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(ISHD)

History and Edutainment  
L'Histoire et Edutainment  
Geschichte und Edutainment



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## PREFACE

The 2014 annual conference of the International Society for History Didactics was organised in Wrocław (Poland) with a leading theme of 'History and Edutainment'. Most articles in this year's issue of the Society's Yearbook originated from the papers presented there. Some authors decided to publish their text elsewhere, e.g. in *Commercialised History: Popular History Magazines in Europe. Approaches to a Historico-Cultural Phenomenon as a Basis for History Teaching*, ed. by Susanne Popp, Jutta Schumann and Miriam Hannig, published by Peter Lang and in *e-Teaching History*, ed. by Joanna Wojdon, to be published by Cambridge Scholars.

The General Assembly of ISHD in Wrocław approved the proposal of the Board of Directors to change the name of the Yearbook to *International Journal of History Didactics and Historical Culture*, with a subtitle *Yearbook of the International Society for History Didactics* in order to emphasise the scholarly interests of the journal and of the Society.

The articles in this issue of the journal reflect those interests and the interdisciplinarity of the research conducted by the members of the ISHD. Both didactical and cultural dimensions can be found in each of the texts.

We start from the 'traditional' educational media, such as books and periodicals. Then two museums are presented: one in Greece and one in Hungary, that tend to combine tradition with modernity, making valuable case studies of the process that is omnipresent in today's museums worldwide. Traditional forms of entertainment that bear educational values include also songs and board games, presented by researchers from the United States and Poland. Moving to contemporary technologies, authors discuss the advantages and shortcomings of such popular media as movies, television shows and video games. We finish with two texts that develop notions found also elsewhere: what are the benefits and drawbacks of incorporating edutainment into the practice of teaching history, for learners and for teachers?

The volume can be regarded as a voice in a broader debate on the reaction of school education on edutainment, and more generally, on public history where entertainment is so popular. It presents potential research areas in both history didactics and public history.

In the *Varia* section readers can find the second part of the text on colonisation and decolonisation as presented in Belgian history textbooks (part I was published in 2014) and a presentation of the book that analyses the results of the Bologna process.

I wish to thank Kath Haydn, Markus Furrer, Frédéric Yelle and Vincent Boutonnet for their invaluable help with translating and proofreading texts in the three languages of the ISHD.

Joanna Wojdon

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## VORWORT

Die Jahreskonferenz 2014 der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Geschichtsdidaktik (IGGD) wurde in Wrocław (Polen) zum Hauptthema 'Geschichte und Edutainment' durchgeführt. Die meisten Beiträge im vorliegenden Jahrbuch stammen aus der Konferenz. Einige Autoren haben sich dazu entschieden, ihren Beitrag anderweitig zu publizieren: z.B. in *Commercialised History: Popular History Magazines in Europe. Approaches to a Historico-Cultural Phenomenon as a Basis for History Teaching*, hg. von Susanne Popp, Jutta Schumann and Miriam Hannig, publiziert bei Peter Lang und in *e-Teaching History*, hg. von Joanna Wojdon, publiziert bei Cambridge Scholars.

Die Generalversammlung der IGGD folgte in Wrocław dem Vorschlag des Vorstands, den Namen des Jahrbuchs auf *International Journal of History Didactics and Historical Culture* mit dem Untertitel *Yearbook of the International Society for History Didactics* anzupassen, um so die wissenschaftliche Ausrichtung des Journals der Gesellschaft zu betonen.

Die Beiträge in dieser Ausgabe des Jahrbuchs widerspiegeln das Interesse und die Interdisziplinarität der Forschung der Mitglieder der IGGD. Sowohl didaktisch ausgerichtete, wie auch geschichtskulturell orientierte Bezüge finden sich in allen Texten.

Wir beginnen mit den 'traditionellen' pädagogischen Medien, wie Bücher und Zeitschriften. Dann werden zwei Museen vorgestellt: eines in Griechenland und eines in Ungarn, welches Tradition mit Modernität zu verbinden versucht und so als wertvolle Fallstudie gelten kann, die zeigt, wie in heutigen Museen solche Prozesse umgesetzt werden. Traditionelle Formen der Unterhaltung, die pädagogische Werte einschliessen, darunter Lieder und Brettspiele, werden von Forschern aus den USA und Polen eingebracht. Mit Blick auf die aktuelle Technologie besprechen Autoren die Vorteile und Mängel populärer Medien, wie Filme, Fernsehshows und Videospiele. Wir schliessen mit zwei Texten, deren hergeleitete Begrifflichkeiten auch ausserhalb der Geschichtsdidaktik diskutiert werden: Was sind die Vor- und Nachteile für Schüler und Lehrer, Edutainment in die Praxis des Geschichtsunterrichts einzubringen?

Der vorliegende Band kann als eine Stimme in einer breiteren Debatte zur Wirkung von Edutainment in der Bildung gesehen

werden und auch allgemein zur Public History, bei der Edutainment so populär ist.

Im zweiten Teil des Bandes (Varia) finden sich Texte zur Kolonisation und Dekolonisation, dargestellt in belgischen Geschichtslehrmitteln (Teil 1 wurde 2014 publiziert). Weiter folgt eine Darstellung eines Buches, das die Resultate des Bologna-Prozesses analysiert.

Danken möchte ich Kath Haydn, Markus Furrer, Frédéric Yelle und Vincet Boutonnet für ihre wertvolle Hilfe beim Übersetzen und Korrekturlesen der Texte in den drei Sprachen der IGGD.

Joanna Wojdon

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## PRÉFACE

La conférence annuelle 2014 de la Société Internationale pour la Didactique de l'Histoire s'est tenue à Wrocław (Pologne) avec pour thème principal 'l'Histoire et le ludo-éducatif.' La plupart des articles du numéro de cette année proviennent des présentations lors de la conférence. Certains auteurs ont décidé de publier leur texte ailleurs, par exemple dans *Commercialised History: Popular History Magazines in Europe. Approaches to a Historico-Cultural Phenomenon as a Basis for History Teaching*, dir. Susanne Popp, Jutta Schumann et Miriam Hannig, publié par Peter Lang et dans *e-Teaching History*, dir. Joanna Wojdon, publié par Cambridge Scholars.

L'Assemblée générale de la SIDH à Wrocław a approuvé la proposition du Conseil d'administration pour modifier le nom des Annales pour celui du Journal International de la didactique de l'Histoire et de la culture historique, avec comme sous-titre Annales de la Société Internationale pour la Didactique de l'Histoire afin de souligner les intérêts savants de la revue et de la Société.

Les articles de ce numéro de la revue reflètent les intérêts et l'interdisciplinarité de la recherche menée par les membres de la SIDH. Les deux dimensions didactiques et culturelles peuvent être trouvées dans chacun des textes.

Nous commençons par les médias éducatifs 'traditionnels', tels que des livres et des périodiques. Puis deux musées sont présentés: l'un en Grèce et l'autre en Hongrie, qui ont tendance à combiner tradition et modernité, proposant des études de cas intéressantes de ce processus qui est omniprésent dans les musées d'aujourd'hui dans le monde entier. Des formes traditionnelles du divertissement, telles que des chansons et des jeux de société véhiculant des valeurs éducatives, sont analysés par des chercheurs des États-Unis et de la Pologne. En passant aussi par des technologies contemporaines, les auteurs discutent des avantages et des inconvénients de médias populaires comme des films, des émissions de télévision et des jeux vidéo. Nous terminons avec deux textes qui développent des notions qui se retrouvent aussi ailleurs: quels sont les avantages et les inconvénients de l'intégration du ludo-éducatif dans l'enseignement de l'histoire, pour les apprenants et pour les enseignants?

Le volume peut être considéré comme une voix dans un débat plus large sur la réaction de l'enseignement scolaire face au ludo-éducatif,

et plus généralement, sur l'histoire publique où le divertissement est si populaire. Il présente des intérêts de recherche potentiels pour la didactique de l'histoire et l'histoire publique.

Dans la section Varia les lecteurs pourront trouver la deuxième partie du texte sur la colonisation et la décolonisation telles que présentées dans les manuels d'histoire de la Belgique (partie I publiée en 2014) et une présentation du livre qui analyse les résultats du processus de Bologne.

Je tiens à remercier Keith Haydn, Markus Furrer, Frédéric Yelle et Vincent Boutonnet pour leur aide précieuse à la traduction et la relecture de textes dans les trois langues de la SIDH.

Joanna Wojdon

HISTORY AND EDUTAINMENT  
GESCHICHTE UND EDUTAINMENT  
L'HISTOIRE ET LE LUDO-ÉDUCATIF



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**SEEING THE PAST IN PICTURES:  
CHILDREN'S HISTORICAL PICTURE BOOKS  
AS AN INTRODUCTION TO HISTORY**

Arja Virta

*This article deals with children's way of understanding images in historical picture books, the difference between fact and fantasy, between the past and the present, and judging the veracity of the presentation. The data were collected through group discussions with 8 and 10 year old children (n = 38). The objects that were used as the basis for discussions were historical fiction picture books that describe life in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Findings suggest that children can distinguish between fantasy and what they see as real history, but do not question the realism or veracity of the pictures. They had difficulties in explaining why they found the descriptions as real. As to changes and differences between the past and the present, they mainly referred to practical differences in the way of living. As a conclusion, the exemplars of historical culture can be starting points for children's historical understanding at an early age, and therefore a resource for history education.*

### **1. Introduction: Children and Historical Culture**

Information about the past is nowadays mediated very effectively, through a number of channels and in various forms. Also children can become acquainted with the variety of historical culture, or historical entertainment, before formal history instruction at school, for instance in films, picture books, or historical games (Rantala, 2011 and 2012). Popular culture, as well as family traditions can have an influence on children's thinking about and interest in history. Historical picture books can be seen as a kind of historical edutainment, because they can comprise entertaining, exciting, aesthetic and cognitive dimensions, often merged together, and the children perhaps do not think that it is a learning process. There is also some evidence that children's literature can be effectively used for promoting learning and giving meaningful learning experiences, both in history (Levstik, 1986; Youngs, 2012; Bickford, 2013) and in art history (Yohlin, 2012).

However, it is still unclear, in what way children understand the actual historical content of picture books, and if they view them more as fantasy and exciting stories than as educative experiences.

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to analyse children's reception of the visual content of historical picture books, especially how the youngest readers understand the distinction between fact and fiction, or fact and fantasy, and how they see the differences between the past and present ways of living. The empirical part is based on group interviews with children. One of the popular Finnish historical picture books, namely Mauri Kunnas' Koiramäki ('Doghill') books, was used.

The popular Finnish author and illustrator Mauri Kunnas has published a great number of illustrated books intended for children. Many of his books are also available as translations into a number of languages. What is typical of his historical production, is artistic expression, humour, and also careful work with historical and anthropological description of objects and milieus. 'Doghill' books deal with rural, and partly urban, life in Finland in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The author has based the illustrations on authentic milieus, an outdoor museum in the countryside, and city milieus from the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Turku. There animal figures, dressed as humans, are described as living as people and doing the work humans used to do (Kunnas, 1980, 1982; Kunnas & Kunnas, 1998).

The Doghill books can be seen as examples of both historical culture and historical entertainment. From this point of view, Jukka Rantala's (2011; 2012) research about Finnish elementary school children's consumption of historical culture is interesting. The data consisted of a fairly large set of interviews with 174 children, 7 to 10 years of age. They had read many books dealing with the past, and at the top of the list were books by Mauri Kunnas, most often 'Doghill' books. Of the 174 interviewees, 119 mentioned some of his books. The data were collected between 2008 and 2010, so it is relevant for the present situation. This result gives further motivation for using 'Doghill' books as the basis of the present study.

## **2. Approaches to Children's Historical Understanding**

The skill of interpreting images is vital for understanding historical culture that is often highly visual. Historical fiction picture books can be considered as multimodal texts, including text, images and design (Youngs & Serafini, 2011; Youngs, 2012). As Fasulo, Girardet and Pontecorvo (1998: 133-134) point out, reading images is a different process compared to working with text: the organization of data is

different, 'discontinuous, not equally dense in every point, with some feature assuming a predominant salience'. Visuals do not self-evidently make it easier to learn, neither can children's nor adults' capacity for reading visuals be taken for granted.

Harnett (1993) worked with children, 7-9 years of age, using sets of historical postcards that children had to describe and arrange in chronological order. Small children simply told what they saw in pictures, focusing on details, but transferring soon to more general contents. Even small children could mention some background knowledge they had acquired outside of school. Foster, Hoge and Rosch (1999) conducted an interview study with 56 pupils from Grades 3, 6 and 9, using photographs. The interviewees were asked questions about when, why and by whom the pictures were taken and what they told about people's lives. The youngest children told about the past in rather vague and general terms, using time expressions 'a long time ago' and were not able to describe the lives of people that were presented in the pictures, while older students had more contextual knowledge.

Fasulo, Girardet and Pontecorvo's (1998) study dealt with grade 4 students' argumentation and problem-solving capacity, using historical pictures of a Viking house. The children seemed to assume that development with time was progression (cf. Seixas, 1996), and made conclusions beyond mere description, mainly focusing on comparisons between their own time and the period in pictures.

Levstik and Barton have in a number of studies tested children and adolescents' interpretations of time. It was typical for children to explain their conclusions about the past, comparing it with the present. In general, all children in their study were able to make chronological distinctions between the older and newer pictures. Children from grades 5-6 succeeded best, but individual differences were remarkable. So, clear-cut generalizations should be avoided. Already before grade 4, children had some kind of sense of history. It was easiest for them to understand changes in material culture, obviously because it was most familiar to them on the basis of their daily life. (Levstik, 1986; Barton & Levstik, 1996; Barton, 1997; Levstik & Barton, 1996, 2008.) Cooper (1995: 8) remarks that concepts that are related to time are to a great degree subjective and cultural, and also related to children's previous experience, for instance their opportunities of listening to stories. Children seem to be able to classify things according to their

age, but it is more difficult for them to explain or justify their conclusions (Cooper, 1995: 13). Children can also make conclusions of time on basis of external features and without purely historical concepts or exact chronological dates (Lee, 2005: 42; Wilschut, 2012: 188).

In this study, one of the purposes is to find out how children compare the past and the present styles of living. It is about understanding change, and thus related to the concept of time. Change is conceptually problematic. It is crucial to understand that it is not an event but a process (Counsell, 2011). However, in this context, the concept of change is related to the differences and familiarity of the context, i.e. comparison and contrasting with the world that is familiar to the participants.

According to Kieran Egan's typology, children's relation to the past belongs first to the mythological stage which is characterized by narrative form, fantasy and binary opposites (good vs. evil, rich vs. poor). Their relation to the past resembles to a great degree their relation to fairytales. In the next, romantic stage, their thinking becomes more focused on reality, at about the age of seven or eight. (Egan, 1989, 1997.) Although this exact stage of thinking can be questioned and although there always are individual differences, it is obvious that young children tend to display imagination and binary thinking when dealing with the past (VanSledright & Brophy, 1992).

As Youngs and Serafini (2011) remark, historical fiction picture books are combinations of fact and fiction, and challenging, because young readers often do not have historical background knowledge about the era which the book describes. Furthermore, they are perhaps not used to answering the question 'how do I know' but often take any information about the past for granted (cf. Shemilt, 1987: 42-44). Therefore, the question about the difference between fact and fiction may not be self-evident for young students.

The main question in this study is related to children's reception of the historical contents of 'Doghill' books, as examples of the genre of historical picture books. Sub-questions are the following: a) what do they find as 'realistic' in the stories, and what as fairytales? b) how do they justify their opinion? and c) what can be concluded about their general understanding of historical change and the differences between the past and the present?

### **3. Conducting the study**

#### *3.1 Presentation of the Material*

In this study, children in groups studied some selected pages from two of Mauri Kunnas' 'Koiramäki' ('Doghill') books that present the life in early or mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Finland. In 'Doghill house' (Kunnas, 1980) the storyline is not about great adventures but about people's, actually dog-people's, life and experiences in the countryside. In 'Doghill Kids Go to Town' (Kunnas, 1982), then, the storyline is based on the scenes the dog-children saw on their visit to their relatives who live in the city as craftsmen, and different milieus of the city and the life styles of different layers of society. They also visited shops, the marketplace and a school. The pages that were used as material in the study are summarized in the Appendix 1.

These books have been popular reading in families and kindergarten, and also used in history lessons, especially with young students. The group discussions that were organised for this study may thus resemble reading sessions in families, or perhaps discussions in history lessons.

#### *3.2 The Participants and the Procedure*

The data were collected in Western Finland, in a school that is situated in a suburb where a considerable proportion of inhabitants are migrants. The school itself is a university training school with a research orientation, directly under the Faculty of Education. Therefore, parents had already been asked for general consent for their children's participation in research when the children started school. The principal of the school gave his permission for this study, as well as the teachers whose classes participated. The practical arrangements were negotiated with the teachers. I have received the permission of Mauri Kunnas, the author, through the publishing house, for using the book series for research purposes.

