) that is sometimes called Calvinist.¹³ Consequently, this is reflected in Hungarian textbooks and has a balancing effect. It is tempting to say that Hungarian historiography has its own presentation of the Ottomans, whereas Czechs and Slovaks resemble the Austrian presentation. Even though Hungarian textbooks show that the Ottoman Turks have been seen as an integral part of the European power system, Hungarian authors have not accepted them as an integral part of the European space.

Christian Europe and Ottoman Muslim Non-Europe as Parallel Ideological Categories

The textbooks in the region usually present the medieval “Turk” as a “dangerous enemy” within the framework of a constant threat to medieval Europe as a whole. The image of the Turk as an enemy “has always fulfilled the role of a ‘binding agent’ inside the Christian (European) cultural sphere.”¹⁴ Some scholars even say that “Turks” are often seen in collective memory as the “favourite enemy” who is usually the intellectually opposed one. In the medieval *turcicas*, “the image of cruelty exercised primarily against Christians was inseparably associated with the Turk.”¹⁵ When we studied the share of positive, neutral and negative designations attributed to the Ottoman Turks in textbooks, two terms appeared quite frequently: the “Turkish danger” and the “Turkish threat”, complemented by the collocation “Turkish plundering”. The feeling of threat is observable especially in formulations such as, “the permanent Turkish threat was threatening.”¹⁶ Echoes of old animosities are quite often found in the sub-headings of textbook chapters, such as “The Ottoman Conquest” and “Ottoman Expansion,” even “Under the Turkish Sword” or, in Polish, “Wars with Turkey” and “Conflicts with Turkey” (*Wojny z Turcją* and *Konflikty z Turcją*).¹⁷ It is crucial to understand this, as cognitive science has shown, because it is precisely these key statements that usually get through to the reader.¹⁸ Generally speaking, Czech, Polish and Slovak narratives focus primarily on Ottoman military advances, conquests and the struggle against the Turks. The Czech authors Čornej, Čornejová and Parkan seem to be clouded by their own political and ideological preferences, when they write that,

...when Habsburg Ferdinand I ascended to the Hungarian throne it brought about another revival of the Turkish threat. The Ottoman Empire definitely did not appreciate that, in Central Europe, where the Turks tried to penetrate from the fifteenth century onwards, a powerful new state was born. The Hungarian nobility represented another big danger for the Habsburg state, because it often benefitted from Turkish assistance, in spite of the fact that the Ottomans were considered “the greatest enemies of Christianity” ... The Ottoman Empire posed a permanent danger for the Habsburg monarchy. The wars did not stop and their costs represented a huge burden on the inhabitants of the Czech lands who had to pay even higher taxes.”¹⁹

A similar one-sided attitude in a country that largely contributed to the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the First World War is very surprising and without parallel in the Czech textbook production.

One aspect is well-known from other European countries, that is, the improper use of nouns such as Turk and Ottoman. We find only scarce attempts to explain this essential terminology pair in researched textbooks, although one would suppose that it should be done from the start. Why is this important at all? Because, although the majority of Ottoman soldiers and settlers (about 80 percent) in Ottoman Hungary consisted of ethnically islamized Slavs, textbooks usually simply call them “Turks” without looking at what is behind this term. The Ottomans who settled in Hungary, no more than 80,000 people, originated mostly from the Balkans (Serbia, Bosnia), so that the habits and influences we refer to in order to identify the “Turkish” world in Hungary are far more reminiscent of the Bosnian and Serbian environment. In contrast with the Ottomans, who did not care about their ethnic origins because they constituted a supranational ruling elite, the current use of words “Turk” or “Turkish” serves to identify a modern nation that is a relatively new twentieth century construct. A clear distinction between the Ottoman elite and ordinary Turks could be found nowhere in explicit terms.

The Slovak textbooks give us an example of the custom of interpreting the Habsburg-Ottoman wars as a conflict between Christian Europe and the Muslim Ottoman Empire.²⁰ Indeed, the imagery of a struggle between “Cross and Crescent” (*Kříž a půlměsíc* in Czech, *Kereszt és félhold* in Hungarian, *Krzyż i półksiężyc* in Polish and *Kríž a polmesiac* in Slovak) seems to be a lasting one. In the same vein, Dvořák and Mrva outline the outcome of the second siege of Vienna in 1683, whereby “Turks suffered a crushing defeat from Christian armies” followed by an observation that the “united Christian armies liberated Esztergom...,” although the word Christian should be replaced by Catholic.²¹ The political history of Islam is analogous with the attempt of the Catholic Church to attain worldly power, and high social tensions between serfs and their Christian landlords actually helped the Ottomans to hold onto power in historical Hungary. The peasantry was so hated by its own soldiers that often it was not even allowed to fight against the Ottomans.

Although the Ottoman Empire extended its frontiers well into the central parts of the territory of Hungary after taking Buda (Budapest) in 1541, Islam hardly gained any ground there, and only very few towns, such as Esztergom and Visegrád on the Danube river, were inhabited by the Ottomans only.²³ Moreover, in the ages of Reformation and Counter Reformation, feelings of togetherness among various Christian denominations were not stronger than resistance and even the hatred of Germans and Habsburgs. The authors of textbooks seem to be unaware that “recent investigations have pointed out that not only the uppermost layer of the Ottoman officials were of Christian origin, but the majority of the common soldiers were also recruited from among Muslims in Northern or Western Balkans whose families had converted to Islam just one or two generations earlier... [o]bviously, these Ottomans could not have been expected to spread the authentic forms and norms of Sunni Islam.”²² When the Ottoman army marched against Vienna in 1683, when taken together with the Moldavian auxiliaries and Thököly’s *kurutz* troops, Christians represented well over half of its soldiers.²⁴ As early as in 1456 at least half of the Ottoman army that attempted to capture Belgrade was made up of Orthodox Christians, so that it has been described by some researchers as a sort of Islamo-Christian syncretism. Thus, behind the hawkish-religious propaganda provided by both sides, “an extraordinary level of Muslim-Christian collaboration took place: alliances which historians of both faiths were not always willing to acknowledge.”²⁵

By seeking to avoid simplistic thinking, the inclusion of the term *giawr* (unbeliever, in Turkish *gavur*) in some textbooks is unfortunately insufficiently explained. Bartl, Kačirek and Otčenáš, for instance, mention that “the Turks considered all [Christians, (my note)] as unbelievers, meaning *giawrs*.”²⁶ But, one cannot fully grasp the meaning of this term without explaining it somehow at length. First, to label any Christian as “*giawr*” is (theoretically) a punishable offence in Islam, because Christians and Jews are considered to be “people of the Book.” Second, only later did *giawr* develop into a derogatory term, so that at the times of the Ottoman-Persian wars even Persians were called *kuffār* (which means “unbelievers” in Arabic) by the Ottomans.²⁷

When continuing our linguistic investigation one is confronted also with out-dated terms used to define Muslims. In the Czech Republic, the use of Eurocentric and for Muslims completely unacceptable Christian-centred term “Mohammedanism” as a synonymum to Islam is routine even in textbooks that were published very recently.²⁸ Indeed, similar terminology is to be found in some Hungarian textbooks too, in this case the term “*mohamedánok*” (Mahommedans) appears instead of “*muzulmánok*,” the designation for “Muslims” in Hungarian.²⁹

As textbook research has shown, outright mistakes in the text occur more or less everywhere in the world. Here, mention should be made of at least two examples that are quite frequent. First, Mandelová and Čornej emphasize in Czech textbooks that Constantinople was renamed Istanbul right after its fall in 1453, although the city itself was called both Kustantiniyya and Istanbul. In fact, even though Turkish people called the city Istanbul, the official documents used the name Kustantiniyya until the twentieth century. It was only in 1933, well after the establishment of the

Turkish republic, that the city officially became Istanbul.³⁰ Second, various mistakes are made in connection with Islamic religion that is usually presented from the outsiders' perspective. According to some Hungarian and Slovak textbooks it was Muhammad and not Allah who founded the Muslim religion and created the Qur'ān.³¹ The Arabic word *jihād* is almost automatically interpreted in martial terms as the "holy war", for example by Száray or Bartl, although Cegielski offers a much more balanced definition of *jihād*.³²

Post-national Strategies: Wishful Thinking?

