

«The Image of the Other in History Teaching»
Second symposium on
"Globalisation and images of the Other: challenges and new perspectives for history teaching in Europe ?"
(Istanbul, 30th Novembre – 1th December 2008)
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**Globalisation and History Teaching
The Need to develop Historical Anthropology**

- 1) *In view of the political and cultural conditions of the world society that have been created by globalisation it is not sufficient to teach history on a national basis, limiting its purview to the European context alone.*

In all European countries the teaching of history has been related to nation building. History teaching has contributed to the building of national identity, national consciousness and the development of a nation state. In all European countries teaching history has meant and still means teaching the respective national history within the context of European history. This orientation was predominant in history teaching in the 19th and 20th centuries. Due to its focus on national history within the context of European history, it was restricted to political history and a conceptualisation of history as the result of the actions of outstanding human beings. It is only recently that this orientation has changed and social history and, in some cases, historical anthropology have also become an integral part of the teaching of history.

Today history teaching also includes a consideration of culture and cultural diversity. In this context I would like to distinguish two definitions of culture. The first sees culture as including art, music, literature, the performing arts and architecture. The second is broader and thus embraces "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage" (UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage).

2) The characteristics of globalisation: One-world mentality vs. cultural diversity

In spite of these important changes there are still very few cases in which history teaching is oriented towards our present-day Europeanization and globalization. Today history teaching must respond to new challenges associated with the process of globalization. Globalization is a complex phenomenon which has a profound influence on the lifestyles and self concepts of most Europeans. Globalisation is now all-pervasive in almost all areas of life in Europe, with the result that the effects of crisis situations such as the current crisis of the financial markets and banks are exerted not only nationally, but worldwide.

Today many areas of human living are affected by globalisation.

Among many other aspects, the following six dimensions are of constitutive importance for the process of globalization (Wulf/Merkel 2002):

1. transnational financial and capital markets, the mobility of capital and the increasing influence of neoliberal economic theory;
2. company strategies and markets with global strategies of production, distribution and cost minimization by means of outsourcing;
3. transnational political bodies and the declining influence of the nation state;
4. patterns of consumption, lifestyles and cultural styles and their tendency towards uniformity;
5. the new media and tourism; research, development and technology;
6. the one-world mentality.

To these characteristics we must also add the globalization of poverty, suffering, war, terror and the exploitation and destruction of nature, which are related to colonialism and capitalism and have long been ignored.

These developments are leading to a separation of the political from the economic spheres and to a globalization of lifestyles and a rise in the importance of new communication media. These are not linear processes. They are disrupted in many places and produce contradictory results. They have different objectives and decision-making structures and are organized in networks, like rhizomes. They do not run parallel in space or time and they are subject to a wide variety of different dynamic forces. They are multi-dimensional and multi-regional and deeply rooted in the centres of neoliberal capitalism. The dominance of a globalised economy over political life and the globalization of lifestyles by means of the increasing presentation of experience as images in the new media help to bring about changes in the way we work. All this has

been accompanied by a decline in the influence of the individual nation states, while cultures have become increasingly permeable and homogeneous, resulting in the development of new ways and spheres of life.

The question arises as to what this scenario means for history teaching and to what extent it takes these developments suitably into account. Whatever the case may be, there is now a need for discussion in the teaching of history about the development of and changes associated with Europeanisation and globalisation. This discussion is leading to a partial re-organisation of ways of teaching history, with an associated reduction in the reliance on national histories as explanatory basis.

The challenges of globalisation have made it necessary to conduct a thorough investigation into the conditions of human life as they stand today. This is the task of a contemporary anthropology, which can no longer be reduced to ethnology, philosophical anthropology or anthropological issues in the historical sciences, but must be reformulated as *historical and cultural anthropology*. Thus defined, anthropology must set itself the task of elaborating a body of knowledge that makes a contribution to improving human beings' understanding of themselves and the world and takes cultural diversity into account. This anthropological knowledge must include a reflection of its historicity and culturality, thus providing a frame of reference for teaching history in such a way that the anthropological perspective is included. If we are to grasp the situation of human beings adequately today, we also need, for example, to understand the historical and cultural co-ordinates of globalisation.

3) A double historicity and culturality as the main elements of a historical anthropology whose goal is to contribute to the development of a historical consciousness.