This article draws on broader data consisting of 17 group interviews with 66 children, who were 8, 10, 12 and 13 years old, from grades 2, 4, 6 and 7. This article is based on the interviews with the ten group interviews from grades 2 and 4, altogether 38 children. The composition of this target group was:

five groups from grade 2: 18 students (age about 8 years),  
five groups from grade 4: 20 students (age about 10 years).

These participant groups (Grades 2 and 4) can be considered as the major focus of the whole study, because these books can be seen more directed to younger readers. These children had not studied history at school, so it was possible to study their preconceptions, mediated through other kinds of history culture.

The data were collected with group interviews, because this method enables to study how children together constructed their understanding, asked each other questions and brought their knowledge and ideas for solving the problems. Each group consisted of four children, except one with only two participants. 19 of the interviewees were girls, 19 boys; 15 were of Finnish origin and had Finnish as native language, 25 had a foreign background, but most of them were born in Finland and had gone to school in Finland.

The duration of the interviews was between 17 and 25 minutes but in one case 15 minutes. All in all, the reason for the brevity of the conversations was the children's limited capacity to focus on the task, but it was sufficient time, because towards the end of the discussions children started to repeat same points of view. All the groups had polite and positive, sometimes even enthusiastic, attitudes to the interview.

The interviews were conducted in school during lessons, in separate peaceful rooms that were intended for supervision discussions or meetings. The interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder. For transcription, the recordings were listened through several times, to distinguish the expressions of each participant. All interviews and transcriptions were done by the author of this article.

In the beginning, the children were asked general questions: What do you think is true in this picture, what is fantasy or imagination? – What could be true, or reality long time ago? How do you know? Why do you think so? Have you seen something like this before? What do you think, what was it like to live at that time? Why do you think so? They were also asked to compare the pictures with the present way of living with following questions: What is the same as our lives, what is different? Similar types of questions were asked about all the pages, varying however according to the specific contents of each page.

All the interviews were transcribed verbatim. After that, the content was segmented so that those parts that were related to the research questions were coded and marked with colour codes. The discussions were also classified into semantic groups according to the themes: fact – fantasy, understanding time and change, comparison between the past and the present, and comparison between past lifestyles (class, countryside – town).

#### 4. Findings

In the interview samples, 'R' refers to the interviewer, who was the author of the article. All children's names have been changed. The codes in the parenthesis after the quotes refer to Grades (Gr 2 or 4) and the number of the interview (1–5 in each grade).

##### 4.1 *Facts or Fantasy*

In general, the youngest participants had already tried to make distinctions between the fantasy and realistic components of the pictures. Most of them concluded that the Doghill stories were partly a representation of reality, partly fairytale.

R: *Is this true or fairytale?*

Lindy: *Often my little brother and I think it is true when we play.*

Mark: *Animals are fairytale, everything else is true. All old times are true, all houses, it is true that there were humans, but these are dogs. (Gr 2/1)*

R: *Is this true or fairytale?*

Sun: *It can be both and.*

Abu: *Fairytale.*

Lauri: *It can be true, because in old times they lived this way in the countryside. But these were not dogs.*

Hanna: *It can very well be true, but those ones are not dogs. (Gr 2/3)*

Rita: *When animals speak, it is not true. But otherwise, life is [true].*

Matt: *I do not believe this is true, these people, but that house is true, this outside is true, I guess. (Gr 4/1)*

Only dogs and other animals, dressed in people's clothes and doing work that people do, were seen as fantasy or fairytale. However, in

some cases, reality and fantasy were mixed in their thoughts. This was expressed only in one of the grade 2 interviews (Gr2/1, above), when Lindy told about fantasy and plays. In the question if they had seen objects similar to those described in the book, some of them spoke about their toys that were based on Doghill figures. The eight and ten year old participants also paid attention to some funny details, mice seen running in the pictures, or a hen sitting on the teacher's head.

Otherwise, notwithstanding the animal figures, most of the children were convinced that the description of life was to a great deal true. They could say that the illustrations were 'about family life a long time ago' or 'true ages ago'. They did not doubt the truthfulness of the illustrations' historical contents.

#### 4.2 *Justifying Truthfulness*

The children tried also to explain their conclusion that images – except animal figures acting as humans – were true. However, it was not simple for them to say why it should be true, and answers were often like this: 'It seems to be true, but I do not know why.' Their understanding that the picture of history was true was based on their own observations, on the stories of family members, or excursions to traditional milieus, with family, school or kindergarten. They could also explain that people used to live in similar houses, for instance in the countryside. Many of them said that they had seen similar milieus somewhere, often in the countryside, or can see something like that still in their surroundings.

R: *How do you know that life was like that?*

Bibbi: *You know when it is so, when your parents tell you.*

I: *Who wants to continue?*

Rita: *This is about old times, my grandma had stuff like this when she was young, she also lived in a farm house like that one.*

R: *And she has told you about it? Have you seen pictures too?*

Rita: *Yes. (Gr 4/1)*

Sometimes the children justified their opinions on the basis of anything related to the past, although not understanding the time dimensions or anachronisms. The evidence they used could be one

single detail they knew about the life in the past, for instance that 'everything was made of wood' or the lack of running water:

Nina: *It is true that they really lived like this in the 19th century. They did not have running water.*

Enna: *I cannot tell.*

Ken: *This is really true, this story. I did not read it but I know that this is true. My father said that there were no cars when he was little.*

R: *mmm*

Ken: *... or perhaps some, not many. (Gr 2/4)*

One of the children thought that the description must be true because it seemed to be realistic as the animals were working the way people did. Very often they saw something familiar in the pictures, often objects or practices. The work in the farmhouse was depicted in an authentic manner.

Most of the groups were very convinced about the veracity of the pictures and did not show any indications of suspicion or criticism. Obviously they had little to compare with, and had only fragmentary evidence to reflect on. However, one of the Grade 4 groups started an intensive discussion showing indications of suspicion. They seemed to have preconceptions about what belonged to a village or a country house in old times.

Flora: *I have not seen any saunas.*

R: *Do you think it can be true, in spite of that?*

Flora: *Well, yes, I do not know. There is no swimming, and if they go to the sauna, and there are pines. I would have thought that it would be other trees.*

R: *What do the boys think?*

Juha: *I think it is strange that there are dogs. By the way, didn't they have outdoor privies in those days?*

R: *Yes, I think there were. Can you see such outhouses (toilets) here?*

Juha: *Can it be some of these storehouses?*

R: *I do not know, perhaps behind the house.*

Juha: *The wells then, weren't they the sort that had a stone thing around?*

R: *Some of them had, but also this kind of well was used in the country. (Gr 4/3)*

### 4.3 *Comparisons between life in the past and in the present*

All the groups were asked: ‘What would it have been like to live at that time, in those houses? Easy or difficult?’ The reactions were quite varied, from enchantment to comments about the lack of modern technical devices, which might make life more difficult and uncomfortable. It was obvious that children were able to see some differences and similarities between life in the past and in their own time. Mostly, their attention was focused on practical objects and activities (cf. Harnett, 1993; Lee, 2005). They also made observations on more abstract differences, such as the poor and the rich, and the tempo of the lifestyle. This tendency to see dichotomies corresponds to the characteristics of the mythological stage in Egan’s (1989; 1997) typology.

One of the most common remarks was that in those days, people did not have electricity and therefore many of the practical things had to be done otherwise, in a more complicated and time-consuming way. This observation suggests the participants had some divergent approaches to history. Most often they just mentioned the differences, but in some cases they continued to say that they would have nothing to do if they lived in past conditions. The others, then, thought that the past way of life could in some sense have been better than the present. Different reactions are shown in the following excerpts:

R: *What would it be like to live there?*

Enna: *That year [time] certainly quite normal.*

Ken: *That looks heavy; now we just turn the tap and get water, but these people had to carry water to others.*

--

Ken: *This looks quite heavy, but also rather nice.*

R: *What is nice?*

Ken: *I would like to know what kind of life they lived.*

Nina: *That can be quite nice, they have animals of their own, but it is also hard work, when they have to get their food from the fields, and so on. Nowadays we just go to a shop, and my mother chooses what we buy.*

Ken: *That seems to be heavy, the work they do, people do not work that much nowadays. (Gr 2/4)*

Similar impressions were expressed in another interview:

R: *Was the life easy or difficult?*

Tina: *It was difficult, they had to fight for everything to survive.*

Eva: *Survive what?*

R: *What did they have to survive?*

Tina: *Everything.*

Eva: *Winters, if the houses did not have any lagging material. (Gr 4/4)*

Ari: *that would not be nice.*

Ken: *That looks quite irritating, ... there is no real backyard to play in, there are only swings.*

Ari: *Not much for children to play with, they did not have cell phones.*

Nina: *You did not need a phone, I have seen that, you did not need them then, you could just write a letter.*

Enna: *Or you could speak.*

Ken: *Irritating. With modern phones you can send messages. Here they had a postman running or cycling, or horses carrying mail. It does not seem to be nice. (Gr 2/4)*

In other words, children seemed to have an idea of progression: life is easier and more pleasant today than in the past (cf. Seixas, 1996: 772-773). However, in a couple of groups the children pointed out the tranquillity of the life style depicted in the book. This nostalgia was most clearly expressed by some migrant children who of their own initiatives compared the historical view with their home village in the country of origin:

Sara: *It would be really nice to live there, it is not a town, it is peaceful, no noise as in an apartment house*

Dana: *Peaceful, and no exhaust gas as from tractors, the homes look fancy, good for living*

Sara: *The homes are really nice, just like those in our country, it is really nice to be able to sleep, no shouting, it is really nice there. (Gr 4/3)*

Some participants expressed emotional, nearly nostalgic stances: it would be exciting to live in an old house (*I have always wanted to live in an old house, Gr 2/5*), but for some it was scary – for instance because of spiders.

The children felt that life was different. The past was experienced as attractive but a bit impractical. Some present pastimes would be

missing. The groups expressed different opinions of the past, depending on how they related it with the present. Although most of the children emphasised the differences between the past and the present, a couple of groups (one of grade 2, one of grade 4) started to debate the differences and similarities between countryside and town, or the wealthy and the poor.

Abu: *The bed, look ...*

Hanna: *This is finer than the previous house, sort of wealthier, here they have a sofa.*

Lauri: *In the other one everything was made of wood.*

Hanna: *Here they have pans in the kitchen [turns back the picture of the country side kitchen] here they did not. Look at this house, all made of wood ... but here they have wallpaper.*

Sun: *But here they did not have any wall paper, just wood.*

Hanna: *Look how many people, pans, this is richer.*

*And look at his clothes, what wonderful shoes compared ... (Gr 2/3)*

Previous studies have pointed out that exact dates do not make sense for young children (Foster et al, 1999; Wilshut, 2012). However, one of the Grade 2 pupils said that life was ‘really like that in the 19th century’. This can be explained by her obvious interest in the ‘Doghill’ books that had been read to her several times. It was typical that they could make difference between old and new things, or more modern or old-fashioned ways of living, for instance comparing a farmhouse and a town house. They saw that the living room in the town house was more modern and more comfortable compared to that in the farmhouse.

## 5. Conclusion

The group discussions with elementary school children suggest that most of them already had great interest in the past and had also acquired some information on it. In discussions about the images of the books, they were also willing to use their previous pieces of knowledge, often originating from other sources than school: family traditions, trips to countryside with the family (cf. Harnett, 1993). Some of the participants mentioned eagerly anything belonging to the category ‘past’, without making difference between eras, or without

seeing anachronisms. It is also typical that these children observed very concrete and practical objects in the pictures (Lee, 2005: 42-44), and they were not critical as to the contents (Levstik, 1996).

The children brought into the situation what they had heard via family tradition or during school excursions, and visits to museums (Rantala, 2010, 2011). Children with a migrant background often mentioned similar school related experiences to the others, but also experiences from journeys to the home country of the family – there they had seen for instance similar villages or similar shops to those illustrated in the book. It was not the purpose of the study to compare students' answers on basis of their cultural backgrounds, but the question 'whose cultural heritage' turned out nevertheless to be relevant and worth further consideration, because the book that was used is describing the old Finnish way of living.

Previous studies have pointed out the role of images as points of departure for understanding history (Alleman & Brophy, 2003; Counsell, 2011; Levstik, 1986, 1993). Therefore for instance books like Doghill are utterly important in teaching – and as a background for teaching. There were obvious indications of young children's capacity of understanding and reasoning about the past (cf. Levstik, 1993), although they naturally were lacking content knowledge and exact concepts. This kind of content-based discussion as such can be eye-openers, inspiring children to ask what was possible historically, what was anachronistic, and to make them to understand what they already know about the past.

The findings tell something about children's orientation to the past. There are also indications of children's mythical orientation to the past, with focus on binary opposites (VanSledright & Brophy, 1992; Egan, 1997). This data did not show examples of narrative structuring of the contents, because the interviews were not focussed on their narrative capacity.

As to the evaluation of the findings, it is always possible in group discussions that some participants cannot express themselves while some others are more dominant, but on the other hand, there can be also vast differences in children's answers in individual interviews or written responses. One of the merits of group interviews was the chance for children to think and discuss together.

The participants were eager to discuss the images, and clearly inspired by the content, although they had not yet studied history at

school. In spite of lacking factual knowledge many of them had some ideas and pieces of knowledge, and some groups started real debates about the content. The group discussion thus produced rich data of young children's emerging historical understanding.

Pupils' preconceptions and previous knowledge should be recognized and used in history education, paying attention to the informal processes of historical learning and everyday historical culture. Children's interest in history is often initiated by informal sources of historical information.

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**Appendix: The pages that were used in the study**

In the interviews, the version of Koiramäki books was Kunnas & Kunnas (1998) that included both of the previous volumes: Kunnas (1980) 'Koiramäen talossa' and Kunnas (1982), 'Koiramäen lapset kaupungissa'.

pp. 4-5 A picture of a fairly wealthy farm in Finland, province of Satakunta. A outdoor museum as basis of this.

pp. 6-7 Interior of the country house.

pp. 42-43 Laundry in the strand of a lake or a river.

The next illustrations in the book are based on the old parts of the city of Turku (houses in the Handicraft museum, and other old buildings and milieus).

pp. 52-55 The house of a fairly well off baker, exterior and interior.

pp. 58-59 Market place.

pp 64-65 Old-fashioned grocery.

pp 66-67 Two parallel city milieus (poor people's quarter on the outskirts, a rich part of the city, in the centre. People in different costumes.

pp. 88-89 School.

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**‘HISTOTAINMENT’  
BY POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINES.  
THE ‘EDUTAINING’ DESIGN OF HISTORY  
AND ITS CHALLENGES  
FOR MEDIA CRITICAL HISTORY EDUCATION**

Susanne Popp, Jutta Schumann and Miriam Hannig

*This article deals with popular history magazines as a product of commercial mass media, which present history with a claim of ‘edutainment’. So far, this subject matter has received hardly any attention from historical-didactic research. The article focuses on the impact of the ‘edutainment’ concept on the selection and the presentation of the historical topics and the preferential ways of mediation, which leads to the question of the historical-didactic quality of the presentation of history in the magazines. Referring to the results of the EU-EHISTO project, the article discusses the magazine’s significance for a critical media education within history classes.*

## **1. Introduction**

The issue ‘history and edutainment’ encompasses a very extensive field, e.g. computer and board games, films, museums, historical and archaeological picnics and battle reconstructions, popular history magazines, and TV programmes as well as entertaining materials and activities in the school classrooms.<sup>1</sup>

This article deals with popular history magazines as an example for the commercial presentation of history that claims to be ‘edutainment’.<sup>2</sup> It raises the question of how the objective of ‘edutainment’ influences selection, presentation and mediation of historical topics in those magazines and which challenges and chances for historical education can result from including these magazines in history classes. After all, on the one hand, these magazines are read not least by teachers, pupils and even students of history; on the other hand, history education aims for external openness. Pupils should learn to deal with commercial history products.

The following starts with a short introduction to the subject matter of ‘popular history magazines’ (1.), which until now has not received a lot of attention, neither from history didactics and educational

empirical research nor from research on media education.<sup>3</sup> This is followed by brief information about the EU-LLP project EHISTO (European History Crossroads as pathways to intercultural and media education)<sup>4</sup> (2012-2014) (2.), which deals with the medium of popular history magazines, comparing internationally and with a historical-didactic perspective; this research is the basis for the article at hand.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently – based on historical-didactic quality standards – characteristics of the ‘edutaining’ presentation of historical topics in those magazines (3.) will be presented, which shows possible consequences of the ‘edutainment’ claim for the presentation of history. The article concludes with some considerations about the transferability of the media-critical and intercultural approach on other phenomena of the ‘history and edutainment’ sector.