Although the Ottoman period in East-Central Europe transcends current state boundaries, the aims of national *curricula* more or less dictate just the opposite: to interpret events in such a way that helps to shape national and state consciousness. This approach, however, often brings displays of reductionism if not vulgarization that can be highlighted under the label "historiography of the fatherland". Given that history has often been considered as being basically a struggle for national ideals, the identification with the nation-state is even today often seen as being timeless. To use Pingel's wording, "nations strive to develop positive self-concepts" in order to support their claims to autochtonism and to legitimize various founding myths.³³ Citizens of nation-states are supposed to adhere to national values, and the educational process together with school textbooks (which are usually meticulously prepared and overseen by the state authorities) has great influence on human beings in their formative period. More significantly though, for the majority of young people, textbooks represent the only source of information about alien cultures and religions in a lifetime. The fact that these publications influence human beings in their formative period means that textbooks brand us for life.

Even in some of the most recent Hungarian textbooks, Ottoman Hungary is regarded from national (although not nationalistic) perspective. The need to forge a sense of national identity is clearly observable, although for the period under scrutiny not nationalism but other allegiances were dominant throughout in the region.³⁴ Hungarian authors often have difficulty thinking of historical Hungary as a multicultural and multiethnic empire, concentrating predominantly on Hungarians while leaving other nationalities (*nemzetiségek* in Hungarian) only very limited space.³⁵ Moreover, the reason why Hungarians give such intense attention to the age of the Ottomans originates from the prevailing view that "the battle of Mohács is one of our national tragedies."³⁶

The national perspective is present on various fronts, as can be observed in Slovak textbooks where bias against the Turk can be coupled with distance to everything Hungarian. Adhering to the present-day boundaries is taken so seriously by the Slovak textbooks that maps of historical Hungary are often meticulously reduced to what roughly corresponds to the modern boundaries of Slovakia.³⁷ Thus the parameters of Ottoman presence in East-Central Europe are lost, and instead of

a broader perspective the student is confronted with a twentieth-century national framework applied to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Indeed, these texts can sometimes hardly reveal that many important events happened on the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom, which included the entire territory of today's Slovakia. The history of Slovakia, which has been independent since 1993, could be better balanced by teaching which focuses more on identities that are not national, such as aristocratic national or regional ones. Indeed, regionalism could show how different the situation in Royal Hungary really was when viewed from pro-Habsburg Bratislava, now Slovakia's capital, and Slovakia's second largest city Košice, one of the centres of anti-Habsburg uprisings during the Ottoman period. In other words, from both the far west and far east of present-day Slovakia.

While focus on national identity is still strong, the multicultural past with its different religious, linguistic, cultural, social traditions and other aspects of human activity remains improperly handled in the textbooks. The nineteenth and twentieth century conflicts and national animosities are often projected into the past to appear enduring and constant throughout the ages. Time and again, some authors are obsessed with the search for elements of national identity. Ďurica, for instance, argues that, in supporting Count Thököly's the pro-Ottoman uprising, the Slovaks actually attempted to "gain a certain degree of sovereignty for Slovakia within the borders of the Hungarian Kingdom" at the end of seventeenth century.³⁸ To understand countless Hungarian collaborations with the Ottomans, however, one must grasp the absolutism and colonial approach of the Habsburg court vis-à-vis Hungary (the Habsburgs also delayed solving problems in Hungary because of more urgent tasks inside the Holy Roman Empire or at its borders with France) which were far more important than efforts aimed at gaining Slovak sovereignty. Furthermore, in the seventeenth century the Hungarian and also the Croatian nobility became discontented with the way in which the Habsburgs fought against Ottoman Turks. Most Slovak textbook authors present developments surrounding the second siege of Vienna by the Ottomans in 1683 in such a way that the reader cannot be actually aware of the fact that two thirds of Slovakia's territory stood loosely on the Ottoman rather than Habsburg side, in particular due to the alliance of Count Thököly with the Grand Visier Kara Mustapha Pasha.

Further examples of national feelings strengthened by educational means may be provided by looking at national heroes in different textbooks. While for a Pole the foremost national hero is inevitably the victorious King Jan III Sobieski (siege of Vienna, 1683), for a Hungarian it may be Count Zrinyi, defender of Szigetvár castle in 1566, or István Dobó, the defender of Eger in 1552. Czech textbooks focus most frequently on the Austrian commander Prince Eugene of Savoy who defeated the Ottomans at the battle of Zenta in 1697. Although the Polish-Ottoman conflict was concentrated mostly in the territories of present-day western Ukraine and the former Principality of Moldavia (in 1620–1621 or 1672–1699), Poles achieved their most celebrated victory when defeating the Ottomans at the gates of Vienna. After the battle, Sobieski festively entered Vienna to

the sounds of *Te Deum*, ahead of the Austrian emperor Leopold I who had escaped to Linz and returned to Vienna only after the hostilities were over. As this battle is considered to be one of the greatest Polish victories in history, Polish textbooks often include a sub-chapter entitled the “Viennese Expedition”.³⁹ Another Polish hero, nobleman Jan Karol Chodkiewicz (1560-1621), who successfully defended the Chocim fortress on the Polish-Moldavian border (today in Ukraine) against the army of Osman II in 1621, and Franciszek Kulczycki, who later opened the first coffee shop in Vienna, are also given an honored place in Polish textbooks.⁴⁰

Textbook authors understandably highlight specificities in relation to the Ottoman Empire. Cegielski et al. emphasize that in 1530 “Poland reached a settlement with the Ottoman Empire as the first European country that was soon transformed into an eternal peace treaty.”⁴¹ As a consequence, between 1530 and 1620 Polish-Ottoman relations were regulated by this “eternal peace.” Almost all Slovak textbook accounts of the Ottoman age mention with some degree of satisfaction, if not national pride, that the Slovak capital Bratislava was the capital of the Hungarian Kingdom for three centuries (1536–1848) after the Ottomans took Buda. Indeed, Slovakia is seen as a territorial base of the Hungarian Kingdom itself, with Bratislava (*Pressburg* in German, and *Pozsony* in Hungarian) as its capital and Trnava (*Tyrnau*, *Nagyszombat*) as its new ecclesiastical centre of Roman Catholicism in Hungary. Interestingly, this is one of rare topics when one is tempted to observe that the Slovak textbooks hint, although unintentionally, at something positive in connection with the Ottomans.

Although biased against the Ottoman Turks, Slovak textbooks do occasionally present information that openly pictures the Turks in a more positive light. Bartl, quoting from the *Sperfogel Chronicle*, is the most convincing in this sense.

On Sunday 30 July (1529) we received a report from Buda that the Turk comes back again to Hungary with all its military power ... Our King Ferdinand is currently in the German countries, and we do not know ... whether ... he is capable of defending (us) against the enemy. Indeed, it is feared that everywhere the Turk comes he has an advantage, because even the local people, given the great violence, arrogance and damage caused by the Germans during Katzianer’s command, are full of rage against the German army ... wretched people of this upper country find themselves in hardship and suffering, and say they would prefer to be under the Turks rather than the Germans.”⁴²

Nevertheless, erroneous generalizations that misrepresent the actual state of affairs are more frequent. For example, the section in Dvořák and Mrva suggests that soldiers of other nations who were fighting in the “Turkish” army detested the Turks illustrates what can be euphemistically called a complete misunderstanding as far as the logic of internal functioning of the Ottoman army is concerned.⁴³ In this case, the unprofessional use of emotive language in the form of question to

students only evokes more controversies, prejudices and stereotypes. There is clearly an underlying assumption that regards the Ottomans as oppressors of all surrounding nations.