In my view, the main aim of teaching history is to develop a *historical consciousness* based on historical and contemporary structures and phenomena. This is a more important than imparting a large number of historical facts, which are usually more or less unconnected and not sufficiently understood. Today, history needs to be taught in a way that helps to reduce the wealth of historical knowledge by focusing on a knowledge that relies on thoroughness, i.e. on gaining an understanding of selected examples. A historical consciousness is centred on an awareness that previous worlds such as those of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and our contemporary world are historically developed worlds and that they are thus modifiable, which makes them *open-ended*. A historical consciousness includes an awareness of the uniqueness and thus also the particularity and diversity of historical and cultural situations. This historical awareness is

the central goal of a *historical and cultural anthropology* that aims to improve the self-understanding of human beings today and in which the phenomena of human beings are the subject matter of research and teaching (Wulf 2004, 2002a, 200b).

In our attempts to impart a historical consciousness we need to grasp the *dual nature of the historicity and culturality*, that is, that both our own times and the era with which we want children to become familiar with have their own historical and cultural character.

Based on the common understanding of the demise of a binding abstract anthropological norm, today's anthropology attempts to relate the historicity and culturality of its concepts, views and methods to the historicity and culturality of the themes, objects and issues under examination. This places historical anthropology somewhere between history and the human sciences, where both the findings of the critique of anthropology and those of the human sciences can be used to tackle new questions on human nature. At the heart of these efforts lies a restlessness of mind that cannot be stilled. Research in historical anthropology is not limited to certain cultural contexts or single epochs. By reflecting on the inherent historicity and culturality of their research today anthropologists can leave behind the Eurocentricity of the human sciences and focus on the unresolved problems of the present and the future.

4) The issues addressed by historical anthropology and its procedures and the imparting of historical consciousness carried out with them can help to deal competently with cultural diversity. In terms of globalisation this means that we need to develop an awareness of the multiplicity of cultural similarities and differences. In the final analysis, it means that globalisation is not a single phenomenon, but that it comes in many shapes and sizes. Thus, the forms of globalisation seen in China differ substantially from those in the USA and those that exist in India are not the same as those found in Europe and Africa.

History is shaped by cultural diversity and cultural diversity is shaped by history. There is no single definition of history, but a diversity of definitions. Definitions of history and of cultural diversity are pluralistic and manifold and we must therefore consider different definitions, methods and paradigms of history. To what degree does teaching history mean teaching political, social and economic history? Inspired by the "Ecole des Annales" and the "Nouvelle Histoire", in France *historical anthropology* has become an important paradigm for the teaching of history (Wulf 200a, 2002b, 2004). To help children to understand the historicity of their families and of their feelings is an important part of history teaching.

Historical anthropology views the diversity of cultural developments from the point of view of the definition of culture that I delineated a moment ago. Rather than a process of globalization that encourages a uniformity of humankind, we need a reflexive, critical and heterogeneous process of globalization. However, in order to achieve this it would be necessary to modify a number of the changes that have already taken place and to ensure that cultural diversity, the fascination of otherness and anthropological reflection on historical and cultural differences are integrated in the dynamics of globalization.

As experiences with inter-cultural communication and inter-cultural learning have shown us, the meanings of the same cultural phenomena and situations can often differ, depending on who is responding to them. This is illustrated, for example, by the differences in meaning attached to words in European languages which originated from the Latin word *natura*. The associations and connotations of the German "Natur", English "nature", French "nature" or Spanish "naturaleza" differ widely, even though the cultures in which they developed share a long common history. If we compare them with the meanings of the Japanese word for nature, "shi zen", we find even greater differences (Imai/Wulf 2007; Suzuki/Wulf 2007). The term also has both descriptive and normative meanings in Japanese, however, its associations, emotional aspects and atmospheric nuances are very different from those of the European variants. Different cultural backgrounds naturally lead to differences in perception and experience. For example, it was Japanese primatologists who first discovered that macaque monkeys had a sophisticated culture and were capable of cultural learning. It was Japanese attitudes to community and society that enabled them to notice this behaviour much earlier than their European or American colleagues.

In the light of the one-world mentality which still dominates the discussion on globalization, it is imperative to highlight historical and cultural differences, even where appearances may be deceptively similar. It is this that makes it possible to communicate with the other. If human beings were aware of the otherness in themselves and their own cultures, this would open up new possibilities for understanding the otherness of other people and other cultures and of developing a way of thinking from the point of view of the other – a *heterological way of thinking*. With the increasing awareness of differences and alterity and the recognition of cultural diversity it is increasingly becoming possible to identify common aspects of different cultures and to break down barriers between them. One of the aims of globalization is to create a homogeneous world. As a result, the ability to perceive and accept differences is essential and can even help to prevent violent conflict. However, even acceptance of cultural diversity has its limits; for many people it is related to issues of human rights and global ethics. It must

be accepted that disagreements will arise with members of other cultures in this context. Wherever possible, such disputes must be conducted without recourse to the use of force.