## **2. Popular History Magazines**

In general, popular history magazines<sup>6</sup>, whose tradition in Europe dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are to be defined as illustrated periodicals addressing a non-expert audience. Illustrations are an integral and constitutive element of the concept, and the amount of illustrations (e.g. paintings, photographs, maps, charts, tables) in general correlates with the amount of text – or even exceeds it.<sup>7</sup> Compared to other media, popular history magazines feature more text than audio-visual formats including computer and video games and less text than specialised literature or non-fiction. The fact that magazines address a ‘non-expert’ audience does, however, not imply, as mentioned above, that students of history, history teachers or experts from other professional fields who deal with the past are not included in the group of buyers and readers of these periodicals.

Unlike the many famous computer and video games with historic contents (e.g. ‘Civilization’, ‘Age of Empires’ or ‘Assassins Creed’), which aim for an international audience, popular history magazines are produced for a national market and are linked to the respective national historical culture – not least due to the language and the previous knowledge of the customers.

At the same time, history magazines are an international phenomenon which enables a comparison focusing on similarities and differences between national historical cultures within this medium. As a matter of fact, international comparisons by analysing the topics

displayed on the magazine's cover pages revealed significant transnational convergences: there are certain topics – the most prominent are the First and the Second World War – which play a part throughout all European and international magazines. Regarding European magazines in particular, those analyses confirmed the concept of 'European History Crossroads', which was developed by the Council of Europe<sup>8</sup> in order to reflect Europe's 'shared history': the European regions and states have shared many historical experiences which they have, however, experienced from a different perspective and which they still remember in a different way today.<sup>9</sup> This is reflected in the different ways they deal with common topics.

Finally, it should be noted that history magazines – although they are a very traditional medium lacking moving pictures, sound or interactive options – witnessed an international upward trend since the turn of the century. This is a phenomenon, which initially provokes amazement considering the amount of competitive products – the quantity and diversity of audio-visual offers of popular historical culture in the field of television, film as well as computer and video games – but at the same time it proves that new kinds of media do not automatically replace older ones. More and more titles of popular history magazines have appeared in increasingly dynamic and internationally networked markets<sup>10</sup> for history magazines,<sup>11</sup> whereby the situation can differ significantly from country to country: while in some countries the magazines have a long tradition (e.g. UK, France, Germany) and have adapted to modern conditions over time, completely new approaches can be found in other countries due to major political and social changes (e.g. Russia); in some other countries in turn – which are not to be neglected on a global scale – the culture of commercial history magazines is barely older than 10 or 20 years (e.g. PR China, Brazil).

Even if some newly established magazines – often also as extension lines of established magazines or as imports of other countries' formats – have not been on the market for a long time, the overall conclusion is, however, that media companies are broadening their diverse range of history magazines – which means they assume that a sufficient market demand already exists or they believe that they can at least create it so that the investment will be worthwhile.

### 3. EU-EHISTO Project

The EU-EHISTO project<sup>12</sup> was based on international comparative studies about the selection of topics and the ways of mediation of popular history magazines. The research has been conducted since 2009 and very soon showed the historical-didactical potential of that medium for the development of not only intercultural but also critical media skills.

Intercultural historical competences are essential in a world of European integration, globalisation, worldwide migration and the development of multicultural societies. An international comparison of history magazines about the same topics enables an understanding of transnational similarities and differences between national historical cultures and enhances the pupils' competences to raise awareness of one's own (mostly national) view on history as well as the interest to ask for reasons for the diversity interpretations of history.

Critical media skills are also essential as, outside of school, pupils are confronted with numerous representations of history in commercial – often also 'edutaining' – mass media that have very different intentions, levels of quality and maybe biased ideological tendencies and which influence the pupils' understanding of history. At the same time, it became clear that history magazines are a medium which is very suitable for use in history classes as the text/image structure enables a flexible use. The teacher can make a selection (e.g. the use of images, design of the cover pages, articles), which can be matched very precisely to the objectives and contents of the lesson. However, for the transnational comparison, texts and translations need to be provided; therefore, the working materials developed by the EHISTO project are translated in 5 languages – which makes them also suitable for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) – and are now available free of charge on the project's homepage.<sup>13</sup>

The EHISTO website offers:

- transnational teaching material ('Learning Objects') for the secondary level with teacher manuals on two exemplary 'European History Crossroads' – 'Columbus and the "Discovery" of the "New World"' and 'The "outbreak" of World War One' – that cover national magazines from five European countries as well as the syllabi of all partnering countries and offer – amongst other things – a tool for the analysis of history magazines in class.<sup>14</sup> The teacher manuals

contain explanations for the 'Learning Objects' along with didactic hand-outs;<sup>15</sup>

- a detailed concept of an initial teacher training seminar which integrates the new approach along with activating methods;<sup>16</sup>
- a detailed concept of an in-service teacher training course which puts the project results into classroom practice;<sup>17</sup>

The following outcomes are available in English language:

- an interactive project website that presents all project results and working materials facilitating the exchange between teachers and pupils;
- the final publication, which summarises the project results and further interesting articles about popular history magazines.<sup>18</sup>

The analytical framework – the tool for the critical enquiry of popular history magazines – aims at developing pupils' skills to critically evaluate representations of history in commercial, 'edutaining' products on the basis of historical-didactic quality standards. For instance, questions regarding the work with historical sources, their origin, presentation and function of illustrations, the roles of personalisation and of 'story-telling', the relation between factual and fictional elements, the question of multi-perspectivity and controversy, the quality of historical explanations and interpretations and especially principles of a democratic understanding of history are taken into account.<sup>19</sup>

In the following, the essential characteristics of the 'edutaining' presentation of history in the magazines are portrayed and commented from the point of view of historical-didactic quality standards.

#### **4. Findings**

At first, it needs to be noted that magazines differ considerably in terms of quality (regarding historical-didactic standards). An impressive example resulted from the comparison of selected articles about the 'outbreak' of WWI (from the assassination in Sarajevo to the declarations of war). All magazines presented the assassination in Sarajevo as a key event of the immediate prehistory of the beginning of the war. However, there were differences in the presentation: Some magazines for instance dramatise the 'July Crisis' in a sensation-seeking way by depicting the process of the assassination in Sarajevo to the

declarations of war as an inevitable catastrophe that turned a relatively minor regional cause into a global disaster. In contrast, other magazines reconstruct the 'July Crisis' in a historically correct way as an open process which took a specific direction as a result of specific conditions and decisions.<sup>20</sup> However, both narratives mentioned can be found in every examined country, which shows, that national perspectives on this topic do not differ a lot. Those magazines presenting the 'fuse' narrative consistently show a clearly stronger pronounced tendency towards personalisation, emotionalisation, simplification and sensationalism as well as towards the use of insufficiently examined, specified and often also anachronistic image material.<sup>21</sup> The latter can also be discerned for those magazines that historicise and present the 'July crisis' as an open process; however, they are prepared to 'challenge' the audience with controversial presentations, diverging opinions and open questions. Despite the differences in quality, common trends can be identified regarding the presentation of history in popular history magazines, which let it become clear what price is to be paid for the 'entertaining' character as the driving force of commercially successful popular history magazines.

The following trends regarding the depiction of history in this genre, which deserve consideration by history didactics, can be seen as significant, even if there are exceptions in the wide international landscape of history magazines.

To begin with, the illustrations play a constitutive role for the magazines' concepts of history. It seems that an article that cannot be illustrated would not be in the magazine. It is typical for the 'edutaining' style that the magazines cultivate a design in which illustrations play a rather independent role even though they supposedly support the presentation of a historical topic. Unlike in academic articles, there are rarely references between illustration and text. Moreover, these illustrations are often not historically adequate as they do not originate from the period covered by the corresponding article covers. For example, articles about Antiquity, Middle Ages or Early Modern Times are illustrated with 19<sup>th</sup> century history painting as these depict charismatic persons and dramatic events in an 'illusionist' and emotionalising way that gives the viewer the impression of directly glancing on bygone times through a 'window to the past' – and the non-expert reader as well as a pupil possibly is not

able to identify this anachronistic use of pictures because the captions mostly do not inform the non-expert reader even about the year of production of the image on display. Conversely, those illustrations that depict iconic sources of the period of the historical event are not analysed as historical documents: There is no relation between the text and the image and further, the historical value is missing. Magazines also partially use stills, which are taken out of current historical films; those are usually magazines of a lower aspiration level – exempt from articles dealing with the historic-cultural reception of a certain topic in public history.<sup>22</sup> The use of photographs which many non-expert readers trust profoundly is often careless and inaccurate.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the magazines with low aspiration levels can also be recognised by the fact that they do not refrain from the manipulation of photographs. They apparently rely on the readers' inability to discover these interventions.<sup>24</sup>

The illustrations have a function in their own right. On the one hand, they serve to enhance the vividness of the topic, to emphasise the aspect of entertainment, and to convey a specific historical atmosphere or 'aura'. On the other hand, the iconic presentations of the past suggest or even create the illusion of authenticity of the representation of the past and help to reinforce the illusion of an 'objectively fixed' knowledge of the past. We all know that pictures suggest a rapid, concrete and (seemingly) easily understandable access to historical subjects and in reality are – due to the characteristics of the iconic code – not only more ambiguous than texts, have more requirements for understanding and finally have inherent medium-specific limitations: they can only depict the visible. For the construction of meanings they have to refer to semantic conventions which the interpreter – as described by Panofsky<sup>25</sup> – must in turn deduce mainly from historical written documents.

The magazines' use of illustrations tends to ignore these challenges and follows the general line of a representation of history which claims a 'historicist' and 'positivist' approach to a very 'colourful' historical world by text and illustration. It supports the magazines' 'disambiguation of historical knowledge'. Limits of knowledge, different degrees of certainty or research controversies are usually not discussed. One reason for this might be the fact that a 'good story' – a vibrant, vivid, exciting, atmospheric and emotionally appealing 'narrative' – is mostly at the centre of the magazine articles'

representation of history and is considered essential for sales success by all responsible journalists we interviewed during the project.

These narratives are in general of the 'traditional' type: the events are depicted mainly chronologically and basically concentrating on 'persons', 'acts' and 'events'. Moreover, in most cases there is an omniscient narrator who has the sole power of interpretation and – by nature – does not refer to historical sources and scientific literature and in general does not reflect upon the own point of view. Ironically, it could be stated that in this respect, it seems quite adequate that the articles come without the apparatus which provides evidence of what the statements are based on.<sup>26</sup>

A central requirement for the narrativisation is 'personalisation'. 'Personalisation' in history and political didactics means the biased attribution of the power to effect historical and political changes to individuals, especially to outstanding personalities. One could bluntly say that what most of the magazines declare as 'history' is almost exclusively the depiction of intentionally acting individuals, whereby – borrowing from historicism – the 'great men that made history' set the scene.<sup>27</sup>

In the narratives of the magazine articles, personalisation is the central factor for the stimulation of the recipient's emotional proximity to the temporally distant and factually alien world of the past without which an immersive quality of experience would become quite impossible. However, the positive or negative identification of the reader with the key figures is only possible if the depicted motivations and intentions – e.g. ambition, courage, envy, lust for power – stay within the currently accepted frame of the alleged 'human continuities'. The depicted 'stories' offer a very colourful spectrum regarding space and time, peoples and persons, atmosphere and costume, scenery and anecdote. But regarding the depicted action schemes, they tend to have a fairly narrow and fiddling set of scenarios and plots, patterns and stereotypes, which means that beneath the historical surface a profound historicisation of the events is largely missing.<sup>28</sup>

The central significance of personalisation for narrative representations of history implies that the boundaries between fact and fiction blur. This is especially true for scenic, often dialogical representations of the action that achieves a level of detail which goes far beyond the information the historical sources can provide. This is even more true – by nature – for the use of figure-centred indirect

speech and the 'inner monologue' of presented persons which is per se not accessible for historians. These ahistorical elements might remain unnoticed if the reader is intrigued by the action and appeased by various strategies suggesting authenticity – especially by mentioning historical names, accurate details or experts. Finally, strong personalisation allows the reduction of the historical context and the shortening of the cause analysis and, moreover, usually leads to the overemphasis of psychological assumptions about the character of intentions and motives of the acting persons. At the same time, it conveys a feeling to the reader of being very close to the events.

Based on the title pages, the EHISTO project analysed the topics which history magazines preferably cover.<sup>29</sup> As the cover features of the magazines are often connected to topics which are part of the traditional syllabus at school or public historical culture, it is not surprising that a great part of the topics cover national history and the familiar cultural area, whereby the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are overrepresented. Historical figures are dominant, often followed by issues related to war; here the importance of the First and Second World War for the magazines becomes apparent. The topics connected to 'myths and mysteries' are not solely but predominantly covered by magazines that prefer a more sensationalist style. These magazines can play a rather strong or marginal role in each country, but they exist everywhere. The quality of the magazine articles may well be in line with reliable accounts of history, however, there is a tendency towards the spectacular and to depict 'celebrities', whether it is famous persons or well-known events or locations. Furthermore, it has to be noted that the magazines have a tendency to traditional gender concepts even though this can be more or less strong in different countries and within the countries again in different magazines. Regarding Swedish history magazines, for instance, Monika Vinterek points out that the scheme of 'mighty men and naked women' on cover illustrations is especially striking.<sup>30</sup>

In summary, it can be said, that all those topics which offer little vividness and have a rather analytical than a narrative character – such as the analysis of basic structures and changes in economy and society, culture and politics – get little or no attention. Consequently, non-expert readers can hardly widen their historical consciousness when reading those magazines: innovative realms of history or historical research, or vanguard topics are left out as well as recent topics of

social and political relevance that are not consensual. From the history didactics' point of view it is crucial and of the utmost importance that the historicist approach of the 'edutaining' history of the magazines – and not only of them – strongly emphasising personalisation does not meet the requirements of a democratic concept of history that would make the readers understand that history is not merely made 'top-down', but always by society itself as well. The history the 'edutaining' magazines sell to their readers is not their own history as a part of society; instead, they are made spectators who observe an exciting and entertaining stage performance.

## 5. Conclusion

'The medium is the message.'<sup>31</sup> The title of this seminal book on media analysis is relevant not only for the entertaining but also for the 'edutaining' presentation of history. The intention to successfully sell historical topics in an 'edutaining' format as a commercial mass product tends to result in making 'good stories' exclusively out of topics with a 'celebrity' effect in a strongly personalised manner. This trend, we assume, not only applies to the popular history magazines we analysed but for many other mass media, e.g. films, novels or computer and video games.

One can assume that pupils who deal with these historical media learn something about history. The crucial question is, however, *what* they learn, which in turn depends on the concepts of history that mass media offer. Maybe dealing with history is better than not dealing with it. But there are limits to that. Implicit views on the world and society conveyed by representations of history in mass media affect the historical consciousness and a general understanding of the present in democratic, pluralistic and multi-cultural societies. This is even more true if non-expert readers feel so well informed by the richness of details of the historical world depicted in the magazines' articles and the illustrations that they do not critically reflect upon the underlying structures of selection, representation, interpretation, and mediation – whether they are not capable of doing this or because it would disturb the immersive experience.

However, this means that history classes must include these media and teach competences to critically deal with them and to develop standards for assessing the quality of the presented concepts of history.

More important than looking for a panacea for 'effortless learning' in history classes,<sup>32</sup> is to include the presentations of history in 'edutainment' formats – be it computer games or history magazines – as subject matter in history teaching which pupils can analyse with a critical attitude towards media and ideologies.<sup>33</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. <http://ishd.co/conferences/> (10.11.2014).

<sup>2</sup> The editorials of popular history magazines regularly stress the claim to connect education with entertainment. They claim that the historical information they present is relevant, correct and up-to-date. Entertainment means here that the historical contents are richly illustrated and presented in an easily understandable, colourful, vivid and exciting way. These are the outcomes of the EU-LLP-EHISTO project (2012-2014); cf. part 2. – Cf. also Popp, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Popp, 2015; Popp et al., forthcoming; Axelsson, 2012; Blandin, 2013; Crivellari, 2014; Hannin, 2013; Pain Prado, 2010; Sjöland, 2011; Spieß, 2010. A detailed bibliography can be found in: Popp, Schumann & Hannig, 2015: 43, note 8. There have been no empirical studies on possible learning effects of teaching and learning history by using history magazines so far, but there is an article forthcoming by the EHISTO partners Terry Haydn, Thomas Nygren and Monika Vinterek.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. <http://www.european-crossroads.de/> (10.11.2014).

<sup>5</sup> As the project results are available online, further information about the subject matter and teaching materials, which were developed within the project in order to stimulate critical media and intercultural skills in history classes, can be obtained. Cf. <http://www.european-crossroads.de/> (10.11.2014).

<sup>6</sup> The EHISTO project only dealt with magazines that cover general historical topics, so called special-interest magazines. Very-special-interest magazines – magazines that exclusively deal with a specific aspect of history, e.g. militaria magazines – were not part of the research.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. e.g. Wobring, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Council of Europe, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> The following European History Crossroads (EHC) are part of the national history syllabi as well as of popular history magazines in the EHISTO partner countries: Columbus and the 'great discoveries', World War One, World War Two, Holocaust, Hitler, Migration. The following EHC are part of the national history syllabi as well as of popular history magazines in most of the EHISTO partner countries: Alexander the Great, Islam, Charlemagne, Reconquista, Crusades, Vikings, Wars of religion in the context of Protestant Reformation, Absolutism (Louis XIV of France), French Revolution, Napoleon, Industrial Revolution (modernisation, change of living conditions), Imperialism, Colonialism, Cuban Missile Crisis / Cold War.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. e.g. the (independent) French version of the German magazine GEO EPOCHE, Hamburg: Gruner & Jahr, <http://www.geo.fr/> (10.11.2014).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Popp, Schumann et al., 2015. This volume includes country-specific studies also on China, Russia, Brazil, and Turkey as well as contributions which evaluate the international developments.