In broader regional comparison, textbooks in V4 countries, unlike most of those written in the Balkans, are less nationalistic and negative toward the Ottomans, and are mostly not emotional in tone. This claim seems to be supported by the reasoning of Koulouri when she says that, “if a ‘cold war’ is currently going on among textbooks in the Balkans, it is because there are strong feelings in society that also nurture another ‘cold war’ among the media, which reflect and shape mentalities as much as the school.”⁴⁴ Since the Ottoman age represents the “black period” of most Balkan histories, textbooks in the region tend to reproduce stereotypes and nationalism in this context. Also, we found nothing comparable with the bias against the Christians and Europeans that is still abundant in Turkish history textbooks for secondary schools that remain among the worst examples of this genre.⁴⁵ In this framework, Turkey’s “relations with Europe are based on a rigid conception of enmity and gains” that is “often inadequate for the understanding of any European or global event or perspective” while still “pressing an obtuse national identity on its citizens.”⁴⁶ Indeed, in the Turkish republican education system, “the image of the foreigners portrayed in the formal socialization of the student is one of cunning and sly conspirators, who are bent upon exploiting the Turkish population at each opportunity they get.”⁴⁷

Economics and Demographics: An Analysis of Omissions

Inevitably, in almost all textbooks, quality is also influenced by what is not included. Therefore, a brief survey of the most important omissions and gaps seems inevitable. To start with, let us summarize what important developments were taking shape in the area of economics during this period. In the economic sphere, Hungary witnessed a striking paradox during the sixteenth century. In spite of the triple partition of the country its economy remained unified. Merchants and craftsmen as well as preachers traveled freely over the territories of rival empires: namely, Royal Hungary, the Ottoman Hungary and Transylvania. Due to rising prices of agricultural products in Europe, and strengthened by the population boom, the demand for Hungarian beef and leather from Austrian, Italian and German markets increased significantly. As Pállfy has elaborated, this positive trend resulted in growing exports of Hungarian agricultural goods so that the entire Hungarian territory remained in the “bloodstream” of the European economy.⁴⁸ In the second half of the sixteenth century, Hungarian traders annually sold around one hundred thousand head of cattle that originated largely from the Ottoman part of Hungary.

It was only in the first half of the seventeenth century that the economic boom in Europe came to an end, so that impressively high volumes of beef export from Hungary declined rapidly. Hungarians eventually lost their positions which they had acquired during the previous agricultural

boom. The Slovak textbook for the Hungarian minority correctly mentions that,

[t]he King, but also the aristocracy still considered the Hungarian regions occupied by the Ottomans (called *Hódoltság* in Hungarian) to be an integral part of the Hungarian kingdom, and they governed them similarly to the period before 1541. Tax collection on *de iure* Ottoman territories was the task of the Hungarian fortresses along the border, resulting in double taxation (both Hungarian and Ottoman) in Ottoman border provinces such as *Budun*, *Kanizsa*, *Temesvar* and others. This was also facilitated by the fact that the Hungarian peasants did not convert to Islam. The disputes among Hungarian peasants were not decided by the Turkish courts, but they were addressed by the Hungarian counties that took refuge in frontier castles.⁴⁹

Furthermore, “trade with beef served as a hyphen between divided parts of Hungary.”⁵⁰ The main reason for recalling in detail the economic developments of the time is to highlight the importance of their omission in numerous textbooks. All these important facts are generally dealt with only in Hungarian textbooks, both in Hungary and Slovakia, and therefore it is certainly justified to speak about a major gap within our area of interest, especially as far as Slovak textbooks are concerned.

Both Hungarian and Slovak textbooks deal also with the demographic impact of the 150-year long Ottoman rule in the region, although they fail to reflect recent findings of scholars in this field. The surveyed textbooks generally depict the demographic trends during the Ottoman period as disastrous for the local populations. Analyzing Hungarian textbooks further, according to Dupcsik and Repárszky Hungary suffered from “demographic catastrophe” due to the Ottoman rule – so much so that, when the occupation ended, the Kingdom “had barely more inhabitants than two hundred years ago, whereas the European population increased one and half times.”⁵¹ Researchers in recent times, however, questioned the argument that the population of Hungary under Ottoman domination suffered significant losses. Population trends between the middle of the sixteenth and the end of the seventeenth century show that Hungary was not very different from those European countries that did not fall under the Ottoman rule (one should not forget the great loss of human life in the Czech territories during the Thirty Years’ War).⁵² During the Ottoman era, the population of the whole country increased slightly from 3.3 million to about 4 million, and the rate of population growth, 21 percent, was similar to that in Western Europe. “It has recently been suggested that 3.5 million people lived in Hungary at the end of the sixteenth century; thus, far from showing great losses, population seems to have increased in northern Hungary and Transylvania, while the Ottoman-controlled territories stagnated. In spite of setbacks and even long-term losses in certain regions, population grew somewhat throughout course of the seventeenth century, reaching an approximate 4 million at the end of the Ottoman period.”⁵³ Notwithstanding these findings, readers of secondary literature and textbooks are overwhelmed with the picture of wandering and displaced people, that is, of the Ottomans presiding over a predatory economy and being the cause of sharply

diminishing population.⁵⁴

Whereas the Hungarian textbooks stress that the most disastrous repercussions of the Ottoman age had been felt by the populations living on the plains, and therefore it was the Hungarians who recorded the highest losses, the Slovak textbooks highlight that both the Hungarian nobility and ordinary people speaking Hungarian escaped from occupied territories in huge numbers towards northern Hungary (today's Slovakia), most of which remained in Austrian hands during the period. The newcomers, they summarize, consequently "magyarized" certain regions of predominantly Slovak and German Upper Hungary (*Felvidék* in Hungarian).

On the other hand, there is a widespread conviction among present-day Hungarian historians that Hungarians represented about 70 to 80 percent of the country's entire population before the defeat at Mohács, but due to the hardships of Ottoman rule they gradually fell into minority status in the Hungarian Kingdom at the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁵⁵ Most Hungarian textbooks are of the same opinion.⁵⁶ At that time, as the textbooks usually argue, the current ethnic boundaries became more or less permanent. The message, however, sometimes does not stop here as some go on to state that the Turkish rule in a sense prepared the way for the partition of Hungary after the First World War. As a consequence, two hundred years later, the Turks involuntarily helped to split historical Hungary into several states through the treaty of Trianon in 1920. This brought about, they conclude, a new tragedy for the Hungarian nation, often felt and interpreted as a new Mohács. Only cursory attention is paid in textbooks to the presentation of the internal structure and institutions of the Ottoman Empire, but authors do discuss Ottoman titles and Islamic terminology. That a very significant part of the Ottoman elites was made up of renegades is only vaguely mentioned. The Turks did not carry many residents away from Hungary to work elsewhere as slaves. Unlike in the Balkans, the Ottomans did not impose their well-known levy on the rural Christian populace in the form of forced recruitment of young boys (*Devşirme* in Turkish), but rather took local people hostage in order to get high ransoms for setting them free. Unfortunately, textbook authors are sometimes unaware of this, so that one can witness claims that verge on the comic, at least for an insider. One recently published Czech textbook includes a map showing the Ottoman territories in 1580, and asks students to determine, using this map, from which Christian countries the "Turks" levied boys for their army, as if they had been doing it everywhere in Ottoman Europe.⁵⁷

Omissions often reflect a missing link between scientific research and textbook writing. We have, for instance, an exact picture of the administrative organization and everyday life in the *Uyvar Eyalet* (the Ottoman province centered around the town of Nové Zámky in Slovakia) thanks to research with Ottoman documents (*defters*) done by Jozef Blaškovič from Slovakia. Nevertheless, present-day Slovak textbook authors, much like their predecessors, seem to have no knowledge of the work of Blaškovič, Vojtech Kopčan and other local Ottomanists. Even more serious, however, is the fact that Slovak textbooks pay almost no attention to the fact that, during the seventeenth

century, the concept of restoration of the Hungarian Kingdom under the protection of the Ottomans had gained wide support among the ruling elites and often outweighed the pro-Habsburg camp. The anti-Habsburg side envisioned expelling the Ottomans only later, when the change in the distribution of forces would make it possible (this concept was most clearly articulated by the Transylvanian *voivod* Gabriel Bethlen at the beginning of the seventeenth century). Another problem is the claim that the Ottoman Empire went through political, economic and societal decline from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards. Historians of all kinds have widely employed the “decline” paradigm for the period after Sultan Süleyman I’s “golden” age (1520–1566). The idea that the Ottoman Empire went through decline since the end of the sixteenth century predominates in many textbooks, although contemporary historical and Turkologist research underlines that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are rich in crisis, ups and downs, transformations, but certainly no longer use the expression “decline” for this period.⁵⁸

History textbooks also contain images and illustrations. Illustrations in most textbooks show reproductions of drawings, artifacts, portraits, costumes, documents in color. Illustrations are usually explained by an accompanying text caption. The most widely used picture in Czech and Slovak textbooks is that of the scout cavalry corps (*deli* in Turkish) from the *Codex Vindobonensis* 8626, dated around 1590, most probably by an unknown painter.⁵⁹ Maps are of varying quality, more advanced and less static in Polish and Hungarian textbooks, and generally less sophisticated in Czech and Slovak ones. Hungarian textbooks are the most prolific, showing a detailed map on almost every page that covers this period.⁶⁰ A closer look at Slovak textbooks shows that maps are sometimes accompanied by quite incomplete keys as well.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, all the above-mentioned ex-communist states have been involved in an effort to rewrite their outdated textbooks, although the perception of the Ottomans and Muslims has not changed substantially. Czech, Slovak and Polish textbooks concentrate too much on traditional narrative driven by events and personalities, while some Hungarian textbooks make more of an effort in the area of modern narrative, by addressing causation, variations, and multiperspectivity. This is the case of Száray 2008, currently the most widely used textbook in Hungarian classes, which is a good example of the innovative source-centered history teaching in Hungary.⁶¹ It is best suited to make students understand the issues using different types of sources (texts, maps, tables, graphs, illustrations).