Living conditions in the 21st century are strongly influenced by the struggle between the uniformity of globalization and movements which emphasize cultural difference and diversity. These include the conflicts between the global and the local, the universal and the singular, tradition and modernity, the spiritual and the material, necessary competition and equal opportunities, short-term and long-term reflections, the rapid spread of knowledge and the limitations of our human capacity to cope with this (Delors 1996).

Humankind is now faced with three special challenges which are also challenges to the teaching of history in the 21st century. They are related to the *handling of cultural diversity, the consideration of sustainable development and education for peace.*

5) History teaching as dealing with alterity and heterological thinking.

In order to be able to deal competently with cultural diversity we need to experience the other, alterity. Neither people nor cultures can develop satisfactorily if they cannot mirror themselves in others, if they do not engage and influence each other. Both cultures and individuals are formed through exchange with others. Reciprocal exchange processes allow relationships to develop between people and their alterities and broaden the horizons of their lives and experience in the process. Such exchange processes include the giving, receiving and returning of objects, donations and symbolic goods.

Historically, European cultures have developed three strategies to reduce alterity to the known and trusted. One of these is European rationality – *logocentrism* – which has led to foreign cultures and people being judged according to their adherence to logocentric norms. Whenever other cultures fail to live up to this expectation they are degraded and not regarded as being of equal value. The second strategy centres on European individuality and the *egocentrism* that goes with it. This egocentrism led to the development of a high esteem for the individual and an increase in individualist self-assertion at the cost of community. The third strategy employed to reduce alterity to European standards is *ethnocentrism*, which has also led to an over-valuing of European culture and a corresponding under-valuing of others. The effects of these strategies are still apparent in the dynamics of globalization today and constitute an obstacle to dealing with cultural diversity productively (Wulf/Merkel 2002; Wulf 2006).

In many areas processes of contact, encounter and exchange are determined by the circulation of capital, products, workforce and symbolic goods. The dynamics of these processes lead to meetings between people and cultures and engender both material and immaterial relationships. They occur within the framework of global power structures and are intrinsically unequal, being determined by consolidated power relationships that have their roots in history. Despite the fact that many such processes are influenced by capitalist market movements and therefore fuel inequality, they also promote encounters with the alterity of other people and cultures (Winterstein 1999).

Societies and cultures are constituted by contact with alterity. The experiences of other people and cultures are central to the development of children and adolescents. People can only understand themselves as reflected by and through the reactions of other human beings and cultures. This implies that knowing ourselves means that we must be aware that we do not really understand alterity.

How is it possible to accept one's experiences of other peoples without triggering mechanisms that reduce them to the known and trusted? There are several answers to this question, which differ depending on the context. One way to bear the alterity of strangers is based on the experience of one's own foreignness, i.e. feeling surprised by one's own feelings and actions. Such events can promote flexibility and curiosity about the alterity of other people and cultures.

Thus, in order to be able to understand and engage with alterity, we need to experience our own foreignness. This experience constitutes a basis for developing the ability to think and feel from the perspective of the other – heterological thinking – in the context of which the engagement with the non-identical is of central importance. Such experiences can be expected to increase sensitivity and the readiness to surrender to what is new and unknown. In turn, this results in a better ability to bear complex situations emotionally and mentally without acting out stereotypes.

Obviously, these options for human development can also be subverted into their opposite. In such cases, the encounter with cultural variation is met by violent action aimed at reducing difference to sameness. Because such efforts mostly fail, a vicious circle of constantly escalating violent action ensues, which results from mimetic processes of mutual imitation and has only one outcome (Wulf 2006, 2005).

To avoid encounters with cultural diversity and alterity ending in rivalry and violence, we need normative rules. These have been formulated in the Charter of Human Rights, which has come to command authority far beyond the boundaries of the European culture from which it emerged.