<sup>12</sup> The project group consisted of four university experts in history didactics (University of Augsburg, Germany, coordinator), University of East Anglia, UK, University of Dalarna, Sweden, and Academy of Management in Lodz, Poland, one university expert in the field of media didactics (University of Salamanca, Spain) and the Institute for Film and Images (FWU) in Grünwald, Germany. All university partners closely cooperated with local 'EHISTO partner schools'. Eleven history teachers and more than 300 pupils contributed to the creation of the interactive online modules ('Learning Objects'); they also tested and evaluated them with regard to their practical suitability. The group was supported by an international research network reaching from Augsburg to Shanghai as well as by academic advisors and international networks such as e.g. the ISHD (International Society for History Didactics), EUROCLIO (European Association of History Educators), <http://www.euroclio.eu/new/index.php> (10.11.2014) and the DVV International (Institute for the International Cooperation of the German Association of Adult Education), [http://www.dvv-international.de/index.php?article\\_id=1405&clang=0](http://www.dvv-international.de/index.php?article_id=1405&clang=0) (10.11.2014).

<sup>13</sup> The languages are: English, German, Polish, Swedish and Spanish.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the EHISTO Analysis Framework, an instrument for the analysis of popular history magazines, <http://www.european-crossroads.de/outcomes/baselinestudy/analytical-framework/> (10.11.2014). Cf. also the EHISTO-Module 'Handbook of the Initial Teacher Training', <http://www.european-crossroads.de/outcomes/initialteachertraining/> (10.11.2014).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the EHISTO 'Learning Objects', <https://media.sodis.de/ehisto/en/index.html> (10.11.2014).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Hannig, Popp & Haydn, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Nygren & Zangrando, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> The final publication is also available via Peter Lang LTD International Academic Publishers (<http://www.peterlang.com/index.cfm?event=cmp.ccc.seitenstruktur.detailseiten&seitentyp=produkt&pk=84330&concordeid=265779>) (10.11.2014) and via [oopen.org](http://www.oopen.org) (<http://www.oopen.org/search?identifer=514270>) (10.11.2014).

<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, comparisons with texts from schoolbooks are suggested as it can be very revealing to better understand the characteristics of each of these two text types. Apropos, it would then turn out that not all texts of the schoolbooks do fulfil important historical-didactic quality standards. Therefore, media skills regarding history didactics can lead to a critical understanding even of schoolbooks which many pupils trust blindly.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. the report about the EHISTO project: Schumann, Popp, & Hannig, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Examples are described more precisely in the following.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. e.g. the article of Fernández-Armesto (1992) that deals on a very ambitious level and on the basis of historical sources with the change of the image of Columbus during the course of the centuries.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the photograph that allegedly presents Gavrilo Princip at his arrest is presented in all analysed history magazines' articles about the assassination of Sarajevo but only one gives the correct information (the person depicted is not Princip). Cf. Schumann, Popp & Hannig, 2015: 27.

<sup>24</sup> For instance, a cover of G/GESCHICHTE shows a collage, made out of at least four different photographs. It is too difficult for readers to deconstruct this manipulation. A survey among students of history revealed that they assess this edition as academically sound with a high level of quality. Cf. Hannig, 2015: 343-344.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Panofsky, 1972.

<sup>26</sup> It is a significant feature of popular history magazines not to support important statements by references to sources or to specialist literature.

<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, a study about video games dealing with Early Modern Times concludes that the depiction of Early Modern Times is closer to the 19<sup>th</sup> century historicism than to the academic understanding of this period in the present. Cf. Kerschbaumer & Winnerling, 2014.

<sup>28</sup> John Caughie's (2000) study of the British television drama came to a quite similar result in respect of the role of historical dramas.

<sup>29</sup> Regarding the results of the analysis of German magazines Claudius Springkart's (2015) article demonstrates the analytical process very well.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Vinterek, 2015.

<sup>31</sup> McLuhan & Fiore, 2011 [1967].

<sup>32</sup> There are controversial debates about the learning effects of 'edutaining' computer and video games. Cf. e.g. Young et al. (2012). It seems very difficult to obtain reliable information about the learning effects of 'edutaining' games. This is not only because of the variety of different types of games but also because of the complexity of the didactic objectives for history learning.

<sup>33</sup> Significantly, such media-critical objectives are not part of the learning objectives of 'edutaining' games for history classes.

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**EDUTAINMENT IN THE MUSEUM –  
A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN EXPERIENCE  
THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PÉCS  
IN AN INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Agnes Fischer-Dárdai and Krisztina Dezso

*The University History Collection at the University of Pécs is an exhibition where the visitor can experience the establishment and development of the institution, which is connected to the city of Pécs in myriad ways. The significance of the founding of the University in 1367 can be seen in a European context: visitors can try out and use educational tools from the Middle Ages. Roaming the halls as a student, instructor or citizen of the city, we are immersed in a world we know only by its details, but the exhibit has the ability to form them into a whole. The personal experience is supplemented by objects, documents, and a system of geographic spaces. The memories of the Middle Ages – which we know only through reading about them – become tangible here. Materials having to do with the more recent life of the University can be seen, heard and handled here – the exhibition aims to affect all senses in order to help the visitor relive University experiences. The collection also encourages return visits and speaks to the visitor as they can add their personal mementos to the collection.*

*It took the cooperative work of several experts to offer the community such a complex experience. The need for the organisation of the preservation and collection of historical memory can be traced back about a hundred years. The current exhibition and museum collection is the result of earlier museum-like activities. The purpose of this paper is to summarise the key steps to this stage.*

### **1. The Practice of Edutainment in Hungarian Museums**

Educational entertainment, also referred to as edutainment has become one of the most popular and successful knowledge transfer methods since the turn of the millennium. The main purpose of edutainment is to promote students, visitors and enquirers to experience the achievements of modern information technology by promoting learning and acquisition of new knowledge or development of their existing skills through pleasurable experiences.

It was at the beginning of the 21st century when new methods of experience-centred education were adopted by the public education in the first place. Traditional teaching is based on a one-way

communication system, which is about to be replaced by a contemporary, reflective approach, where the participants are involved more actively in the learning process. The dissemination of these new knowledge transfer methods, the access, consumption, and the utilization of knowledge also changed, and broadened with new facilities (Forgó, 2009). The digital revolution did not affect schools only, but other types of mass communication tools, museums and even theatres. There are clear demands on behalf of cultural consumers for involving new methods of multimedia in these fields.

Hungarian museums soon realized these demands, and started reflecting the concept of edutainment in their exhibitions, museum-pedagogy programmes and activities. Museum staff also understood that guest-friendly and experience based activities are the key components of a modern establishment. Besides the traditional role of a museum, which is to preserve and transmit knowledge, new practices of edutainment were adopted, offering immersive learning experiences, by securing both material and intellectual conditions.

A survey was made in 2006 by the *National Cultural Fund of Hungary* titled *Látogatóbarát múzeumok elméleti megalapozása (Ideally Foundation of visitor-friendly museums)*, and also research involving a significant number of Hungarian museums in 2009, whose results were put together by László Puczkó (Puczkó, 2006 & 2009). During the research visitors were asked to provide their opinions about the museums and the exhibitions. An important aspect amongst the observations was the scale of novelty and visitor-friendliness in each institution. The visitors preferred the museums which applied innovative technologies, designed original and modern exhibitions, and apart from the displays, organized special activities for different age groups.

Naturally the requirement for the emergence of visitor-friendly museums is to provide the obligatory qualification of the museum staff, since to acquire advanced professional skills and ICT expertise is essential in the development of new methods and contents. The Museum Education Centre,<sup>1</sup> which was founded in 2006, became the role leader of these museum-pedagogy courses. During the time between 2008 and 2013 within the framework of the *Museums for Everyone Program* efforts were made to nourish cooperation among schools and museums. The results of these courses had already become common knowledge, since it is expected that newly opening exhibitions would suit advanced principles of museum-pedagogy.

Teachers and students alike, who participated in the programmes, also claimed that museums should use and exploit the technical and methodological benefits of the 21st century in their real and virtual exhibitions.

Another breaking point of Hungarian museums is cultural tourism, which has been trying to reach out more to adult visitors. For student groups different kind of themed museum packages were introduced much earlier. Individual adult visitors tend to get less attention even nowadays, since generally only guided tours and by chance academic lectures are related to some exhibitions. Nevertheless, as far as possible, adult visitors also tend to enjoy fun-oriented, interactive exercises in connection with specific displays, or even touch the copy of the shown artifacts. Therefore it is easier to mobilize and recall those groups of visitors who had previously participated in edutainment exhibitions and programmes.

The permanent exhibition of the University History Collection of the University of Pécs is also founded along these principles mentioned before, offering an experience and an entertaining tour throughout the history of higher education in Pécs, for all ages, as well as utilizing and making use of the opportunities offered by 21st century technical achievements.

## **2. The University History Collection at the University of Pécs**

The University History Collection at the University of Pécs is an exhibition where the visitor can experience the establishment and development of the institution, which is connected to the city of Pécs in myriad ways. The significance of the founding of the University in 1367 can be seen in a European context: visitors can try out and use educational tools from the Middle Ages. Roaming the halls as a student, instructor or citizen of the city, we are immersed in a world we know only by its details, but the exhibition has the ability to form them into a whole. The personal experience is supplemented by objects, documents, and a system of geographic spaces. The memories of the Middle Ages – which we know only through reading about them – become tangible here. Materials having to do with the more recent life of the University can be seen, heard and handled here – the exhibit aims to affect all senses in order to help the visitor relive University

experiences. The collection also encourages return visits and speaks to the visitor as they can add their personal mementos to the collection.

It took the cooperative work of several experts to offer the community such a complex experience. The need for the organisation of the preservation and collection of historical memory can be traced back about a hundred years. The current exhibit and museum collection is the result of earlier museum-like activities. The purpose of this paper is to summarise the key steps to this stage.

## 2.1 *The Preludes to the Collection of Historical Memories in the Period before the Second World War*

In 1923 the Pozsony-based (Bratislava) Royal Hungarian Elizabeth University moved to Pécs. After the First World War institutions, instructors and students had to practically flee from the city of Pozsony. Goods, instructional tools, and equipment for the University's medical clinics – with a few exceptions – remained in Pozsony. There is very little information about equipment and objects. They appeared from time-to-time in personal bequests related to the University. A few volumes were transferred from the library in Pozsony (Fedeles, 2011: 14-31).

In these stormy times the thought of collecting and preserving objects of historical value would have been far from anyone's mind, given that establishing the conditions for daily instruction, training and clinic work had to be the top priority. After reestablishment in Pécs there came a calmer period, in which there was an opportunity to collect objects and documents of historical value. The archival collection was placed in the Archives of the University of Pécs,<sup>2</sup> while the historical document, photograph and material collections were placed in the University of Pécs Historical Collection.

We are aware that there were earlier attempts to establish a museum collection, e.g., at the Stomatology Clinic. Unfortunately these special collections did not survive; nor did other descriptions or object registers. It is likely that not enough material (and not enough high-quality material) was gathered for the foundation of a serious academic collection. Some university institutions registered an intention but collection never got under way.

The portraits of university rectors that are currently the property of the University of Pécs Collection<sup>3</sup> and the General Medical Faculty were painted between 1920 and 1940. In 1925 and 1928 five statues

were erected in the university atrium, honouring men who made great efforts to have the University survive and relocate to Pécs, namely Kuno Klebelsberg, Lajos Tóth, Flóris Korb, Mihály Pekár and Gyula Zichy (Polyák, 2014). The links for use by Rectors and Deans, and the ceremonial dress – the dress cape and hat – as well as the Faculties' sceptres were made during the Pécs years. These original objects are now to be found in the University collections, where they are placed within a historical narrative such that today's citizens can appreciate the symbols of cohesion, while students can appreciate the continuity of traditions.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 *The initiation of organised collection of historical memories and the first exhibits at the University of Pécs*

After the Second World War, as a result of education policy decisions, the multi-faculty Elizabeth University was closed. As such, 1950 saw the establishment of the University of Pécs (with a Faculty of Law) and the Pécs Medical University (POTE). In 1948 the Pécs Pedagogical College was established, which took the place of the Faculty of Humanities that was disbanded in 1940 (Pohánka, Lengvári & Polyák, 2011: 49-147).

Research on and collection of museum materials received a boost in 1967 when, on the 600th anniversary of the Middle Ages University of Pécs, several academic meetings and exhibitions covered University history not only in the Middle Ages but in modern times as well. Led by Andor Csizmadia, the year saw the publication of a volume on the history of the University (Csizmadia, 1980) as well as a jubilee collection of articles (Csizmadia, 1967). It was at this point that researchers once again began to focus on several sources on the history of the University, i.e., the founding document from 1367, period diplomas, and collections of Middle Ages speeches.

On the 625th anniversary of the Pécs *universitas*, on the initiation of Gábor Kelényi, the rector of POTE, the country's first university history museum was established, focusing primarily on the history of medical education. József Benke had a definitive role in the collection and shaping of materials. The new collection covered medical education from the Middle Ages to 1992. The new permanent exhibit made use of historical documents, photographs and books donated by earlier instructors and students and collected at the Elizabeth University and the Pécs Medical University (Benke, 2000).

In 1975 Professor of Law Antal Ádám initiated the establishment of a University Archive within the University of Pécs Library, in which the Faculties of the University of Pécs would mandatorily contribute documentation (papers, photographs, audio materials, posters, films, publications, independent monographs, periodicals) arising from their operations and scientific tasks.

The idea of an exhibit covering the University's several Faculties and areas of science arose in the Fall of 1997 and was supported by the Janus Pannonius University, the Pécs University of Medicine and the civic leadership of the city of Pécs. The city of Pécs offered a historic building – the so-called Vasváry House – for the purpose of housing the museum. Rector József Tóth opened the new university history exhibit in the museum, which was assembled by József Benke and his colleagues. The collection covered the Faculties and legal predecessors of the University of Pécs from the year 1923 to 2000. The exhibition on the history of the Medical University continued to be housed in the building of the Faculty of Medicine (Benke, 2004).

### *2.3 The Establishment of the University of Pécs Collection*

The wave of university integration beginning in 2000 (which unified the two universities in Pécs along with Gyula Illyés College in Szekszárd) gave a new impetus for displaying the relics of the past in the most complete way. The current University History Collection was initiated by Rector László Lénárd and established within the organisational framework of the University of Pécs Library. On October 31, 2006 the exhibit in the Vasváry House was closed, and the preservation, management and organisation of the objects in its collection were taken on by the university library.

According to the new plans a modern permanent exhibit using interactive technology, placing events in the wider spectrum of Hungarian and European higher education, was to be established in five rooms on the ground floor of the University Library at 3 Ignác Szepesy street. It was to be led by the director of the library. Under the direction of museologist Andrea Pásztor, work on the permanent exhibit began (Fischer-Dárdai & Pásztor, 2013). It was a true honour and a recognition of years of professional work when the director of the Jagellonian University Museum, Dr. Stanislaw Waltos, visited the opening ceremony. He emphasised the role and significance of university history collections and museums in the development of the

identity of universities and in maintaining the traditions of the historical past.

In the same year the University of Pécs Collection was granted the status of a public-purpose museum collection (with requisite authorisation for operation) by the Ministry of Education.

#### *2.4 Experience-centred History in the University History Exhibition*

The goal of the curators of the University History Exhibition was to make it possible for every citizen of the University (student, instructor, researcher, staff member) to get to know our institution's rich past, historical relics, and multi-faceted activities that reached back to the past of University of Pécs's Faculties and other units and continue to this day. The students should form a picture of where their field of study and majors fit into university and Hungarian academic history. Another goal was to ensure that the exhibition space was fit to hold practical teaching, including elementary and secondary classes, and that the exhibition serve as a tool for lifelong learning and experience, regardless of the age of the visitors. The Office of the University Library Historical Collection operates an exhibition which has since been integrated into university ceremonies and teaching. Further, the exhibition space has become a useful spot for seminars and museum pedagogy classes as well as small receptions.

Beyond university visitors, the exhibition hoped to become a point of attraction for tourism in the city's and region's palette. The curators have aimed beyond groups with higher education and specific professional knowledge. Our aim was to make this municipal cultural treasure available to the widest audience as part of a wider European history of education. To make the exhibition equally enjoyable for visitors with divergent levels of knowledge (from elementary school pupils to university students, from local residents to tourists), we transfer multiple levels of differentiated information through both the objects of the exhibition and guided tours (Pásztor, 2006: 1).