The predominantly conservative approach to textbook writing which follows the established academic traditions could be modernized only if much more attention is paid to economic, demographic or cultural issues. Presenting contradictory sources could help, too. It is, of course,

true that the limited time available for the teaching of history makes it difficult for teachers to innovate. Discussions about the origins and character of the Ottoman Empire are seldom to be found in a separate chapter. Altogether, it can be argued that the western view of events dominates in most textbooks. Too much stress is placed on memorization, and specialists in Turkish studies usually complain that they are not invited when new textbooks are being prepared. To help students judge historical events instead of learning long lists of historical facts almost by heart, teaching should focus mostly on historical problems and discussions about different opinions about historical topics.

Let us turn our attention now to the Muslim character of the Ottoman Empire. It is worth noting that Islam in history textbooks of V4 countries is presented and judged by the standards of Christian and/or secular tradition, inevitably leading to an outsider's perspective. The Christian tradition is therefore thought to be more able to accommodate the religious and democratic ideal. According to Górak-Sosnowska, facts are presented in a non-biased way in Polish textbooks but as soon as attention is paid to cultural and religious issues "the narration often becomes subjective or even misguided."⁶² Being Muslim is too often not thought of as a positive asset. On the positive side, there are also good examples of textbooks prepared by numerous authors in consultation with specialists of the field where the text offers more nuanced perspectives of Islam recognizable by Muslims themselves.⁶³

In the past, when connected to the national history of the Poles and Hungarians, the narrative of battles waged against the Ottomans was traditionally part of the *antemurale* ideology justifying the role of the respective nations as defenders of Christian Europe (*propugnaculum Christianitatis*). This ideological construct, which was never significant for Czech textbooks, is no longer explicitly expressed in Hungarian, Polish and Slovak textbooks. The occasional affinity of Hungarian and Polish textbook writing vis-a-vis the Ottoman Turks must also be connected with later developments that reflect the fact that the nineteenth century Hungarian and Polish freedom fighters, such as Hungarians Ferenc Rákóczy II and Lajos Kossuth or Polish emigrants like Józef Bem, Władysław Kościelski, Adam Mickiewicz or Adam Czartoryski, often found refuge in the Ottoman Empire.

Any revision of textbooks requires an intellectually and pedagogically erudite elite that is willing to challenge the dominant narrative on the Ottoman Turks. The role of local Turkish Studies departments seems to be important. One of the reasons why Slovak textbooks in our area of interest lag behind the Hungarian ones may also be attributed to the fact that, unlike all neighboring post-communist countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Ukraine), Slovakia still does not have a university-based department of turcology.⁶⁴ However, turcology is not the only remedy. Although Turkish studies are taught at the Charles University in Prague, the quality of presentation of the Ottomans in Czech textbooks is hardly more balanced than in Slovak textbooks. This is proof that small departments of Turkish studies usually have only limited influence on the general teacher and

student community.

Notes

¹ In many respects these four countries are culturally, historically and even linguistically closely related; hence, it was not an exceptional event when they created the so-called Visegrád Group (V4) - an alliance for close cooperation and European integration of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The Visegrád Group was created in 1991 between Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, which is why it also used to be called the Visegrád Triangle. After the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia became independent members. The name Visegrád is derived from a meeting of the Czech, Hungarian and Polish kings in 1335 in Visegrád castle, situated on the Danube river in Hungary. John of Luxembourg of Bohemia, Charles I (Anjou) of Hungary and Casimir III of Poland met in order to create new commercial routes to bypass Vienna and get easier access to various European markets. A second meeting was held in 1339.

² It is noteworthy and highly symbolic that the Hungarian king Louis II Jagiello (1516–1526), he himself from the Lithuanian-Polish dynasty, was also the king of Bohemia when defeated by the Ottomans at the battle of Mohács in 1526. After five hundred years of continuous existence, the Hungarian Kingdom lost both its territorial integrity and its ruler who died when trying to escape after the military disaster. His sister Anna Jagellonica had been married to Ferdinand I of the House of Habsburg, who later became the Holy Roman Emperor, and also king of Hungary and Bohemia. With the defeat at the battle of Mohács in 1526 a completely new chapter had been opened in the history of South-Central Europe.

³ See Samo Chalupka, *Básnické dielo* (Bratislava: Tatran, 1973), 53–56; Jozef Ignác Bajza, *Príhody a skúsenosti mladíka Reného* (Bratislava: Tatran, 1976); Ján Cikker, *Beg Bajazid* (Bratislava: Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1957).

⁴ Charles Sabatos, “Slovak Perceptions of the Ottoman Legacy in Eastern Europe,” in *Middle Eastern Studies* 44/5 (2008), 735–749.

⁵ South-eastern parts of Poland known as *Podole*, of course, became an Ottoman domain from 1672 to 1699.

⁶ Statistics available at http://portal.statistics.sk/files/Sekcie/sek_600/Demografia/SODB/Tabulky/tab13.pdf, see also www.government.gov.sk/7887/slovensko.php?menu=1265. See also Erzsébet N. Rózsa, “Muszlim kisebbségek Közép-Európában, avagy Közép-Európa különlegessége,” in *Az iszlám Európában*, ed. Zsolt Rostoványi (Budapest: Aula, 2010), 405–446.

⁷ Bogdan Murgescu and Halil Berktaý (eds.), *The Ottoman Empire: Workbook 1* (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2009); Mirela-Luminița Murgescu (ed.), *Nations and States in Southeast Europe: Workbook 2* (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2009). For a free version see <http://www.cdsee.org/projects/jhp/publications>.

⁸ József Elek and László Kovács and Attila Simon, *Történelem. A gymnázium 2. osztálya számára* (Bratislava: SPN, 2007).

⁹ Marek Budaj, *Slovenské dejiny II. Od novoveku po súčasnosť* (Bratislava: Eurolitera, 2009), 12.

¹⁰ Here the big power play is often forgotten: for instance, the Habsburg emperor Charles V. tried to establish an alliance with the Safawid dynasty of Persia against the Ottoman-French axis.

¹¹ From the many examples of Ottoman sources regarding Central Europe one might mention: Evliya Çelebi, *Seyâhatnâme* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999–2006); Nâimâ Mustafa Efendi, *Târih-i Nâimâ* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2007); Silahdar Fındıklılı Mehmed Ağa, *Silahdar Târihi* (İstanbul: Türk Tarih Encümeni, 1928); or works of Ahmed Resmi Efendi.

¹² Gábor Ágoston, “The Image of the Ottomans in Hungarian Historiography,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 61, nos. 1-2 (2008): 15–26.

¹³ Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, “Hungarian studies in Ottoman History,” in *The Ottomans and the Balkans. A Discussion of Historiography*, eds. Fikret Adanir and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2002), 305–350.

¹⁴ Tomáš Rataj, *České země ve stínu pŕlměšice. Obraz Turka v raně novověké literatuře z českých zemí* (Praha: Scriptorium, 2002), 401. See also Christina Koulouri, (ed.): *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education*

(Thessaloniki: The Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2002), 27.

¹⁵ Rataj, *České země*, 402.

¹⁶ Petr Čornej and Ivana Čornejová and František Parkan, *Dějepis pro gymnázia a střední školy 2. Středověk a raný novověk* (Praha: SPN, 2009), 146.

¹⁷ Čornej and Čornejová and Parkan, *Dějepis pro gymnázia*, 69, 104, 121; also Marek Kamiński and Robert Śniegocki, *Historia od renesansu do czasów napoleońskich. Kształcenie w zakresie podstawowym i rozszerzonym* (Warszawa: WsiP), 142, 159; and Zofia T. Kozłowska and Irena Unger and Piotr Unger and Stanisław Zajac, *Poznajemy przeszłość do końca XVII wieku. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum. Zakres podstawowy I.* (Toruń: SOP Oświatowiec, 2007), 238.