6) *History teaching takes place in schools. Many of them, especially the inner city schools in big cities, can be perceived as zones of contact between children and adolescents from different cultures (the 300 pupils of the primary school where we are carrying out the Berlin Study on Rituals, come from more than 20 different ethnic backgrounds). Here differentiation, transformation and hybrid formations are of central importance. These terms are inter-related. Their interconnectedness is obvious (Audehm/Velten 2007).*

1) *Differences* create boundaries and contribute to rendering them dynamic. It is not possible to form a cultural identity without differences. Thus, for example, in the processes of inclusion and exclusion that take place in rituals, differences are created which are crucial for their performative character. The category of difference takes on a special importance in the UNESCO convention on cultural diversity, in which cultural difference is defined as a universal human right that forms the basis for cultural identity. The ways in which heterogeneity and alterity are dealt with are crucial to this cultural diversity, which is created by acts of differentiation (Wulf 2006).

2) *Transgression* consists in overstepping the limits set by rules, norms and laws on the one hand, and overstepping culturally created boundaries on the other. These acts of transgression can be non-violent, but they frequently also involve manifest structural or symbolic violence. In dealing with cultural diversity, boundaries are often transgressed, leading to the creation of something new. Transgressions change norms and rules, ways of life and practices. They change and shift borders and create new cultural relations and constellations in the process. In addition, in order to understand these processes we need to make a thorough analysis of their contexts, focusing on the origin of the change or innovation in question.

3) The creation of new *hybrid cultural forms* by means of difference and transgression is a crucial issue. As the communication and interaction between different countries becomes ever closer and faster, and economic, political, social and cultural exchange becomes more intensive, more and more hybrid cultural forms come into being. Bhabha first used the term hybridisation to define cultural contacts in a non-dualistic and non-essentialist way by describing them in terms of their function of creating identity by means of a "third space". The third space is liminal; it is a space in-between which emphasizes its own in-between-ness. In this liminal space, borders are subject to subversion and restructuring and hierarchies and power relationships are changed. The crucial questions are to what extent these processes result from performative practices and *how* these new forms of hybridization are created. They are mixed forms in which

elements belonging to different systems and contexts change their character in a mimetic process, leading to a new cultural identity. This identity is no longer constituted by distinguishing oneself from an other, but in mimetically assimilating oneself to the other.

7) History teaching as education for sustainable development.

The aim of sustainable development is to realize a continuous process of all-encompassing social change which is to sustain the quality of life of the current generation while securing the options of future generations to design their lives. Sustainable development has become recognized as a way of improving individual life chances and of promoting social prosperity, economic growth and ecological safety.

Agenda 21, ratified in 1992, led to the implementation of the „world decade for sustainable development“ by UNESCO (2005-2014). The aims that were pursued in this decade differed according to world region. In Europe working towards sustainability means first and foremost effecting an ecologically motivated change in the economic system. In less developed countries the term is used mainly with reference to efforts to ensure the provision of basic services and education with the aim of catching up with the more developed countries. The goal of education for sustainability is to enable people actively to design an ecologically sane, economically productive and socially just environment taking global aspects into consideration (Wulf/Bryan 2006).

Sustainability is a regulative idea. Like peace, it can never be fully realized. Sustainable education is an important prerequisite for the gradual realization of sustainability/sustainable development?. As such, sustainability education is directed at the individuals whose sensitivity and responsibility it wants to promote. To this end it needs to start with existing structures and, always bearing in mind individual and social conditions, to develop the creative abilities of young people. By this I mean the ability to shape their own lives and their own lifeworlds in accordance with the premises of sustainable development. To do so, they need to be able to learn from concrete problems, study their contexts and prepare reflective action. Sustainability education implies a reflective and critical understanding of education and a readiness to participate in relevant individual and social learning processes. To this end minimal standards for sustainable development studies need to be developed that do justice to the multiple perspectives of sustainability.

Education for sustainable development should contribute to the establishment of social justice between nations, cultures, world religions and generations. The central principles of sustainability include, alongside the promotion and refashioning of the environment and economic conditions, also global responsibility and political

participation. With these goals, which go far beyond the protection of the environment and resources, education for sustainability takes up ideas that were prepared by peace education in the 1970s (Wulf 1973, 1974). However, at that time there was little recognition of a need for social justice between generations and the growing importance of the task of sparing non-renewable resources.

8) The contribution of history teaching to education for peace.