To meet the expectations outlined above the principles of exhibition organisation had to conform to the mission. It can be generally stated that the exhibition is such that the goal is to show university education as it has adapted to the educational needs of given periods and has adopted scientific results, all making clear the mutual effects of European education and university history. The curators aimed to establish nodes in the space of the exhibition, to outline

development directions, and to emphasise typical, representative and key elements. Further, they were conscious of the information-capacity of the visitors. They built a well-organised, easy to digest exhibition that covered several centuries of overarching rich themes. Certain parts of the theme – given space limitations – were only possible to introduce by sharing the essence of the topics. Our goals are to spark interest and reflection and finally to make it possible for the visitor to create synthesising concepts.

The presentation of the history of the University – taking into account the levels of interest and ages of the visitors – was executed at various levels, depending on the demand for depth in various topics and exhibit units. The simplest, most visibly appealing general bits of information are presented through pictures and text placed on installations in the exhibit space. Deeper information can be obtained through content in multimedia points. Wider multimedia information is marked by symbols that are connected to multi-level multimedia points with database-styled content.

The education history and university history exhibition is a presentation of both period and mentality. For this reason the installation has taken advantage of opportunities and has created an atmosphere characteristic of certain historical periods in each room. The starting point for interpretation at the beginning of each exhibition unit is a short description aiming to put the visitor in a specific context. Deeper understanding is offered through module-like explanations that are more detailed but which avoid unnecessary text.

The installation aims to meet these expectations as well. Adapting to the physical characteristics of the building wing we attempted to construct the installation with high-quality execution, using state-of-the-art technology and long-lasting materials. In terms of form, the visual aspect reflects the style of the period being presented.

In the first room we reproduced the gothic atmosphere of the University of Pécs in the Middle Ages (Pásztor, 2006: 2-36). This section contains archaeological research results and data from archives. It is not our job to take a position on academic debates on the Middle Ages history and position of the University, but we did aim to present research results in an unbiased way in the hope that visitors would use them as a starting point for reflection and the formation of a position. We present known data on the position and coat of arms of the Middle Ages University of Pécs, and not making uncertainties a secret, we

outline what is known about the University. We present the Gothic atmosphere of Middle Ages Pécs using furniture, equipment, colours and pictures. Using the University of Pécs as an example we show life and daily living in Middle Ages universities in general.

With the help of the map of Pécs placed on the ground, visitors can enter the 14th century city and view nearby public buildings, which are accompanied by brief textual descriptions and connected to the University through archaeological artifacts and other sources. The multimedia contents placed in the multimedia points are connected to the map. These contain films on building reconstruction as well as brief information on given church buildings, backed up with sources. The institution's chancellors, instructors and students are brought to life with life-size mannequins, which make use of period source texts to inform visitors about the daily life of university citizens of the time. Text placed on the tableau is from a Middle Age hearing on the disciplining of a university student. The 'animation' of the mannequins makes it possible for larger groups or classes to play situational games to make the life of 14th century students, instructors and chancellors easy to relate to. This is also assisted by folding information signs on the wall and puzzle-style chronologies that can be assembled by the visitor. The chronology is based on archival sources. Piecing these archive sources together step-by-step reveals the history of the University. The multimedia points make it possible for visitors to measure their new knowledge of the life of the University in the Middle Ages through the use of a test.

The second room is furnished as a Renaissance studio, i.e., reflecting the feel of a quiet Renaissance-age scholarly work-room. Cabinets, benches and writing tables were built by modern craftsmen out of wood, based on engravings of the period. Their outstanding work brings to life the time of the Renaissance. The visual effect of the objects in the room and the period colours and light help the visitor experience the showcased texts and pictures.

Such studios were the showcases of education, and as such this interior is used to present the history of European knowledge and early European universities. The exhibition spans a period from the first Middle Ages universities to the Enlightenment, covering the mutual effects of developments in higher education and science. The first unit of the exhibition covers the types of Middle Ages universities, their organisational structure, the characteristics of various faculties, and the

scientific materials of the seven free arts science branches. The next large unit covers the period from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment, in which fundamental changes occurred in the school system, given that it was here that new denominational higher education institutions (Calvinist colleges, Lutheran lyceums, etc.) appeared along with academies teaching professions. The exhibition is supplemented by hand-written codices and a unit presenting book printing, where visitors can take a step-by-step look at the process of producing books.

The second room closes with a presentation of higher education in 18th century Pécs and the history of the printing press. Teaching began in the Seminary and Theology Institute in 1746. A legal academy operated between 1785 and 1802. Visitors can also read about Bishop György Klimó's plans to reestablish a university in Pécs. A cabinet contains products from the Engel printing press in Pécs, which was established in 1773.

Given that there are very few original objects and documents from this period, we took advantage of the scarcity and placed touchable replicas of objects that reflect the Middle Ages history of the university and the subjects taught at the time. The abacus, the Napier-style multiplier rod, the testing of the camera obscura and the understanding of operational mechanisms all make the presentation of the education of the period experience-based. The exact replicas of the objects, which can be seen, observed and touched, were produced by students in the Engineering Faculty based on original diagrams. The writing desks placed between cabinets hold facsimile prints of books of the period. Some of the original copies of these books are to be found in the Library's museum collection and are from the Klimó Library collection, which was opened by Bishop György Klimó in 1774 and was Hungary's first public library. Those visitors who come to the exhibit after having toured the library are given the opportunity to look through these books, to turn the pages, and to read them.

There is multimedia content for this part of the exhibit as well, with a wide lexicon supplementing all presented units. All the small thematic elements of this room have a test exercise attached to them, through which visitors can test what they have learned. The room can also be used to host large school classes, where through group work students can learn about the key phases of the history of universities in Europe

and can reinforce what they have seen and heard through feedback tests.

The third room covers the birth of 'modern universities'. The room emphasises the presentation of the history of higher education in Pécs. The lyceum established by Ignác Szepesy in 1828 was at first a home-based institution that laid a foundation for theological studies. In 1831 humanities studies were initiated. In 1832 a law faculty was added and the dual-faculty lyceum moved into the former Pauline monastery.<sup>5</sup> The room contains cabinets containing documents and objects that are related to the life of the episcopal law academy. Student life is coloured with the inclusion of period testimonies. We plan to install a database in the room's multimedia points that will inform visitors of the history of schools and higher education in Pécs through photographs and documents: the section is still being developed.

In the northern side of the room we recall the Elizabeth University in Pozsony and the initial Pécs period. This university was established by Emperor Franz Joseph in 1912, although the first professors were named only in 1914. Soon the Law Faculty began operating, and in the Spring of 1918 the medical and humanities faculties opened. After the World War, in 1919, with the University now on the other side of the newly-drawn border, the Czechoslovak government closed the school and the faculties moved to Budapest. In 1921 Law XXV. placed the university as a whole temporarily in Pécs, where instruction began in October of 1923. The cabinets and screens display documents, objects and photographs related to the University.

The fourth room covers the history of the University of Pécs and its legal predecessors from 1950 to the present time. Objects and publications from the University's ten faculties and practicum schools are on display, as are descriptions of the main nodes of the histories of the faculties. A small telephone centre in the corner entitled 'This Is How They Saw It ...' contains reflections of former students and professors. Using the oral history method we sought out and interviewed surviving professors from old faculties, whose conversations bring the past to life for the visitor. A separate box placed in the room introduces the University of Pécs Days event, the university television station, cinema, newspapers, the Janus Pannonius Theatre, university athletic life and student colleges, as well as the work of artists who began their work at the University. This is achieved through the use of displayed objects and snippets of film that can be

chosen from a menu. We would like to expand this room with a multimedia point that provides access to the University of Pécs website, given that the exhibition ends with the year 2010, despite the fact that we wish to present changes in the interim and the current situation of the institution.

A favourite part of the exhibition is the screen section of the fourth room, which is titled *Leave your memento here*. Visitors can drop pictures, document, objects, etc., related to their university studies, student life or university jobs that they wish to share into small sacks. They are asked to attach a filled-out card on which they can describe the object and the memory or experience it brings to mind for them. Several types of objects have been collected this way: admission tickets, university periodicals, armbands, posters, program books, and even university balloons and refrigerator magnets. This is an opportunity for visitors to get even closer to the history of the University of Pécs, as they are able to add to the collection. Visitors can thus influence the structure of the displayed objects and have a stronger sense of ownership of the collection, given that they can appear in the framework of the university history collection personally. This inspires them to follow the growth of the museum collection by donating personal objects and documents, and to return to the exhibition regularly. This exhibition unit also serves to strengthen loyalty to the university, and to increase university cohesion.

The fifth room is the *Rector's room*, in which visitors can view films or listen to audio clips on the University of Pécs. Some of these films and audio clips are purchased archive materials. Another grouping of these materials was produced by the University itself, with the help of University institutions and media, students and instructors.

The furnishing is made up of furniture and objects from professors Béla Flerkó, János Szentágotai and Gyula Prinz, along with old pieces of furniture collected from the University. The book cabinets contain university publications, medallions and plaques as well as Rector and Dean links used until 2008.

When composing the script and planning for the new exhibition we paid particular attention to ensuring the new collection would be capable of serving museum pedagogy classes for various age groups. The first and second rooms particularly (*In the steps of the University of Pécs in the Middle Ages* and *Studio*) emphasise this role. Here the space of the rooms is such that museum pedagogy classes can be held.

We distinguished three age groups for whom we tailored various activities according to age characteristics: university-age, secondary school-age and elementary school-age.

Museum pedagogy classes for secondary and elementary school students are held primarily in the first and second rooms. The goal of these classes is to present everyday life at the University of Pécs and universities in general in the Middle Ages along with academia in these institutions and the key stations of education history. Both rooms are equipped to offer experience-based acquisition of exhibit knowledge through situational games, interactive computer tasks and the use of object replicas. Different age groups can use various depths and timespans in multimedia point content and games and then use differentiated levels of tests to check on their learning.

The first subgroup of university students is comprised of those who study pedagogy, adult education studies and museum studies. We organise presentation-styled classes for them where they can study how the exhibition offers opportunities in museum pedagogy, or to work in the form of a 'learning museum'. The director of the exhibit shares the concepts that guided the building of the exhibition, emphasising museum pedagogy possibilities. This is not a classic museum pedagogy lecture, but an opportunity to learn of the opportunities that can be used to construct concrete activities and programs. In the future we would like students to hold presentations here, and for them to plan some new activities.

The second subgroup of university students is made of those who come to get acquainted with the history of the University. History, ethnography, Hungarian studies and library students come in various groups within the framework of their studies to get acquainted with the museum.

Foreign students and students from the Erasmus program, or students taking part in summer or winter orientation, often visit the collection in the framework of games in which they are involved. Such programs are coordinated with the host university institutions.

In the long term we would like all first-year students to visit the exhibition and become aware of the history of the University and his/her faculty. Such knowledge can serve as a foundation for cohesion within majors, colleges or university institutions.

### 3. Summary

The principles established in the mission statement of the permanent exhibition – which serve as the principle for the collection – have without exception come to fruition: the exhibition is more than a historical presentation, and has become an important piece of the formation of identity for the University as an institution and for its citizens. This is signalled by the fact that the museum not only hosts museum pedagogy classes and guided tours, but has become host to several university events (the signing of inter-university and international agreements, university anniversaries, conferences, temporary exhibits tied to events,<sup>6</sup> etc.).

The University of Pécs Historical Collection is of course much more than an exhibition space. The staff (six persons) regularly conducts research on book and library history, university history and museum pedagogy. Their successful academic work is clear in the fact that since 2006 museum material has been processed in a database in accordance with legal prescriptions. The photograph collection (called eKépEK<sup>7</sup>) can be accessed through the internet (Dezső & Schmelzer-Pohánka 2014). The processing of document and object materials is under way in the MusArch database. We hope to make access to that database available to a wider audience and researchers in the near future. The collection of objects is continuous: since 2006 we have succeeded in doubling the number of items in the collection.

In 2013 Rector József Bódis supported the establishment of an online journal with our colleagues from the University Archives, called *Per Aspera ad Astra: Communiques on the educational and institutional history of the University of Pécs*, which is published twice per year, offering instructors, students and outside researchers academic material on the history of the University.<sup>8</sup>

In cooperation with the University's leadership we are preparing for the 650th anniversary jubilee in 2017. This will mark the anniversary of the establishment of Hungarian higher education through the first Hungarian university in 1367. The staff of the collection is participating in the compilation of a professors' almanac for the occasion. The jubilee will include an ambitious university history exhibition, which will present rarely seen documents, photographs and objects of the University of Pécs and its legal predecessors from the beginning to the end of the 20th century.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.mokk.skanzen.hu/home\\_hu.html](http://www.mokk.skanzen.hu/home_hu.html) (23.03.2015).

<sup>2</sup> The surviving archival fonds of the Elizabeth University can be viewed at the University of Pécs Archive website: <http://leveltar.pte.hu/content/pte-egyetemi-leveltar-fond-es-allagjegyzeke> (23.03.2015).

<sup>3</sup> Currently on display in the Rector's Office of the University of Pécs.

<sup>4</sup> The rector's links made at the time of the Elizabeth University were worn by University leaders until 2008, when a new Rector's link was made. Of the sceptres, one is still in use in the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Humanities sceptre was copied in 2011, and the original can be viewed in the permanent University History Exhibit. The third sceptre was unfortunately modified, but is still in use during University ceremonies.

<sup>5</sup> A Hungarian male monastic order established in 1250 through the canons of Özséb Boldog of Esztergom.

<sup>6</sup> The staff of the University of Pécs Collection have organised fourteen university history exhibitions at the museum site and other locations. For more on the exhibitions: Fischerné, D. Á. (2014), Az Egyetemi Könyvtár mint az egyetemtörténeti kutatások műhelye, *Aspera ad Astra*, 2014 (1) 68-80. (<http://per-aspera.pte.hu/>) (23.03.2015).

<sup>7</sup> The database can be accessed at: <http://corvina.tudaskozpont-pecs.hu/WebPac.kep/> (23.03.2015).

<sup>8</sup> Web: <http://per-aspera.pte.hu/> (23.03.2015).

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#### List of pictures and captions

1. The opening ceremony of the University of Pécs History Exhibition (17.11.2010)
2. Conference in the exhibition space
3. First room of the University of Pécs History Exhibition
4. Second room of the University of Pécs History Exhibition
5. Third room of the University of Pécs History Exhibition
6. Fourth room of the University of Pécs History Exhibition
7. Leave your memento here!
8. Fifth room of the University of Pécs History Exhibition
9. Museum Pedagogy class at the exhibition
10. Museum Pedagogy class at the exhibition



1. The opening ceremony of the University of Pécs History Exhibition (17.11.2010)



2. Conference in the exhibition space



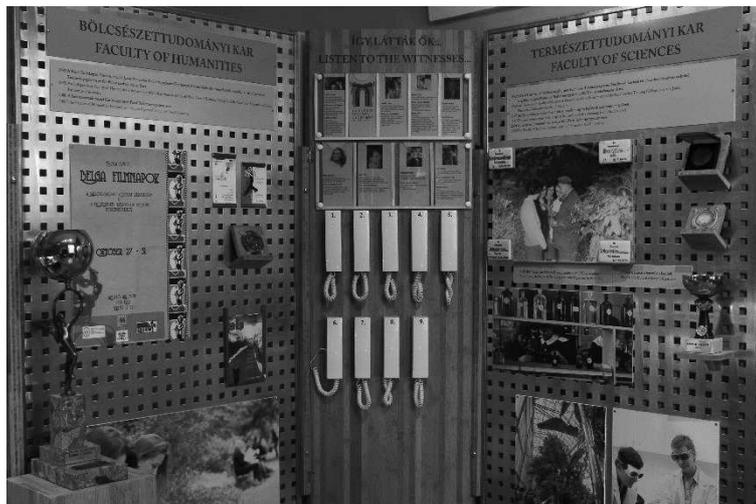
3. The first room



4. The second room



5. The fourth room



6. The fifth room



7. The fifth room



8. Leave your memento here!



9 & 10. Museum Pedagogy class at the exhibition



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## **'DISCOVERING' 150 YEARS OF HISTORY IN A PORTMANTEAU: AN EDUCATIONAL HISTORY PROGRAMME AT THE ETHNOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF THRACE**

Angelos Palikidis

*The subject of this paper is the planning and creation of an educational museum programme in local history at the Thrace Ethnological Museum. The programme is organized around a traveller's portmanteau, which is a faithful copy of such an object from colonial times and contains multimodal material consisting of authentic objects chosen from collections in the museum. During the design phase, we took account of the epistemological framework and methodological principles employed in contemporary museum education and in history didactics, which is why we placed emphasis upon the use of the authenticity of the objects, on the development of genuine experiences on the part of school students and upon encouraging personal expression through the comprehension of, and composition of, multiple narratives. We even designed activities intended to develop historical skills, such as comprehension, analysis and the critical evaluation of historical sources, map reading, the dating of objects, the understanding of changes in the urban landscape. Our concern during the design process was to link Local History to National and World History and to set the place in question, Alexandroupoli, in the broader geographical context of the Balkans and south-east Europe.*

### **1. The Theoretical Background to Museum-Based History Education: From Modernity to Today**

The public museum, as we conceive of it today, that is, as a building in which objects are exhibited with the intention of educating and entertaining the public, is a creation of the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and mainly of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is directly tied to ideological concepts introduced by the Enlightenment and by the foundation of national states (Hein, 2004: 423). These museums, the products of modernity, which are also termed 'disciplinary museums', replaced private collections housed in the palaces of royal families and the residences of scholars. They hosted public collections and offered access for the first time for the whole population to these works (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 167). Emerging ideologies of nationalism regarded museums as

'temples' of national culture, which documented the continual course of the history of the nation, its presence in lebensraum and its cultural and spiritual superiority over other competing nations or over other civilizations. Thus the choice was made to exhibit works of 'high' art, which were placed into the rooms of museums in chronological order, analogous with the linear narrative of National History. In fact, the traditional museum hosted an illustrated version of the prevailing national narrative. This expression, precisely because of its powerful emotional nature, was intended to be received by the public as effectively as possible.