¹⁸ See the interview with Susanne Kröhnert-Othman, “In Schulbüchern wird der Islam zu rückwärtsgerichtet dargestellt”, *Zeit Online* 6 October 2011

¹⁹ Čornej and Čornejová and Parkan, *Dějepis pro gymnázia*, 121.

²⁰ Marián Damankoš, *Svetové dejiny II. Novovek 1492–1914* (Bratislava – Prešov: Eurolitera, 2005), 67.

²¹ Pavel Dvořák and Ivan Mrva, *Dejepis – Slovensko v stredoveku a na začiatku novoveku* (Bratislava: Orbis Pictus Istropolitana, 1997), 60.

²² Pál Fodor, “The Ottomans and their Christians in Hungary,” in *Frontiers of Faith. Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities 1400–1750*, Eszter Andor and István György Tóth (Budapest: CUP, 2001), 138–139.

²³ See ‘Madjar, Madjaristan’ in *EI² (1960-2003) Encyclopaedia of Islam-New Edition* (Leiden: E.J.Brill).

²⁴ Thomas M. Barker, *Double Eagle and Crescent: Vienna’s Second Turkish Siege and its Historical Setting* (Albany: SUNY, 1967), 410.

²⁵ Ian Almond, *Two Faiths, One Banner. When Muslims Marched with Christians Across Europe’s Battlegrounds* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2011). See chapter 4.

²⁶ Július Bartl and Luboš Kačirek and Michal Otčenáš, *Dejepis, Národné dejiny pre 2. ročník gymnázií* (Bratislava: SPN, 2002), 13–14.

²⁷ EI², *Kafir* IV: 407b

²⁸ *Světové dějiny I: Dějiny lidských civilizací od pravěku do poloviny 17. století* (Prague: Fortuna, 2003).

²⁹ Judit Stefány and Gábor Biró and László Lőrinc, *Történelem 2. Ember és társadalom. Középkor, kora újkor* (Budapest: AKGA Junior Kiadó, 2001), 214.

³⁰ H. Mandelová and E. Kunstová and I. Pařízková, *Dějiny středověku a počátků novověku* (Liberec: Dialog, 2002), 104–105; and Čornej and Čornejová and Parkan, *Dějepis pro gymnázia*, 104.

³¹ Miklós Száray, *Történelem II., középiskolák 9. évfolyam számára* (Budapest: Nemzeti tankönyvkiadó, 2006), 195; and Július Bartl and Miroslav Kamenický and Pavol Valachovič, *Dejepis pre 1. ročník gymnázií* (Bratislava: SPN, 2002), 142.

³² Száray, *Történelem II.*, 195; Bartl and Kamenický and Valachovič, *Dejepis*, 142; and T. Cegielski and W. Lengauer and M. Tymowski, *Ludzie-społeczeństwa-cywilizacje. Historia. Starożytność i średniowiecze. Kształcenie w zakresie podstawowym* (Warszawa: WsiP, 2002), 405–406.

³³ Falk Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision* (Hanover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1999), 38.

³⁴ At the time *natio Hungarica* was defined according to the legitimation myth of the Hungarian nobility as the so-called society of noble families coming with Attila and Árpád to the Danube basin, and those who were later accepted to this society regardless of nationality.

³⁵ Hungarian dominance is often expressed with the aid of maps. Generally, maps depicting the distribution of Hungarians and other nationalities abound in Hungarian history textbooks, indicating, as they often do, that the country was predominantly populated by Hungarians, though in reality the situation was a great deal more complex.

³⁶ Száray, *Történelem II.*, 209.

³⁷ See Dvořák and Mrva, *Dejepis – Slovensko*, 49.

³⁸ By creating a new principality in Upper Hungary, Count Emerichus Thököly (1657–1705) tried to replace the already declining Transylvanian principality as a pillar of independent Hungarian statehood. The short-lived Principality of Upper Hungary was established from eight counties in the borderland between Transylvania and Royal Hungary as an Ottoman vassal in 1682. It embodied the pro-Turkish orientation of much of the Hungarian nobility that was fatally divided into pro- and anti-Habsburg wings. The Ottomans called it the kingdom of *Orta Madjar* (Middle Hungary).

Due to opposition from professionals in the field, Ďurica's textbook was ultimately not distributed to schools. See Milan S. Ďurica, *Dejiny Slovenska a Slovákov* (Bratislava: SPN, 1996), 59.

³⁹ Kamiński and Śniegocki, *Historia od renesansu*, 161.

⁴⁰ Kozłowska and Unger and Unger and Zajac, *Poznajemy przeszłość*, 238-239; Kamiński and Śniegocki, *Historia od renesansu*, 162.

⁴¹ Cegielski and Lengauer and Tymowski, *Ludzie-społeczeństwa-cywilizacje*, 404.

⁴² Július Sopko, *Kroniky stredovekého Slovenska* (Budmerice: Rak, 1995), 278; quoted in Bartl and Kačirek and Otčenáš, *Dejepis*, 11.

⁴³ Dvořák and Mrva, *Dejepis – Slovensko*, 43.

⁴⁴ Koulouri, *Clio in the Balkans*, 33.

⁴⁵ See Caner Uguz, "Turkey's historical dilemma: The question of European identity and the role of history textbooks," in *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 26 (2004): 181–197.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 190-192.

⁴⁷ Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *The Rising Tide of Conservatism in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 144.

⁴⁸ See Géza Pálffy, *A tizenhatodik század története* (Budapest: Pannonica, 2000), 119–129.

⁴⁹ József Elek and László Kovács and Attila Simon, *Történelem. A gimnázium 2. osztálya számára* (Bratislava: SPN, 2007), 59.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵¹ Csaba Dupcsik and Ildikó Repárszky, *Élő történelem II. A 10. évfolyam számára* (Budapest: Műszaki kiadó, 2010), 303.

⁵² The inhabitants of the Ottoman Hungary escaped the horrors of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648).

⁵³ Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, "Hungarian Studies in Ottoman History," in *The Ottomans and the Balkans. A Discussion of Historiography*, eds. Fikret Adanir and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 332–333.

⁵⁴ See Elek and Kovács and Simon, *Történelem*, 74–75, who mention that the population of Hungary declined by several hundreds of thousands.

⁵⁵ In contrast, data offered by Slovak textbooks portray a diametrically different picture. Dvořák and Mrva, for example, argue that, "though Hungarians represented the most numerous nationality, they accounted for less than one third of the total population" ever since the establishment of the Hungarian Kingdom (Dvořák and Mrva, *Dejepis – Slovensko*, 52).

⁵⁶ Elek and Kovács and Simon, *Történelem*, 76.

⁵⁷ Kolektiv autorů, *Dějepis 7 - středověk a počátky nové doby, učebnice pro základní školy a víceletá gymnázia* (Plzeň: Fraus, 2009), 126.

⁵⁸ Cegielski and Lengauer and Tymowski, *Ludzie-społeczeństwa-cywilizacje*, 46.

⁵⁹ Sometimes the author is identified as Heinrich Hendrowski.

⁶⁰ Dupcsik and Repárszky, *Élő történelem* or Száray, *Történelem II.*

⁶¹ Száray, *Történelem II.*; in Hungary, there exists also a CD-ROM in three languages as a valuable source of information for both Hungarian and foreign students: *Kereszt és félhold (1526–1699). A török kor Magyarországon* [Cross and Crescent (1526–1699). The Turkish Age in Hungary]. Encyclopaedia Humana Hungarica 05. (Budapest: EHE, 1999). It is regrettable, however, that the English and German version often uses Hungarian names for historical

locations and events, including those that did not happen on the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom. And so, for example, the famous battle between Rudolf I of Habsburg and the Czech king Přemysl Otakar II in 1278 is hardly identifiable under its Hungarian name Morvamező, instead it should be called the battle of Marchfeld (in Ger. *Schlacht auf dem Marchfeld*, also *Schlacht bei Dürnkrut und Jedenspeigen*; in Czech *Moravské pole*) in the German and English version of the work.

⁶² Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska, "Perception and Misperception of Islam in Polish Textbooks," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 60, no. 1 (2007): 75–84.

⁶³ See for example Kolektiv autorů, *Dějepis* 7.

⁶⁴ Indeed, the Hungarian capital Budapest is proud of having opened the first Institute of Turkish Philology and Hungarian Prehistory in the world in 1870. In Slovakia, the only hope rests on the opening of a Department of Turkish Studies, preferably at the Comenius University in Bratislava, which should advance the field of Turkish-Ottoman history and Islamic studies.