Due to the existence of modern weapons of mass destruction humanity still faces an unprecedented threat of war and violence. Peace has become the prime condition for human life. Its production and preservation is key not only for the survival of individuals, generations and nations, ,but also for that of humanity as a whole. In the context of history teaching it is therefore imperative that curricula both cover the conditions that lead to war, violence and destitution and search for ways of rendering them less harmful or even overcoming them.

Education for peace is pedagogy's contribution to overcoming these conditions. It recognizes that they are often due to systemic problems rooted in the macrostructure and can only be partly reduced by education. Education for peace is based on the idea that a constructive manner of dealing with the major problems currently facing humanity must be part of a lifelong learning process that begins in childhood and continues throughout adult life.

In the early 1970s peace research showed that peace could not be brought about by a change in consciousness alone. The experiences of the peace movement have confirmed these analyses. The absence of peace and the presence of violence are too deeply rooted in social structures to be overcome by human striving for peace alone. Peace requires additional political action directed at reducing the violent structures inherent to the international system and to society at large. Education for peace must draw on central guiding ideas such as „organized lack of peace“, „structural violence“ and „social justice“. These ideas emphasize the social character of peace and guard us from fantasies of omnipotence and naïve problem reductions. According to Galtung's differentiation, which is still valid today, peace not only denotes the absence of war and direct violence (a negative definition of peace), but also needs to be understood as the reduction of structural violence and the production of social justice (a positive definition of peace). According to this understanding of peace, history teaching must not only tackle war and direct violence between nations and ethnic groups, but also address the violent conditions at the base of society (Galtung 1973; Wulf 1973, 1974; Senghaas 1995, 2000).

History teaching in the context of education for peace condemns both organized open violence and structural violence. As an alternative it promotes processes of non-violent conflict resolution, the realization of social justice and the improvement of co- and self-determination. It is conscious of the fact that it is a process rather than a state and that, despite its apparent unattainability, peace must remain its unconditional objective.

The overcoming of apathy and the experience of powerlessness is the precondition for any peace-related learning process that can pave the way for a disposition to act. One way to learn consists in linking one's own experiences of deficiency with major global problems. The insight that certain macrostructural conflict formations determine and even endanger one's own life leads to a motivation to champion peace. Thus, beyond imparting relevant insights, education can bring about changes in attitude and promote political commitment, both of which lead to changes in political action.

Teaching history in the context of education for peace requires the establishment of certain standards if it is to further non-violent learning processes. It will also develop forms of participatory and autonomous learning. These learning processes place great responsibility for initiative in the hands of the recipients of peace education. They are encouraged to develop their visions of peace and a consciousness of the historical causes and the general changeability of conflict formations; this contributes to the conception and development of "real-utopian" blueprints for changing the world. At the same time it ensures that education and people's perception of problems are orientated towards the future.

In conclusion I would like to propose three more guiding principles I believe we need to observe if we are to improve the teaching of history.

9) Teaching history and the expansion of our understanding of learning

A modern understanding of teaching history means not only learning facts, but also learning how to live together, to act and to be (Delors 1996). As our Berlin Study on Rituals has shown, this means integrating mimetic, performative and poietic modes of learning in order to create intensive encounters with history (Wulf 2003; Wulf et al. 2004; Werler/Wulf 2006; Suzuki/Wulf 2007).

10) Teaching history as a performative process

Teaching history is not merely a cognitive process; the staging of the body also plays an important role in rendering historical knowledge embodied. Three aspects of performativity are important in three explicit ways. Firstly, teaching history is itself a historical and cultural performance; secondly, in the teaching of history language is often performative and a mode of action and thirdly, teaching history has an aesthetic dimension that needs to be considered in the process of teaching (Wulf et. al. 2004; Wulf 2007; Suzuki/Wulf 2007; Wulf/Zirfas 2007).

11) The learning of history as a mimetic process

History is learned in mimetic processes. In these processes past events are represented in children's imaginaries (Hüppauf/Wulf 2009). In mimetic processes a representation and a creative imitation of past events take place. Through mimetic processes both an individual and a collective imaginary, that is, individual and collective historical consciousness, are created. Without mimetic representations history remains inanimate and does not enrich children's imaginaries (Wulf 2007; Gebauer/Wulf 1995, 2004, 2005).

12) History teaching in Europe as an intercultural process

History teaching in Europe is an *intercultural task which includes European and global perspectives* (Wulf 1995, 2006); today cultural diversity is seen as the wealth of humanity. This view on history teaching has resulted from the anthropological turn I have been talking about, which is leading to the development of a more comprehensive approach to teaching history today.

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