At the same time, at central points in colonialist states, ethnographic museums were created, to exhibit treasures, arms and exotic or curious objects brought back from distant colonies (Barringer & Flynn, 1998). The aim was twofold: On the one hand, there was the intent to display imperial wealth and the grandeur of the imperial and colonial expansion, and on the other, the desire that such museums function as evidence of the racial and cultural superiority of the western white over other human races (Lidchi, 1997: 185-199; Hein, 1998: 4; Kotsakis, 2008: 35-37).

The role of the visitor to traditional museums was passive, and, in as far as the greatest museums of the world and in Greece continue to be structured on this philosophy, still is. The spectator wanders through the rooms of the museum, following the chronological order of the exhibits, (s)he observes them, (s)he admires them and learns various pieces of information about them, either by reading his or her guide book to the museum or by taking a guided tour conducted by trained museum employees. Similar behaviour and activities are imposed upon school groups who visit museums, even though until recently educational visits were frowned on in general (Black, 2005: 9-44).<sup>1</sup>

The spectacular changes that have occurred in recent decades in the field of museology and the rise of new interdisciplinary subjects, such as museum education and history didactics, have caused cracks to appear in the traditional idea of the museum and have introduced new concepts that have brought about radical changes in the landscape of museum exhibitions and educational activities within museums. Of major importance is the change from a chronological arrangement of exhibits to thematically-arranged displays, from a one-dimensional linear narrative to multiple narratives, from gleaming works of art to

the remains of the everyday life of the people of the past, from memorizing of information and admiration of exhibits, to comprehension, critical analysis and entertaining experience. In other words, there has been a change from the museum as a 'temple of culture' to the museum that focuses on the interests and desires of the visitor and acts as a place for reflection and entertainment (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). At the same time, similar changes have occurred in the field of school education, with the introduction of new curricula that encourage the use of museum objects in the teaching of History, in the hope of bringing about a more effective and substantial approach to the past (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994: 10-5).

The Ethnological Museum of Thrace was founded in 2002 in Alexandroupoli, a city nearby the Greek-Turkish border.<sup>2</sup> It contains various collections drawn from the general area of Thrace. Thrace is a geographical area divided after the World War I into three states (Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria). Since its foundation, the museum has been notably active. It is continually developing its collections. It is involved in recording and digitizing written and visual sources. It works mainly with historians and anthropologists in its efforts to promote interdisciplinary research. It produces its own publications and organizes conferences and seminars, to which it invites academics from Greece and abroad. The most important area in which the museum is active is education. It has planned and brought to fruition many educational projects regarding diet, art, folk tradition, social stratification, archaeology, music, the environment and local history. The museum conducts educational programmes for all age groups – family programmes, seminars, workshops, events and lectures, all of which enjoy enthusiastic participation. The basic aim of these educational programmes is the application of the methodology of Museum Education and the establishment of a stable relationship of trust and mutual influence with the local community and educational institutions. It should also be noted that in 2014 an oral history group was founded at the museum, with the aim of creating a database of oral testimony from the inhabitants of the whole of the region of Thrace.

## **2. The Epistemological Framework of the Project**

The aim of our project, like that of many other such educational projects designed in museums, is to draw together various disciplines and various distinct courses in the school curriculum. Thus we intend it to possess interdisciplinary and cross-curricular qualities. We have incorporated contemporary perspectives and methodologies drawn both not only from pedagogy and history didactics but also from social sciences that connect with history, such as semiotics, social anthropology and archaeology. The most important points in our research involve the relationship that arises between the visitor/learner and the objects exhibited in the museum and the meanings and experiences that are produced thanks to this relationship. This is so, because we attempt to use the objects that we have placed in the portmanteau as important media tools, which bring the school students into contact with the past of their local community.<sup>3</sup>

This is certainly an enormous subject and much has been written in recent years on the matter. Here I will limit myself to a few observations:

In the semiotics of material culture,<sup>4</sup> objects are regarded as ‘texts’ which produce not one, but multiple meanings, depending on the cultural environment in which they happen to be embedded at the time and on the codes of communication employed in this environment.<sup>5</sup> This view thus rejects the belief, held by many, that objects preserved from the past, by reason of their physical presence, constitute documents or evidence from the past and so retain intact their original meaning up to the present day (Lidchi, 1997: 162-163). In the view of Charles Peirce, the assigning of meanings to exhibits in a museum and the creation of experiences arise from a triple-pole relationship, a semiotic triangle, as it were, the corners of which consist of the interpretant, the object and the representamen. Peirce defines the interpretant (rather than ‘intepreter’) as the individual who is the bearer of experiences, ideas, knowledge, culture, education, abilities, feelings and disposition. Respectively, Taborsky offers us an analytical tool, which consists of three realities, material, individual and group reality. The interaction between them products meaning and provides experiences (Latham, 2008; Taborsky, 1990). Objects are comprehended as mediating cultural tools, which can offer us

experiences of the past and encourage intellectual activity at the highest level (Nakou, 2009: 37).

During the 1980s, however, a movement came into being among the archaeologists of Cambridge, pioneered by Ian Hodder, Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley. This movement, which was to spread worldwide, assigns a distinct place to the study of the relationship between people and objects of the past. This movement was labeled post-processual archaeology, in reaction to traditional processual archaeology, which regarded archaeology as a scientific discipline employing scientific methods to lead to objective interpretations and conclusions and to the formulation of general rules regarding human culture (Shanks-Tilley, 1987: 29-45, 53; Hodder, 1991: 7-18). Post-processual archaeology borrows the perspectives and analytical tools of structuralism, post-structuralism, semiotics and British Marxist theory. It asserts that there is a dialectical and constantly changing relationship between mankind and objects, that material objects from the past cannot be 'read' in isolation and should be comprehended through their cultural context, while the meanings that we create regarding such objects are multiple and thus subjective. In his final work, eloquently entitled 'Entangled', Hodder studies the multiple relationships that connect people and objects in space and time. Defining entanglement as 'a heterogeneous mix of humans and things, potentials and constraints, ideas and technologies', he rejects any contradictions between subjectivity and objectivity, materiality and idealism and indeed any such dualisms in general that predominate in the philosophy of knowledge (Hodder, 2012: 208).

It is obvious, and there is no need for me to argue the case, that contemporary education, and in particular, museum education rests on the view held by Dewey that learning must be connected with the life experiences of the students and that the learning activities must be 'lively, vivid and interesting' (Dewey, 1938: 14). Nevertheless, Dewey himself observed that this does not mean experiences on their own will teach (Dewey, 1938: 25). Particularly with regard to history, children tend to see events and persons in a simplistic fashion and to interpret them in terms of presentism and atemporality, so that they end up with stereotypes and misconceptions that are very difficult to change (Castle, 2002). Thus 'there is no intellectual growth without some reconstruction, some remaking, of impulses and desires in the form in which they first show themselves' (Dewey, 1938: 73). Thus

entertaining oneself in a museum is not enough for the experience to have educational value. Entertainment, as Hein notes, is ‘necessary but not sufficient for education’. The aim is to find out ‘how to transform the obvious enthusiasm of visitors into connected, engaging activities that lead to growth’ (Hein, 1998: 3). Thus perhaps what is needed is what Gardner terms ‘discipline’. This, as regards history teaching, means familiarizing the students with the methods employed by historians and with the processes of historical research in order to cultivate and acquire historical skills (Gardner, 1999: 122).

### **3. Project Aims and Methodology**

Fundamentally speaking, what we have is a local history programme that offers school students the opportunity to learn the history of their town, Alexandroupoli, from its foundation, in 1872, up to the present. The basic idea is to place an amount of multimodal material in a traveller's portmanteau. The material relates to the history of the city and to the daily life of the inhabitants and can be used for teaching, since it consists of a wide variety of materials, such as historical texts, documentaries and snap-shots taken from the cinema, maps, photographs, aural evidence containing testimonies given by inhabitants of the city, written texts and objects in daily use. The project addresses students in the final class of primary school and in the first three classes of gymnasium (lower secondary). Those with whom I have worked together over this project are the Director of the Ethnological Museum, Ms. Angeliki Yannakidou, the animateur, Ms. Valentina Sokratous.

The aims we set ourselves were as follows:

Firstly, it was our goal that school students should cultivate an understanding of History, critical thought and creative imagination. We also wanted them to express themselves both individually and collectively, rather than simply memorizing and recalling historical information. We preferred interpretation, or rather interpretations, over explanation. There is a real distinction between interpretation and explanation in modern history teaching. Explaining a phenomenon or accounting for a material object from the past means a rational, ostensibly objective procedure, which rests on the acceptance of a general rule linking teleologically the object with a cause, a canon that holds generally; the explanation is absolute and rarely allows alternative

interpretations. By contrast, interpretation rests on accepting the point that meanings, rather than being the product of rules and of the adherence to principles, in fact change, depending on circumstances and people's views at the time, so that interpretations can never be anything other than multiple (Kotsakis, 2008: 31-32). On the basis of this consideration, we encourage our students, once they have studied the historical material, to offer their own interpretations and to develop and express their own reflections and arguments, obviously based on the historical sources.

Secondly, in students activities centred on the use of historical sources, we use teaching strategies based on discovery learning, as Bruner defined it in the 1960s and turned into teaching practices later (Bruner, 1966; Saab, Joolingen & Hout-Wolters, 2005). Since, however, in our case the museum objects being investigated are to be regarded *de facto* as historical sources, we have attempted to apply history teaching strategies, in order to construct a dialectical relationship with the sources and to create causal and chronological conceptual representations. In particular, as regards the teaching methods and techniques, the objects are initially approached via their visual and tangible features, after which follows further research employing supplementary information that contributes to the decoding of the messages conveyed by the objects and to the broadening of subjects for discussion and of the historical field in question. This supplementary information concerns the materials used and the technology employed in producing the object, the creator of the object, the one who commissioned it, its use, any subsequent transformation or after-use, the human values that it bears and to its social role. Briefly put, that is, the information refers to the historical context of the object. Obviously, during this process, the students are encouraged to express alternative views and interpretations. Working sheets distributed to student groups require that they record the features of the objects that they are examining and the information that they acquire from the objects, that is, the working sheets demand that the students develop strategies and techniques for 'reading' the objects. However, the students are then set more open-ended questions that can be answered in multiple ways, in order to enhance individual expression and interpretation and so lay the foundation for multi-perspective aspects.

Thirdly, the aim of the programme is for school students to recognize the value of Oral History. And so included in the educational material are recordings of the testimonies in the Museum archive taken from inhabitants of Alexandroupoli. We should stress the point that the testimonies that we have chosen in various cases do not agree with each other. This is of great value for the historical thinking of school students, since they may be led to conclude that it is not unusual for differing narratives to co-exist, not only in the present but also in the past.

Fourthly, in the planning and in the selection of the material, we have used objects from the daily life of Alexandroupoli during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that are not exhibited in the display cabinets of the museum and so are not known to the public. For us, this was a remarkable opportunity to take these objects out of storage in the museum and for visitors to become aware of the unseen, but important functions of the museum.

Fifth, most of the objects chosen and placed in the trunk are real, while the remainder are faithful copies. These objects include documents, photographs, clothes, toys, tools, decoration items and accessories. The students can touch these objects, scrutinize them more closely and then put them back in their place. Thus students develop a sense-based communication with the remains of the past. They can comprehend the materials, the feel, the weight, the technology and the functionality of these objects and can perhaps intuitively relate to the era in which the objects were produced and to the men and women who made and used them. They may even be able to compare these objects to objects of today used for the same purposes. As Lipe (1984: 4) stresses, the authenticity of the objects is the foundation for the creation in the observer of a subjective knowledge that offers him or her an experiential contact with the past, whilst a sensory contact with objects in a museum is of great pedagogical value.<sup>6</sup> Thus, in museum education use is made of the eloquently expressive term 'hands on', to describe accurately this form of communication; museum visitors are both entertained and awakened intellectually – so 'hands on' leads to 'minds on' (Hein, 1998: 2). Naturally, all this occurs mainly in children's museums, where, however, authentic objects are not used. In this sense, the initiative of the Thrace Ethnological Museum is pioneering. Besides, one of the pedagogical aims of the programme is for children to learn to treat

exhibits with care, to acknowledge their value and the need to preserve them, since it is via the exhibits that they are able to learn of their past.

With regard to our methods for interpretation of the concepts of historical time and space, we should make the following points:

Regarding the structure of the programme, the distribution of the activities that we planned within in a projected teaching period of four hours (see below) and the arranging of the objects in the draws of the portmanteau, we decided to subdivide this length of time into five historical periods, namely, a) 1872-1912, b) 1912-1923, c) 1923-1940, d) 1940-1974 and e) 1974-2014. As for the chronological impetus of the programme, we combined two methods, a) the conventional 'chronological or periodical method', which is almost universally applied in most curricula, starts from the past and leads to the present day and, b), the 'regressive approach', which uses the present as historical starting point. Applied during the 1930s by teachers who were followers of the progressive education movement (Evans, 2004: 47), the chief advantage of the 'regressive approach' lies in the fact that it starts from the known and familiar, that it awakens the curiosity and desire of the students to learn how we ended up here and in the fact that this approach gradually reveals the relationship between the past, recent or distant, and the present (Carpenter, 1964: 26-48). At the level of national or World history, the application of this method indeed involves many problems and difficulties, since students and educators are obliged to function in a fashion opposite to that to which they are accustomed, but above all because they require a broad and well-composed picture of the past. Nevertheless, in educational history programmes directed at a younger age and differentiated in terms of subject and methodology from conventional narrative teaching, as local history and museum education programmes are, this approach can offer considerable benefits, since such programmes rest on students' cognitive structures that already exist (and indeed derive from their own experiences) and on students' emotional experiences. For this reason in our own educational programme we have chosen the present as starting point for the development of educational activities and we examine the present, our impetus being in the direction of the past as far as the Asia Minor Disaster and the Treaty of Lausanne, whilst we then take the usual chronological direction, starting from the foundation of Alexandroupoli in 1872.

The central point of the programme and a crucial factor for its success is to cultivate in students the ability to orient themselves in historical time and in general to adopt chronological skills. This we have attempted to do by creating a historical timeline on which are placed the most important historical events of the period, these being not only political, diplomatic and military, but also cultural. The timeline revolves around three parallel axes, centred on local, national and World history. thus Local history is placed in a wider context and students are aided in their understanding of the changes that occur in local history under the influence of events taking place on the borders of the state or on a broader geopolitical scale. Today, it is considered particularly important for school students, from primary school onwards, to acquire historical skills that enable them to understand the links between micro-scale events and the international arena in terms of space and time and to function effectively in this interaction (Skelton & Reeves, 2009). Alexandroupoli, formerly Dede Ağac, is a typical example of the great impact that international events had on local society during the First World War, since the neighbouring Gallipoli peninsula was for ten months the scene of violent clashes (1915-1916). In almost every educational activity, the students are referred to this triple timeline and are required to link the two sets of events or to place photographs, post cards and written sources on the time axis.

An equally important axis informing the programme is space. The significance of anthropogenic locality in, among other branches, historical research and education is enormous, if we recall that upon this is written, albeit sporadically, the life and cultural development of human communities (Kasvikis & Andreou, 2008: 125-126). Despite the fact that the programme is intended to be used indoors, in the museum or in school, the reference point is familiar to students and makes up the environment of both their historical education and of their own lived experiences: This place is, of course, their town. Here, at the micro-scale level, the main aim is the didactic use of mainly visual sources, such as photographs and city plans, that contain buildings or areas in the city that have survived up to the present. This is not an easy task, if one bears in mind the swift changes or, more precisely, the change in the appearance of cities in Greece that occurred suddenly with the mass construction of apartment buildings during the 1960s and 1970s. Today, among the apartment blocks very few old public

buildings, private buildings and churches have been preserved. These, however, can aid students in orienting themselves when they are examining historical photographs of Alexandroupoli and in restoring in their imagination the townscape that has been lost. On a wider geographical scale, the aims are easier to achieve, given that use will be made of digital maps and software that depict the repeated changes to national borders that have occurred in Thrace during the period in question.