De/Colonizing Pictures? German Television and Colonialism – An Essay

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Abstract • Over the last decade, an increasing number of documentaries and fictional films broadcast on German television has established an image of German colonialism that claims to be informed by postcolonial criticism but, as I argue in this article, often resembles the image created by colonialism itself. *Das Weltreich der Deutschen* (The Global German Empire, 2010), a documentation produced by Guido Knopp, serves as an example for the close connection between practices of representation and colonial fantasies, and demonstrates how the combination of entertainment and education obscures the fact that colonialism has been not only a practice of political domination and economical exploitation, but also a practice of representation.

Keywords • colonial fantasies, documentary, popular culture and education, postcolonialism, reenactment, television

The camera rushes over vast natural landscapes, wide, open savannas, impregnable jungles, empty deserts, untouched by any trace of human culture. Then we are down on the ground, lost within enormous tropical vegetation. We see "historical" encounters between white men in white uniforms and semi-naked men and women of darker, fiercely tattooed and pierced skin. While the flow of moving pictures continues, sometimes in the black-and-white of historical documents, sometimes in the bright colors of modern dramatizations, a male voice chimes in, "An empire, extending all over the world. This was also once the dream of the Germans." We see some miniature photographs, among them a white woman, carried in a sedan chair by black men, then a soldier in the uniform of the German colonial troops or *Schutztruppe* (an odd-looking uniform that has recently, after frequent documentaries and movies about German colonialism, become quite familiar), hit by a bullet that was fired by a

black man hidden in a bush. "In the nineteenth century," the narrator explains, "adventurers, scientists, and explorers departed for far away continents ... with fatal consequences. Bloody conflicts raged in the German colonies." Finally, the camera is air-borne again, panning over a computer-generated early nineteenth century imperial Berlin, entering through a window into a room of the city palace (the *Stadtschloß*, which is familiar to the German public as a result of numerous virtual reconstructions anticipating its "actual" reconstruction), where it comes to a halt in front of a globe, Kaiser Wilhelm's globe, showing extended white spots on the surface of Africa and the South Pacific, which are now the objects of German desires, as the narrator concludes, "The worldwide empire of the Germans. A story of dreams, desire, and harsh reality."¹

Less than two minutes long, this is the pre-title sequence that introduces each of the three episodes of *Das Weltreich der Deutschen*, a documentary produced in 2010 by Guido Knopp for ZDF, one of Germany's leading public television networks. The tempo slows slightly after the opening titles, but the rapid change of topics, materials and modes of representation continues throughout each forty-five-minute episode. Knopp, who after numerous documentaries for ZDF figures as Germany's most prominent (or most infamous) "history teacher", tells the story of German colonialism in a style that he himself has made popular on German television.² A variety of historical documents (photographs, films, textual sources quoted by the narrator), dramatizations (using actors or digital animation), and "talking heads" (eye-witness accounts and statements from experts such as professional historians) are choreographed by an explanatory and often leading narration. In order to improve the coherence of the images and to engage the audience more directly, the narration focuses on a number of single characters: the "great men" who "made history" as well as some "ordinary people" who experienced it. The history of German East Africa, for example, which is the topic of the first part of *Das Weltreich der Deutschen*, becomes the story of Hans Meyer, who climbed to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro and named it the "Emperor Wilhelm Peak" (*Kaiser-Wilhelm-Spitze*), also Magdalena von Prince, wife of an officer in the colonial troops and one of the first settlers, and Carl Peters, the infamous "conqueror" of the territory, who was later expelled from the colonial administration because of his brutality against Africans.

The opening sequence reveals quite clearly the divide between entertainment and education that history programs like *Das Weltreich der Deutschen* claim to bridge. In order to attract a greater audience, it attempts to present its topic in an attractive visual form but it is also driven by the need to stimulate an interest in the topic, perhaps even a fascination, but when the narration alludes to "bloody conflicts" and the "harsh reality" it can undermine the

integrity of the piece. The rapid montages of varying visual material create a constant flow of images that makes analysis of a single image difficult. This means that it is sometimes hard to distinguish between "real" historical documents and contemporary reenactments. A more complex issue emerges if we really believe we are to see a "story of dreams, desire and the harsh reality." These are the elements that may, in a complex interplay, have formed the past reality and are therefore in some way embedded in the documents this past has produced. But how, for example, can we see the desire embodied in a photograph of Mount Kilimanjaro rising from the wide East African grassland? And what are we supposed to see within the natural landscapes at the start of the sequence? "A land of untouched beauty" is how an aerial view of the savanna is described by the narrator. The image of "empty ... untouched" spaces, awaiting cultivation by the civilized white man is, of course, a central and powerful stereotype within colonial discourse. So what we perceive to be a documentary image of an African or New-Guinean landscape may actually represent the vision of a man or a woman looking at the white spots on a globe in a room in Wilhelminian Berlin. The pre-title sequence, however, does not leave any time for such reflection, and the following films do not develop this line of thought. The narrator, for example, never questions what we see, either in the "documents" or in the "reenactments". There is therefore the underlying suggestion, that what we see is real, whether beautiful or harsh.

A closer look at the Carl Peters episode reveals the confusion between "harsh reality", dreams and desire. Offering brandy and glass pearls, so the story goes, Peters persuaded local chiefs to sign "contracts, which they did not understand but which would seal their fate." This statement is supported by the historians Senguoudo Mvungi, Paul Msemwa, Horst Gründer and Andreas Eckert. The fact that two German and two Tanzanian historians are involved, suggests a balanced position. But they are all quoted in a way that only confirms the idea already presented, that the almighty Peters tricks naive Africans. This is not only spoken by the narrator but also visualized in two different ways: an excerpt from the National Socialist propaganda film *Carl Peters* (1940) by Herbert Selpin and by an extensive reenactment sequence.

More recent historiography has reconstructed the scene somewhat differently. Long before the Germans arrived, eastern Africa had been part of a closely woven economic and diplomatic network stretching around the Indian Ocean. Thus, Peters was not confronted with "primitive savages", but with politicians experienced in transcultural encounters, probably more experienced than the son of a pastor from provincial Germany. German progress, at least at first, was facilitated by competing groups who hoped to exploit the new player in order to adjust the balance of power in the precarious system in which they were living.³

Das Weltreich der Deutschen, however, leaves no room for alternative versions of a story. All its protagonists are German, and so are the archives from which their stories are told. In the case of Peters, most of the material can be traced back to his own extensive writings. So it is Peters' own version of the story that is repeatedly retold, for example, in Selpin's film on Carl Peters. *Das Weltreich der Deutschen* uses extensive footage from this film, presumably to support the narrator's characterization of Peters as a "prehistoric Nazi." This, however, is not evident in the scenes from 1940 that essentially duplicate the story of the conquest, which is then told yet again in the 2010 dramatization. Rather than formulating a thesis about the relationship between colonialism and National Socialist racism, the excerpt from Selpin's film fits into a chain of representations, continually affirming the established story. As a result of this kind of archival research a National Socialist propaganda film can usurp the role of a historical document, while Africans are not only denied a perspective of their own, but neither is any opportunity given to consider the origin and continuation of the stereotypes. The only discernible reason for including this footage is that, by adding another source to the already prolific material, the audience should be convinced that it is getting the whole story. Someone who has scoured the archives so extensively and has so much to show for it couldn't possibly be wrong.

The representational superiority of its material is the most characteristic element of Knopp's style of documentary. The German Emperor's globe, established in the pre-title sequence as a representation of the imperial dream, could be seen as a hint of the fantasies, power and cartographical representation to come. From this perspective, the globe would be the origin of the flow of images we have seen before, the place where the empire is dreamt of as well as administered. What we will have seen would not then have been any "real" reality as it may have been experienced by, for example, the East Africans who crossed the path of Carl Peters. Rather, we would have seen a reality of the metropole, a construction of its fantasies as well as its administrative, military and economical force, but above all a construction of its media of representation. In spite of this, however, *Das Weltreich der Deutschen* itself makes excessive use of the "overview" perspective. Different sequences are connected by an animated tracking shot, in which the camera encircles the globe and then zooms in, thus reaching every place in the world and showing in the smallest detail what happened there a century ago. Nothing is hidden from this camera; it has the power to bring every event to life before our eyes, no matter how distant it may be in space and time.

The superiority of this view, however, is partly confined by its own voyeuristic desire, where the power to look is multiplied by the desire to look. This is the case in one aspect of the Carl

Peters story where the reenactment from 2010 differs significantly from that of 1940. In Selpin's film, the autocratic executions that finally led to Peters' dismissal are justified as a defense against a British conspiracy plot. *Das Weltreich der Deutschen* returns to the original legend, according to which Peters took revenge on his unfaithful concubine and her lover. This was a story about sex and crime that caused a scandal in Wilhelminian society and simultaneously directed voyeuristic glances towards the tropical, sexually aroused "wilderness" of the African colony. *Das Weltreich der Deutschen* transforms this into a sadistic scenario. Peters marches along a line of young African women, arranged as though in a model line-up, in order to choose himself a concubine. A moment later the chosen one stands under a gallows, the noose around her neck, and waits for the block to be torn away from under her feet, while Peters, in the foreground, enjoys his lunch.

The beautiful body of the African woman in the hands of a sadistic man who acts, according to the narrator, as "master over life and death." This is an image of colonialism that is condemned morally but strangely, at the same time enjoyed aesthetically (and maybe erotically), and one that appears frequently in popular representations. In the variation of the tortured male body, it occurs, for example, in two fictional movies about German colonialism, *Die Wüstenrose* (1999) and *Africa, mon amour* (2007).⁴ The documentary *Deutsche Kolonien* (2005), a predecessor of *Das Weltreich der Deutschen*, condenses this colonial image to a symbol when the whipping white man is mirrored in the eye of the whipped black man. In these images, the superiority of the colonizer and the complete impotence (and therefore the complete predictability and determinability) of the colonized are closely interwoven.

Superior knowledge and superior control over the representation, both claimed on the basis that all available sources have been exploited as thoroughly as possible, are necessary for the type of popular education program created by television producers like Guido Knopp. The result is, at least in the case of *Das Weltreich der Deutschen*, precarious, not only because the scholarly research has been anything but thorough in its almost complete ignorance of more recent postcolonial studies. The arrogance against historians, even those who appear in the film, is compounded by the arrogance towards the visual material itself. In a making-of documentary of *Das Weltreich der Deutschen*, director Sebastian Dehnhardt explains that a chorus of African children singing a German folk song in the East Africa episode really is from Namibia. But he felt it necessary to insert a more peaceful element into an episode that otherwise contained too much bloodshed: "Therefore we had to create a counterweight, so that the German engagement in East Africa would not be misunderstood."

A dramaturgical as well as a political logic determines what will be seen. So it is the task and the ambition of the globe-trotting team of filmmakers to bring back those pictures

that are wanted, that are "needed". Since the filmmakers already know what that is, they are seldom interested in what they really find "on location". Instead, they tell us repeatedly how much money and creative energy they invested to make the world look exactly as they wanted it to look. In this inclination towards set design and costume, the making-of documentaries and fictional films resemble each other. This inclination points to an idea of reality as something that can be stabilized and supported by reconstructing an "original" look.

Remarkable evidence of this idea is offered by the set designer of the most ambitious colonial fiction produced by ZDF, the melodrama *Africa, mon amour*. The making-of film shows him in front of the ancient town center of the small island of Lamu, explaining how he carefully remodeled it to resemble a German colonial residence, and with a wink he assures us that "the people here" like it much better this way.⁵ His joviality reflects not only the pride of an engineer, touting his own effectiveness in German industry spreading over the world in the colonial era. It ignores a reality that is far more complex than is made visible in the film's "splendid pictures", obliterating a history that begins long before the arrival of the Germans and does not end with their departure. The ancient town of Lamu is a good representation of such a complex history. UNESCO lists it as a world heritage site for its unique architecture blending African, Arabian and Indian elements. But these traces of a diverse and rich cultural interchange dating back to the seventeenth century are not seen in the film or mentioned in the production context. The narrator of the making-of film continues "that the people of Lamu can at least learn about their own history" by watching the shooting of a German melodrama; at this specific moment, we (and the "people of Lamu") see the flagellation of an African man, a scenario, as we have already seen, which is particularly popular with filmmakers.

In the actual movie, where Lamu has become the colonial town of Tanga, we see the flagellation only for a few seconds through the eyes of the heroine, who passes by on a short rickshaw ride from the harbor to her hotel. Within this short ride, the dramatized colonial scenes unfold in a sequence of "views." Similar to early nonfiction films, as described by Tom Gunning, this sequence is not organized by a narration, but by "the act of looking and observing": "the view of the tourist is recorded here, placing natural or cultural sites on display, but also miming the act of visual appropriation, the natural and cultural consumed sights."⁶ Like the tourists of early cinema, the character enters the world of the colony and takes the audience with her on a journey through time. She and the camera consume the world by looking, in the same way one might look at photographs in a tourist's (or a colonizer's) album that have come to life. The difference being that in *Africa, mon amour* the sights are neither natural nor cultural, but artificial, produced for no other purpose than to be consumed. Thus, the life of the reenacted photos is a very restricted one. The three protagonists of the

flagellation scene seem ascribed to their roles forever: the powerless black victim, another black man with his back to the camera, performing the beating with a machinelike expression, and a white officer in a white uniform, very self-confident, unmoved and untouchable. It is a simple allegory of colonial rule, although not particularly representative as it presents the complex and unstable power relations of the East-African society as much too static. Even for the purposes of melodrama, however, there is another problem; the scenario stimulates a rather limited emotional response. There may be anger or compassion, but none of the three protagonists, with their stony coolness, mechanical cruelty or helpless passivity, can raise any deeper interest in his character or the specific role he plays in the scenario. There is no way to enter it by fantasy, no way to change from the role of touristic observer to participant.⁷ Consequently, the narration quickly leaves colonial society behind and moves on to Mount Kilimanjaro. The next time we will see the lavishly reconstructed Lamu/Tanga is when it is destroyed. Like the flagellation scene, it is only set up to be abandoned and finally destroyed.

So what are we, and the "people of Lamu", supposed to learn? The latter that their ancestors were helpless victims, overpowered by some almighty white men, who, as the actor Robert Atzorn says in the making-of film, "came down here, raised a flag, and that was it." And "we", the German viewers, that we are still able to make our vision of the world come true. In the making-of film as well as in *Das Weltreich der Deutschen*, we see the ability, or rather the power of the producers to remodel the world according to their "needs", to tell their story, be it the melodramatic story of a German woman or the story of the German empire. It is quite obvious that this is a genuine colonial fantasy. The link between colonialism and culture, as Edward Said has pointed out, lies in the ability and the power to tell stories and by doing so prevent other stories from being told. In other words, representation itself is a kind of colonizing power.⁸ Films like *Das Weltreich der Deutschen* take full advantage of the power of representation. Atzorn's comment, "raised a flag, and that was it," may not only be too simple to explain colonial realities, but also deprives the colonized of their identity once more by assigning them forever to the position of the helpless victim. As a description of the representational act, however, it is quite precise.

It is surprising to see how clearly German television was once aware of the dilemma of representation. In 1966, Ralph Giordano produced the first documentary on German colonialism, *Heia Safari – Die Legende von der deutschen Kolonialherrschaft*⁹ for WDR, another major German public television network. The film starts with a montage of archive film clips showing the image of an idyllic colonial life produced by the paternalistic, "hard but fair", German rule in Africa. At the same time, a voice-over declares this to be a myth and remarks rather tersely, "Nothing has entered our present consciousness so strongly and 'in

tact' as the romanticized relationship between the German colonial power and its black protégés." It is Giordano's project to destroy this stereotype, to "sully" the images that the "colonial power" produced and that the propaganda of colonial revisionism during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich kept alive. Three decades later, Peter Heller and Sylvie Banuls pick up the same archive materials in their documentary *Manga Bell – König zwischen Goethe und Galgen*.¹⁰ They tell two interwoven stories: of Manga Bell, the last king of the Dualla, who was executed in 1914 by the German colonial administration; and of Jean Pierre Felix Eyoum, a descendant of Manga Bell, who was born in Cameroon but has lived and worked for decades in Germany. While a montage again shows the colonial arcadia, Eyoum recites a poem that glorifies the German cultivation; while the childlike Africans were civilized through labor, the German masters were able to enjoy wildlife adventures. The montage of historical images ends with another quote, "Before the arrival of the Germans, Cameroon was an unknown country" and we now see the reading Eyoum and also his source, Paul Kunze's "People's Book of Our Colonies" (*Volksbuch unserer Kolonien*). This was one of the most popular works of colonial revisionism during the Third Reich and several editions were published. The ridiculous and dangerous Eurocentrism of an attitude that takes for unknown what is only outside the vision of the European self also characterizes the photographic and filmic documents we see while Ayoum reads. But these are exactly the documents that have become the pattern for recent reenactments, either in fictitious works like *Africa – mon amour* or in documentaries like *Das Weltreich der Deutschen*. While Giordano, Heller, and Banuls tried to "sully" the stereotyped images, these same images recently seem to have received a face lift.