The project was applied in pilot form in May 2014, in the Department of History and Ethnology of the Democritus University of Thrace, with 22 students participating. During this meeting, there was an extremely fruitful dialogue, in which views were expressed and new ideas regarding improvements to the programme suggested. In schools in the area, it will be put into operation during the winter of 2014.

#### **4. A brief description of the structure of the project**

##### *4.1 First Two-Hour Session. The First Activity*

The pupils are divided up into five groups. Each group is given a tablet, which functions as a learning tool. The pupils are then asked to use the history map software CENTENIA, to locate the point on the map where their town is located.

##### *4.2 Phase A: Period 1974-2014*

###### *4.2.1 The Second Activity*

Starting from the present and moving backwards through the past, the pupils are required to use the photographs loaded on the tablets of each group to create a picture of the town as it changes, all the way back to the 1970s. Then, using the working sheets for this period, they are required to pinpoint important events during the period. The subjects on which the learning activities are centered are as follows: political events that influenced the inhabitants of Alexandroupoli, development that made it an urban centre, internal and external migration, urbanism and the decline of traditional agricultural communities. The students are encouraged to include accounts from their parents and grandparents.

#### 4.2.2 *The Third Activity*

The animateur explains to the children how a timeline functions and stresses the importance that parallel lines of world, national and local history have for understanding the history of their city. The pupils then seek information and discuss the above topics. Also, they are encouraged to make use of the timeline throughout the programme and can themselves pin events and pictures to the timeline.

#### 4.3 *Phase B: Period 1940-1974*

##### 4.3.1 *The Fourth Activity*

The pupils are required to locate on their tablet the folders for 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. They examine carefully the photographic archive for each decade and fill in their worksheets. They then open the trunk. With the help of the animateur, they examine the contents of the trunk and how they are organized. In each group they study the contents of a drawer, then list and describe the contents on a working sheet in terms of shape, material and colour. They discuss use, functionality, value and aesthetics of the objects. At the conclusion of the activity, each group presents its findings to a plenary session of the class.

#### 4.4 *Second Two-Hour session. Phase C: Period 1922-1940*

##### 4.4.1 *The Fifth Activity*

We now move to the interwar period. With the arrival of thousands of refugees from the Asia Minor catastrophe, the city changes dramatically. The animateur introduces topics regarding how and why the topography and human geography change. The pupils are required use arrows to point out on the map the origin and destination of the waves of refugees.

They draw information from historical texts, eyewitness accounts by refugees, extracts from documentaries and from the objects in the trunk. Finally, each group presents the information that it has gathered and offers its views.

#### 4.5 *Phase D: Period 1880-1912*

##### 4.5.1 *The Sixth Activity*

We move in time to 1872 when the small town of Dede-Agaç was founded under the Ottoman Empire. The pupils are required to use

the timeline to extract information on the period, regarding the industrial revolution, commercial networks, railways and new international alliances. They use the following opening questions: What are the reasons for the foundation of the town? How did it start? The pupils are encouraged to speculate, search through the trunk for texts, photographs and objects from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and prepare small extemporizations for their presentation.

#### 4.5.2 *The Seventh Activity*

Through role-playing exercises the pupils use clothes and objects dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that they have found in the trunk. They attempt to recreate this particular period in the life of the city, when it evolved into a cosmopolitan urban environment with many consulates, trading houses, an aristocracy, educational foundations and schools of music. The overall aim is to reveal the multicultural character of the city during this period.

#### 4.6 *Phase E: Period 1912-1922*

##### 4.6.1 *The Eighth Activity*

The children are required to play a strategy game on a map, in which they use pieces and cards representing the armies of the various Balkan states. They are given information that takes them from the Balkan Wars to the Asia Minor catastrophe. Through the game, the pupils offer answers to the following questions: What alliances were created? What treaties were signed? Who were the victors? What areas was Thrace divided up into and what states was it shared among? How did Alexandroupoli pass from the hands of the Ottoman into the Bulgarians and then into allied hands and finally into Greek possession?

##### 4.7 *The Final Activity: Period 1923-2014*

Using the Treaty of Lausanne as a starting point, the children acquire an understanding of the geographical status of Thrace as it is today. They then move onto the micro-scale of their city, Alexandroupoli. They consult a town-planning map and so become aware of the development and growth of Alexandroupoli from 1880 to the present. Finally, some time is devoted to the evaluation of the programme by the students.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> On the context of the development of the museum as an institution, see Nakou (2009: 14-52). On the epistemological background to the relationship among museum, history and education, see *ibid*: 87-113 and Nakou, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Alexandroupoli was founded in 1872 as Dede-Agaç, the name meaning in Turkish 'Grandfather's Tree'. The aim was that Alexandroupoli should function as a commercial stop on the route from the Ottoman east to the European west. The large-scale construction of an infrastructure consisting of railway and a harbour contributed to the growth of the population. Many consulates opened, together with branches of commercial and shipping enterprises. After the Balkan Wars and in particular the Treaty of Bucharest, in 1913, the town was given to Bulgaria. After the Allied victory in the First World War, all of western Thrace was placed under Allied administration and was definitively handed over to Greece under the conditions of the Treaty of Sevres, in 1920. It was renamed Alexandroupoli in honour of King Alexander of Greece. After the Asia Minor catastrophe and the implementation of the compulsory exchange of population between Turkey and Greece, imposed by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, Alexandroupoli received a large number of Greek refugees, mainly from eastern Thrace.

<sup>3</sup> About the benefits of developing trans-regional and trans-national perspectives based on material objects exhibited in local museums and the questions that arise in the framework of History Education, see Schumann & Popp (2014).

<sup>4</sup> On what 'material culture' is and what it includes, see Hodder (2008).

<sup>5</sup> Latham gives a good summary of four important theories and taxonomic models of the comprehension and interpretation of the meaning of museum objects: a) The semiotic triangle of Charles Peirce, b) Buckland's typology, c) Taborsky's 'three realities' and d) Rosenblatt's interactive model (Latham, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> In research conducted recently in the UK, whose aim was to record the views of children themselves in regard to museum educational programmes, it was found that children ask to be allowed to touch the objects and to engage with them experientially (Black, 2009: 205-207).

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**MUSIC, MINSTRELS,  
AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR:  
ENTERTAINMENT, IMAGINATION  
AND HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION**

Karl Benziger

*Old Dan Tucker's a Fine old Man  
Washed his face with a Frying Pan  
Combed his Hair with a Wagon Wheel  
And Died with a Toothache in His Heel*

‘Old Dan Tucker,’ Daniel Emmett, 1843<sup>1</sup>

*This essay begins with an examination of Dan Emmett's minstrel song ‘Old Dan Tucker’ (1843) as an entrée into American stereotypes about slaves and free blacks and the paradoxical interest Americans had about the African American community. This interest helped stoke abolitionist sentiment at the popular level prior to the American Civil War as evidenced by novels such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's, Uncle Tom's Cabin (1853). Likewise, D.W. Griffith's film Birth of a Nation (1915) fortified negative stereotypes critical to Lost Cause narratives after the war. In the wake of America's great civil rights struggles, films such as Edward Zwick's Glory (1989) provide counter narratives to those of the Lost Cause. An examination of entertaining popular interpretations of history are essential when teaching about the American Civil War in both the secondary and collegiate classroom, as they get to the heart of competing narratives about the Civil War and the nature of civil society in the United States.*

## **1. Introduction**

This discussion begins with an examination of Dan Emmett's minstrel song *Old Dan Tucker* (1843) as an entrée into American stereotypes about slaves and free blacks, and the interest white Americans had in the African American community prior to the American Civil War, 1861-1865. Though slaves and freed blacks were considered inferior by the majority of Americans, an important Black-White cultural exchange took place from which elements of music and dance collided to create the first popular music/dance ‘craze’ in the United States in

the form of Blackface minstrelsy.<sup>2</sup> Slavery existed alongside an American Republic dedicated to rational legal law; early anti-slavery societies used this frame to portray African Americans as tragic figures deprived of individual liberty. This interest helped stoke abolitionist sentiment at a popular level prior to the American Civil War, as evidenced by novels like Harriet Beecher Stowe's, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853). Minstrel shows and songs like *Old Dan Tucker* used a wide range of negative and positive stereotypes of African Americans in order to both fascinate and titillate the audience (Smith, 2013: 55).

In spite of the fact that the Civil War successfully ended slavery in the United States and granted citizenship to former slaves, efforts to guarantee the rights of citizenship became illusory for African Americans. Economic downturn and racism fortified by eugenics ensured that the promise of emancipation and citizenship for African Americans disappeared as a priority in politics for the next hundred years. D.W. Griffith's film *Birth of a Nation* (1915) fortified negative stereotypes of slaves and freed African Americans that were critical to Lost Cause narratives. Lost Cause narratives championed the legitimacy of secession from the United States and the proposition that the Civil War was not fought over the issue of slavery, but as a war between the states. African Americans were characterized as both childish and brutish, and slavery was actually perceived as the proper and humane treatment for an inferior race (Foner, 1988: 608-610). Lost Cause narratives were challenged by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded in 1909, but it wasn't until the great civil rights struggles following World War II that counter narratives to the Lost Cause emerged. These narratives can be found in films such as Andrew V. McLaglen's *Shenandoah* (1965) and Edward Zwick's *Glory* (1989), and in the rich musical exchange that linked the African American community to the American popular imagination.

Slavery was the principle cause of the American Civil War and the entertaining narrative found in *Old Dan Tucker* makes it easier for students at the collegiate level to access and better understand the competing narratives Americans had about slavery and race both before and after the American Civil War. The narratives found in minstrelsy complement novels and movies that address these same issues. How can songs like *Old Dan Tucker* and the story of minstrelsy help us uncover these complex interpretations of slave and free

African American communities in the United States before and after the American Civil War, in the American History survey at the collegiate level? Why are these interpretations important to us in the contemporary period?

## **2. The Minstrel Show and its Relationship to Slavery and Race before the American Civil War**

'Old Dan Tucker', written in 1843 by the musician/entrepreneur Daniel Emmett, became a nineteenth century hit selling over 100,000 copies and was certainly an important vehicle for his company the Virginia Minstrels as they toured both in the United States and Europe. As a young man Emmett had learned to play a variety of instruments associated with minstrelsy while working as a musician in the circus from fellow musicians who claimed to have learned how to play them from slaves and freed African Americans. The Virginia Minstrels helped frame Blackface Minstrelsy for the middle class through professionalization and standardization of the music and related dance forms. The music and dance found in the minstrel show created a compelling shared experience that Americans found irresistible (Smith, 2013: 74-76, 174).

Blackface minstrelsy lay at the heart of antebellum American popular culture (Mahar, 1999: 1). A minstrel show included dances, songs, and jokes emanating from the African American experience in North America. The show was typically divided into three parts that began with jokes and songs, followed by an olio, or variety show, and a finale that often included a parody of an operetta, or a Shakespearean play (Taylor & Austen, 2012: 40). The form is an amalgam of the Atlantic world that resulted from the trans-Atlantic exchange of ideas, goods, and peoples found in the United States, at places such as the Catherine Market in New York City. The market provided a forum at the turn of the nineteenth century where African Americans, slave and free, would dance for money or in exchange for fish, such as eels, capturing the attention of both white and black audiences in a cultural exchange that evolved over time (Lhamon, 1998: 7-24, 59). For example, the nineteenth century banjo used in minstrel shows was a product of the industrial revolution that was developed from West African string instruments such as the Bunchundo (a three string banjo like instrument). The banjo became emblematic of the genre and its

endurance in American song is a testament to the importance of this exchange.

American understanding of the African American community both slave and free was complex during the antebellum period. Many white Americans were at once fascinated by the music emanating from the slave community and at the same time needed to be reassured of African American's racial inferiority (Smith, 2013: 55, 94). Historian Eric Lott explains that minstrelsy was the 'first acknowledgement of Black culture', and yet at the same time whites were fraught with fears of miscegenation and a genuine sexual fascination with the Black body (Lott, 1992: 23, 30-31, 39-40). Spiritual foundations of racism found in the 'Curse of Ham', a reference to the Old Testament story found in Genesis, were reinforced by early proponents of eugenics and were very much part of the context in which minstrelsy evolved (Davis, 2006: 66, 74-76). On one hand minstrelsy underscored and reinforced stereotypes about African Americans that had evolved in Europe and the Americas over hundreds of years, and on the other, blackface minstrelsy practiced by whites provided an avenue to criticise authority and the conventions of the period including sex and class (Taylor & Austen, 2012: 40). This is clearly evidenced in 'Old Dan Tucker' where he presents a powerful and sexualized image in the following verse:

*Now old Dan Tucker is come to town  
Swinging the ladies round and round  
First to the right and then to the left  
Then to the girl that he loves best*

Old Dan Tucker that 'fine old man' clearly enjoyed defying the Victorian standards of the day.<sup>3</sup>

Former slave and abolitionist William Wells Brown made use of the minstrel form in plays and lectures as a way of engaging white audiences and assuring them of his 'authenticity' as he described slavery in the antebellum south. For many Americans this was the only way they could learn about African Americans, let alone slavery itself. Minstrel shows included a large dose of comedy, but also explored the tragedy of slavery through songs about forced separation brought about by the sale of a lover, or a kidnapping (Gilmore, 1997: 743-744, 746; Mahar, 1999: 196-198).

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 included provisions empowering marshals apprehending fugitive slaves in free-states to compel citizens from that state to assist in a posse and denied the accused trial by jury. The law served to inflame the debate over slavery in the United States during the 1850s and highlighted the authority of 'authentic' speakers such as Brown. At the same time Harriet Beecher Stowe's epic novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published in 1853 detailed the heartlessness of slavery and captured the sympathies of many genteel white Americans. The novel sold over 1.2 million copies (Levine, 2005: 186-190). Musicologist Deane L. Root explains that much of the music that Stowe refers to in the novel in relation to her slave protagonists are hymns and operatic pieces that middle class white readers would be familiar with. Minstrel songs were reserved for the uneducated slaves. Antagonists such as the slaver Simon Legree, underscoring the expectation that African Americans, were capable of incorporating the standards and mores of the white middle class.<sup>4</sup>

The Kansas Nebraska Act of 1854 enabled citizens in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to choose whether their various states would come into the Union, as either free or slave, setting off a conflagration in 1855 that anticipated the Civil War itself. Money, arms, and belligerents poured in from the north and south to fight pitched battles in the Kansas territory, and used terrorist tactics designed to strike fear in their opponents. The abolitionist John Brown's night time raid and massacre of five pro-slavery men at Pottawatomie Creek, Kansas in 1856 is a good example.<sup>5</sup> In 1857 the Supreme Court ruled that slaves were property and had no rights in federal court. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney claimed that any law restricting the movement of property was unconstitutional; therefore Congress lacked the authority to limit slavery. The ruling deepened the chasm between Americans over the issue of slavery and helped inspire John Brown to stage a raid on the federal armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia in October, 1859. The raid was a failure, but the figure of Brown electrified the nation. He was hanged on December 2, 1859. Although reviled by slaveholders, his argument that God would 'purge this land with blood' resonated even among those abolitionists who viewed his actions as too radical (Levine, 2005: 199-216; Oates, 1970). For many in the north he became a martyr and inspired lyrics to a popular soldier's song 'John Brown's Body' that included verses such as:

*He captured Harper's Ferry with his nineteen men so few,  
And he frightened 'Old Virginy' till she trembled through and through,  
They hung him as a traitor, themselves a traitor's crew,  
But his truth is marching on.*<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly, the song that became the Confederate anthem during the Civil War was the minstrel song 'Dixie' written by Dan Emmett in 1859, whose chorus goes:

*In Dixie land I'll take my stand to live and die in Dixie  
Away, away, away down south in Dixie*

Prior to the American Civil War Dixieland was synonymous with the homeland of the slaves. The song was played at the President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis' inaugural and was well liked by the Confederate soldiers (Nathan, 1962: 271-274, 359; Guelzo, 2013: 45, 76, 426). Though secession from the Federal Government (Union) was linked to the preservation of slavery as an institution, it wasn't until 1862 that the destruction of slavery became a principal war aim of the United States (Drehle, 2012: 374-379; McPherson, 2008: 156-160).

### **3. African American Minstrel Shows**

African Americans also attended minstrel performances and after the Civil War many began organizing troupes of their own. Paradoxically, the African American dancer, William Henry Lane wore blackface when he performed, as he feared white audience reaction to seeing an African American on stage. Ultimately, his true identity was revealed and he continued to perform to great acclaim, including performances with white minstrel troupes (Taylor & Austen, 2012: 47-49). Industrial workers identified with popular minstrel characters such as Cain. Cain took the powerful role of the trickster to turn social order upside down and helps explain minstrelsy's draw to both African Americans and the white working class (Lott, 1995: 22-24, 143-144; Lhamon, 1998: 124, 179). African American minstrelsy was accepted, but was set in the context of what became legally sanctioned segregation seemingly set in stone in 1896 with the Supreme Court's Plessy v. Ferguson decision. Segregating African Americans from whites was legal as long as equal

facilities were provided, a precedent that would stay in force until *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 (Kluger, 1977: 71-81, 702-710).