Following a trend in historical documentation, two strategies have gained importance in the representation of colonialism: the inclusion of vintage film footage and the reenactment of supposed key moments. While the first promises an authentic look into a past world, the latter suggests the intimacy of becoming part of this world. This mode of reenactment reveals an unsolved tension between modern production and the material it reconstructs and reproduces.¹¹ Treating the visual documents as raw materials to be absorbed and replaced in the process of reenactment is a precarious process that runs two main risks. If, as is often the case, filmmakers do not reflect upon the cultural practices that created the documents, such as colonialism in this case, these documents will lose much of their significance and gain a remarkable potency of repetition instead. Failing to ask how photographs and films were produced, which circumstances and preconditions caused them, which fears and desires are embedded in them, and, more importantly, what has been omitted from a picture, compounds a kind of blindness embedded in the visual medium. Photographic and filmic documents are,

like literary texts, representations of a past not as it was but as a culture wanted it to be seen. They bear the traces of fantasies, in our case those fantasies which lay at the very heart of colonialism, fantasies of power, of fear, of omnipotence and of impotence. If the surviving photographs and films (which reflect the results and not the preconditions of these complex and often contradictory processes of representation) are reconstructed and reenacted, then such reenactment is limited to the way that colonial society visualized itself and wished to be visualized by others. When reenactment revitalizes such a view, it risks reinforcing the underlying fantasies as well. It also contributes to another kind of blindness. Following the obvious and ignoring the individual, it elides the traces of the repressed conserved within photographs. The preconditions of popular film production add the prejudices, stereotypes and fantasies of the present to those of the past .

Dramatization runs the risk of erasing important traces of the past and of altering it, most obviously through casting (adding the looks and mannerisms of present actors) and through storytelling. Not limited to documentary filmmaking, this concept of reenactment is an approach toward other persons, situations and constellations which is vital for a fiction like *Africa, mon amour* but also for a documentary like *Das Weltreich der Deutschen*. If we consider colonialism as a stage where fantasies have been realized, the analogy with dramatization becomes evident. Within the dramatization, a stage is set up, where the actors and actresses slip into costumes and set designs of another world to come as close as possible to those who originally lived in this world and this clothing. A making-of film and other reports usually accompany the more elaborate productions and provide detailed descriptions of the approach taken. The producer is able to praise the money, time and energy spent on rebuilding the lost world. More importantly however, the audience gets the opportunity to share the experience of those who undertook to "dive" into the other world in order to feel the touch of "Africa" or the "South Seas".

In the Making of *Das Weltreich der Deutschen*, director Dehnhardt describes how his assistant director, "in an act of heroic foolishness," took off all his clothes and jumped into the scene to save the take, when the extras failed to perform a nudist dance while a beautiful sunset created the perfect atmosphere. This "heroic foolishness" is perhaps the most accurate formula to describe how the reenactment of German colonialism works.

¹ I quote (in my translation) the narrator of *Das Weltreich der Deutschen* (2010, directed by Sebastian Dehnhardt, produced by Guido Knopp). ("Ein Reich, das sich über die ganze Welt erstreckt. Davon träumten einst auch die Deutschen" – "Im 19. Jahrhundert machen sich Abenteurer, Forscher und Entdecker auf zu fernen Kontinenten ... mit fatalen Folgen. Blutige Konflikte wüten in den deutschen Kolonien" – "Das Weltreich der Deutschen. Eine Geschichte von Träumen, Sehnsüchten und der rauhen Wirklichkeit."). *Das Weltreich der Deutschen* is not the first documentary about German colonialism, but so far the most ambitious. Some others are: *Wie Europa sich einen Kontinent besorgte* (1984, Christian Herrendoerfer, Carlheinz Caspari), *Kronzucker unterwegs: Expedition China. Der Flieger von Tsingtau* (1991, Gerd Weiss), *Wir hatten eine Dora in Südwest* (1992, Tink Diaz), *Auf den Spuren eines Kolonialdenkmals* (1994, Volkert Schult, Stefan Gaffke), *Wo China noch deutsch ist* (1994, Lutz Maklerwein), *Roter Adler an Afrikas Küste* (1995, Johannes Kluger), *Heimat in der Wüste. Deutscher Alltag in Namibia* (1996, Michael Höft, Andreas Greve) *Manga Bell – König zwischen Goethe und Galgen. Eine Familiengeschichte aus Afrika und Deutschland* (1997, Peter Heller, Sylvie Banuls), *Befreien Sie Afrika!* (1999, Martin Baer), *Pagen in der Traumfabrik. Schwarze Komparsen im deutschen Spielfilm* (2001, Annette v. Wangenheim), *Graf Götzen – Ein deutsches Schiff auf dem Tanganjikasee* (2001, Stephan Lamby), *Eine Kopffjagd* (2001, Martin Baer), *Deutsche Kolonien* (2005, Giesela Graichen, Thomas Hies), *Unter Kaiserlicher Flagge. 1. Teil: Die Karawane der Matrosen* (2006, Jürgen Stumpfhaus), *Preußisches Liebesglück. Eine deutsche Familie aus Afrika* (2006, Sönke el Bitar, Gorch Pieken), *Die Prinzessin von Sansibar* (2007, Tink Diaz), *Momella. Eine Farm in Afrika* (2007, Bernd Reufels), *Tsingtau – Auf deutschen Spuren in China* (2008, Dietmar Schultz).

² Knopp has often been publicly criticized by academic historians, but scholarly analysis of his work is still rare. As one exception see Oliver Näpel: „Historisches Lernen durch 'Dokumentation'? - Ein geschichtsdidaktischer Aufriss. Chancen und Grenzen einer neuen Ästhetik populärer Geschichtsdokumentation, analysiert am Beispiel der Sendereihen Guido Knopps,“ *Zeitschrift für Geschichtsdidaktik* 2 (2003), S.213-244. My concern in this essay, however, is not to fill the gap. I am only interested in *Das Weltreich der Deutschen* insofar as it reveals more fundamental problems in the representation of colonialism – that is, that it reveals a close connection between specific modes of representation and colonialism itself. For a broader discussion of this topic see my study *Die Eroberung der Phantasie. Kolonialismus, Literatur und Film zwischen deutschem Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik*, Göttingen 2010.

³ See, for example, Jonathan Glassman: *Feasts and Riot. Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (London: Heinemann, 1995).

⁴ *Die Wüstenrose* (1999, dir. Hans Werner); *Afrika, mon amour* (2007, dir. Carlo Rola)

⁵ I quote (in my translation) the narrator of *Africa, mon amour. Making Of* (2007, written and directed by Klaus Räfle, produced by Oliver Berben).

⁶ Tom Gunning, "Before documentary: early nonfiction films and the 'view' aesthetic," in *Uncharted Territory. Essays on early nonfiction film*, eds. D. Hertogs and N. de Klerk (Amsterdam: Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1997), 9-24, 15.

⁷ For a discussion of the emotional impact of the melodramatic genre see Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," in *Film Genre Reader II*, ed. B. K. Grant (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 140-158.

⁸ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf 1993).

⁹ *Heia Safari – Die Legende von der deutschen Kolonialherrschaft in Afrika*, Ralph Giordano (WDR 1966/67) First screened in October 1966 simultaneously on all "Third Programs." See Eckard Michels, „Die WDR-Dokumentation 'Heia Safari' von 1966/67 über Deutschlands Kolonialvergangenheit“, in *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (2008): 467-492.

¹⁰ *Manga Bell – König zwischen Goethe und Galgen. Eine Familiengeschichte aus Afrika und Deutschland*, Peter Heller und Sylvie Banuls (WDR 1997).

¹¹ In the last few years, a lot of visual material of German colonialism has become available. See for example Wilhelm Schmidt, Wilhelm and Irmitraud D., Wolcke-Rank, eds., *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika. Fotos aus der Kolonialzeit 1884-1918* (Erfurt: Sutton-Verlag 2001) or the reprint of *Großer Deutscher Kolonialatlas*, ed. P. Sprigade and M. Moisel (Reprint, Braunschweig: Archiv-Verlag, 2002).