In spite of strictly enforced segregation, African American minstrels were renowned for their musical talent and attracted large audiences, who were then exposed to the evolving forms of ragtime, blues, and jazz and provided an important venue for Black musicians (Taylor & Austen, 2012: 46-49, 51-55; Abbott & Seroff, 2007: 170-171, 210; Floyd, 1995: 52-57). As historian Eric Lott points out, though abolitionist Frederick Douglas deeply disapproved of minstrelsy for its reinforcement of racist stereotypes, he also saw the opportunity provided to African Americans performing before white audiences to break down those very stereotypes (Lott, 1995: 36-37). Acceptance of African American music and culture accelerated in the context of this genre, but breaking down racist stereotypes began gaining real momentum only after World War II with the struggle for civil rights.

#### **4. 'Old Dan Tucker' in the Classroom**

'Old Dan Tucker' and its many interpretations can be used as a primary source and help to get to the complex story of race and cultural diffusion that is very much part of the American narrative. I use it as a way of luring students into the lesson at hand. The immediacy of live music quickly attracts attention and the novelty of a professor performing the tune ensures that students remember the experience, which is critical as we return to these themes over the course of a semester. After playing the song I ask two questions: What kind of audience would enjoy this song? Why might American children learn this song in nursery school? This leads to a discussion of the lyrics and the pleasure children derive from seeing adults portrayed as buffoons. After the introduction I project images of Dan Tucker, the sheet music, and the Virginia Minstrels, and I ask students to describe what they see. This leads into a discussion of stereotypes. Why would a white man, or even an African American, use burnt cork and other ingredients and make themselves to look like slaves in antebellum America? The discussion usually takes several turns, but in general centres on Masking, Buffoonery, and Dehumanization through the grotesque stereotyping that characterized the characters portrayed. On one hand the various characters challenge authority and turn Victorian conventions upside down, often critiquing the inhumanity of the slave

system itself. On the other hand, it reassures the audience of the racialized hierarchy that was explicit at the time.

From here I move on to a discussion about the genuine interest the slave and non-slave holding community took in African folkloric traditions found in the United States and the process of cultural diffusion using images of the Bunchundo, woodcuts of slaves playing banjos and bones, and finally a picture of a nineteenth century banjo. Dance and music brought over by slaves was exotic and in spite of the subservient position of African Americans was very much enjoyed and ultimately lead to adaptation, due to new material resources at hand, of musical instruments and the reinterpretation of musical and dance forms. This can be seen in 'Old Dan Tucker.' Mass production, printed music, and formal instruction helped institutionalize this new form called minstrelsy and its popularity helped ensure the staying power of the new idiom, which contributed over time to the development of jazz, blues, and folk music played for children.

This introduction sets the stage for student investigations of slave and abolitionist narratives and their interpretation of antebellum America. For example, the *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave Written by Himself*, 1849 and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* provide us with an understanding of the strategies employed by the abolitionists at that time to popularize their cause.<sup>7</sup> The *Uncle Tom's Cabin* website from the University of Virginia provides reviews of the book from both the northern and southern perspectives. How do these descriptions of the institution of slavery agree/disagree with each other and those portrayed by the minstrel show? In the same way one can examine memory of the antebellum period through works such as Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, 1885. Importantly, the investigation must be set in the volatile politics of the late 1840s and 1850's where complex and contesting interpretations of American slavery bedeviled the likes of Abraham Lincoln, and which ultimately lead to the South's secession from the Union and a bloodbath unrivalled by any other American conflict. Analysis of 'Dixie', 1859 and 'John Brown's Body', 1861, two of the great anthems of the competing Armies, underscore the inability of the United States to reconcile this crucial issue. In the nineteenth century the new birth of freedom envisioned by Abraham Lincoln and enshrined by the Civil War amendments that promised equal access to the law for all citizens was all too soon replaced by Lost Cause memory in which the noble

struggle of the Civil War revitalized the nation and the plight of African Americans was forgotten (Taylor & Austen, 2012: 50; Blight, 2001: 1-16, 258, 303-304).

The NAACP campaign against D.W. Griffith's movie *Birth of a Nation*, 1915 provides an opportune moment to revisit the uneasy relationship of race and the development of civil rights in the United States in the classroom. The negative stereotypes of African Americans found in minstrelsy seem to reinforce the narrative found in D.W. Griffith's film. In this telling, Reconstruction fails due to the greed of carpet baggers who had come from the north to exploit the defeated south, and the utter incompetence of African Americans. The omnipresent fear of amalgamation and miscegenation comes to its climax with the 'Gus Chase', in which white womanhood is redeemed by the Ku Klux Klan. In the film the contribution made by 200,000 African Americans to the Union effort during the Civil War is reduced to scenes in which they terrorize the benign shattered world of plantation whites and loyal slaves. It is the Ku Klux Klan that restores order and dignity to the world of the Lost Cause. The NAACP campaign helped revitalize direct action within the African American community and raised the critical issue of what rights accrued to those brave enough to wear a United States uniform in the context of World War I (Blight, 2001: 394-397; Foner, 1998: 172-175). The film itself, however, was indeed a success and indicated that white Americans were not ready to face the issue of race and court-sanctioned segregation. At the same time the popularity of minstrel shows exposed audiences to blues and jazz which ultimately became part of popular mainstream entertainment after World War I, as evidenced by performers such as Bessie Smith, Louis Armstrong, and Benny Goodman. Students must analyse the contrast provided in entertainment media that at once reinforced Lost Cause mythos, in contrast to art forms that openly acknowledged the creativity and genius of the African American community in the United States, in order to better understand civil rights and its resistance before World War II.

According to historian Gary W. Gallagher the first movie to challenge the Lost Cause narrative was Andrew V. McLaglen's *Shenandoah* in 1965. The movie seemed in accord with one of the key demands of the American Civil Rights movement enshrined in the monumental Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Act finally provided the

means to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment of 1868 which guaranteed equal access to the law for all citizens of the United States. The film, set in the Civil War, portrays African American figures that are noble and demand respect. Individual freedom is contrasted with the institution of slavery, and the issues surrounding secession from the Union are questioned. Though it included some historical inaccuracies such as an integrated Union Army with African American and White soldiers fighting side by side, the film provides a stark contrast to the narrative found in *Birth of a Nation* (Gallagher, 2009: 355-356). Edward Zwick's 1989 box office hit *Glory* tells the story of the African American 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry and features not only their immortalized charge against Fort Wagner in Charleston, South Carolina, but also highlights more rudimentary and daily concerns, such as their disgust at being paid lower army wages than the white Union soldiers of the time.<sup>8</sup> Showing selected scenes from *Birth of a Nation*, *Shenandoah*, and *Glory* provides students with an opportunity to compare and contrast the depiction of African Americans in the context of the American Civil War and explain what accounted for these changes over time such as: What strands of the past remain and what strands are consigned to oblivion?<sup>9</sup>

To bring the discussion full circle one can examine Hip Hop and its direct and indirect references to the Minstrel form as an entrée into a detailed discussion regarding contemporary issues revolving around race in the United States. One can also underscore these issues with recent events such as the shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed eighteen year old African American youth by white police officers in Ferguson, Missouri on 9 August 2014, which set off a storm of outrage and once again resurrected questions about race and justice in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

Students enjoy the incorporation of entertainment media into the American History Survey. It provides yet another way to stimulate conversations and investigations about American perceptions of race, and the development of civil society over time. I often use music, or segments from films to begin the class, and set the stage for discussion of critical moments in the development of civil society, such as the NAACP sustained challenge against the narrative found in *Birth of a Nation*. An investigation of minstrelsy that included not only overt bigotry, but a genuine fascination with the African American community gets students into the heart of the complex discussions

Americans had about race prior to the American Civil War. These discussions that include entertainment media can be continued in an examination of the United States that extends into the twenty first century and provides a model for further student exploration of the topic.

Detailed period studies currently provide us with ways to understand the global connections of the Atlantic World. Minstrelsy developed from the Black-White exchange that occurred in the context of the slave trade in the United States. Materials for teaching abound as exemplified through websites I have cited here, along with excellent strategies for teaching (Hughes, 2006; Brown & Shannon, 2012). What I have shown here is a way to broaden this approach across periods, in this case the traditional US History Colonial to 1877 and US History 1877 to the Contemporary Period curriculum. Blackface minstrelsy was a wildly popular form of entertainment and its many meanings provide a window into the complex way in which Americans understood race and the institution of slavery. African Americans utilized the form to gain both black and white audiences, and it served to further fortify professionalization of musical forms that stemmed from the African American community such as jazz, ragtime, and blues. Its staying power through the early twentieth century continued to underscore American fascination and discomfort with the African American community, and provides a way for us to understand the tortuous path Americans took, in their attempt to redeem the promise set out by the civil war amendments guaranteeing equal access to the law.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Blood & Patterson, 1998: 148.

<sup>2</sup> Musicologist Christopher J. Smith calls this process creolization and contends that minstrelsy can be viewed as the culmination of this exchange (Smith, 2013: ix).

<sup>3</sup> According to William J. Mahar this boasting song portrays Old Dan Tucker as a carouser/party male type (Mahar, 1999: 14-15, 196-197).

<sup>4</sup> Deane L. Root, 'The Music of Uncle Tom's Cabin' found under the title Interpret Mode on the University of Virginia's instructional website on Uncle Tom's Cabin: <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/index2f.html> (5.07.2015). I am also referring to Paul Gilmore's article 'De Genewine Artekil' in which he discusses abolitionist Frederick Douglas' autobiography and explains that his denunciation of his slave

past is essential in his embodiment of white middle class attributes in American Literature, 762.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that John Brown was not a relation of William Wells Brown. For a good discussion of the consequences of the Kansas Nebraska act see Bruce Levine's magnificent monograph, *Half Slave, Half Free: The Roots of Civil War* (Levine, 2005: 192-198).

<sup>6</sup> The lyrics for the song 'John Brown's Body' developed over time in Union Army encampments located around Washington D.C. and provided the inspiration for Julia Ward Howe's 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' in 1861. 'John Brown's Holy War,' produced by Robert Kenner, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/brown/sfeature/song.html> (5.07.2015).

<sup>7</sup> The Narrative Life of Henry Bibb and Uncle Tom's Cabin can both be assessed electronically through Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bibb/bibb.html> and the University of Virginia's Uncle Tom's Cabin website <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/index2f.html> (both 5.07.2015).

<sup>8</sup> The battle took place on 18 July 1863 and according to historian James McPherson was hailed in time as a demonstration of the value and heroism of African American soldiers fighting in the Union army. Congress would only belatedly remedy the issue of unequal pay (McPherson, 2008: 202-203).

<sup>9</sup> The failure of Reconstruction helped fortify Lost Cause narratives, but at the same time helped inspire some within the African American community to continue pushing for civil rights (Foner, 1988: 610-612; Tyson, 1999: 4-25).

<sup>10</sup> Well emphasized in Taylor & Austen, 2012: 283-308 and see The Providence Journal, 10-22 August 2014 editions for detailed coverage of the Ferguson shooting.

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## EDUCATIONAL VALUES OF TRADITIONAL BOARD GAMES

Konrad Kochel and Maria Stinia

*This article discusses the didactical potential of traditional board games that used to be or still have been transmitted by direct contact from generation to generation. They appear since the beginning of human history and nowadays can help re-create the atmosphere of the times when they were created and the psychological profiles of the past generations.*

The function of historical education in speech, writing, iconic form or multimedia is getting more able to reflect the complexity of the historical process. Teaching history, however, faces teachers with the issue of evoking and sustaining students' motivation to learn. There is a paradoxical situation, in which students question the purpose of teaching history and simultaneously increase their purchase of press and book publications. There is also a remarkable rise of popularity of historical reenactment, which indicates a large need for historical education. Even more important are activities, which help to reflect historical colour, atmosphere and even psychological construction of past generations. At the same time the curriculum in Polish schools limits the teachers to certain information and discourages them from more ambitious projects and activities. In this situation motivation is crucial as well as looking for attractive media of historical content. The use of old traditional board games in the course of teaching history becomes an important opportunity.

### **1. Definitions: What Is a Traditional Board Game?**

This term doesn't have a single and unambiguous interpretation just as there is no single and commonly recognized definition of tradition. Sometimes it is said that traditional games are all non-electronic games, what makes us usually think of board games and card games (The Magazine for Creative Minds at Play, 2014). This sort of thinking is a very limited vision of games. Firstly, this approach concentrates on the carrier of a game, not on its content, that is rules and narration. Secondly, not every non-electronic game is a traditional game. Another approach to the issue of traditional games is to focus on rules and

narration in games. In this way, traditional games are mostly abstract games, in which pawns move in the fields of a board according to specific rules without referring to any other activities, that this game could reflect. On the other hand, modern games are characterized by a complex narration and game mechanics. Narration, also called plot, is a complex description of places, times, characters, and connects all those factors which determine the course and rules of a game and reflect in game graphic. It is sometimes called the subject of a game. Game mechanics is a term which describes the complex systems of rules in modern games (Cook, 2006). Game Mechanics are to simulate often complex occurrences reflected in a game such as: battles, wars, diplomatic, government, trade, market economy etc. The distinction between traditional and modern games, based on narration and systems of rules criteria, is explicable to some extent. Traditional games, even if imitating the world as Chess, which is a war game of two armies, were not such exact simulations with such complex plots and rules. However, it is difficult to classify the degree of complexity of plots and rules, in order to indicate whether that a game is modern or traditional. If – employing this criterion – we considered Monopoly a modern game, we should also regard ancient Egyptian Senet as a modern game, because it has a complex narration describing the journey of souls to another world and the rules are equally complex. As we can see, the two above methods of classifying what is a traditional game, do not seem too accurate. It emerges from the fact that they ignore the most important part of tradition. As there are many different definitions of tradition, the substantial majority of them underline that a tradition passes down some part of culture from generation to generation. Permanent and more ingrained in culture, are patterns of behaviour passed on in the way of direct interaction, and are independent from mass media. In this context, games should be regarded as traditional, if they were or are transferred in the way of direct contact from generation to generation. These games are Chess, Parcheesi and also mentioned above Monopoly. Modern games like Abalon or Carcassone, which are gaining more and more popularity these days, are passed by direct contact. Only time can show, if they become traditional games. In the case of games like Senet and Petteia, which used to be and are no longer passed from generation to generation, we should use the term of ancient traditional games. Otherwise we should point precisely at the culture, which was their

carrier, for example: a traditional game of ancient Greeks when speaking about Petteia.

## **2. Sources**

Traditional board games from another culture and epochs are not well-known. Not many of them stand the test of time. Information about them is scattered and there are too many diversified sources. Books and texts about games were written even in ancient times, for example a textbook of Emperor Claudius about the Tabula game which was an ancient version of Backgammon (Anthon, 1851: 330). In the Middle Ages a king of Castile, León and Galicia Alfonso X presented his work about games overall entitled the book of game (Alfonso X of Castile, 1283; Schädler, 2009: 16). We can find references to Vikings' Hnefatafl in myths and poems (Paxson, 2005: 140; Andersson & Gade, 2006: 473). Texts about them are subordinated to main story and they are rather short. Generally, source base about games depends on a number of sources from an epoch or culture we know today. An important thing is also what kind of role those games played in that culture. An example can be the Aztec game called Patolli, which had a religious dimension and probably this game was used for a divination ritual. Although few literate monuments of Aztec culture have survived to the present day, due to the important role of this game and its popularity, relatively many sources associated with them were found. However, this popularity caused a situation, in which the rules of those games were not written down and until today we do not have any resources with the exact rules (Verbeeck, 1998). In reconstruction of Patolli rules, we have to use inaccurate descriptions from Spanish sources and in the first place ethnographic descriptions (Verbeeck, 1998: 93). A similar situation exists in the case of Senet, the oldest board game in the world. The game appears in myths about birth of the gods (Ruiz, 2001: 123, 167), and is also mentioned in the Book of the Dead (Digital Egypt for Universities, no date [n.d.]). The special popularity of the game is evidenced by archaeological findings (The Walters Art Museum, n.d.; The Brooklyn Museum, n.d.; Bellessort, n.d.). However, a detailed description of rules from prior centuries hasn't been found until today. Examples of these games show that important sources of knowledge about the games are archaeological discoveries, which show us where the games were played and allow us

to estimate their popularity. They are also a source of knowledge about ancient aesthetics and symbolism associated with the games. In connection with the distributed source base for traditional games from the past, whose elements are often inaccurate and brief, scientific studies on the various games by researchers in cultures and eras, where those games were played are very useful in the reconstruction of the traditional games (Hageman, 2005: 1-7).

The development of ethnographic research and ethnic studies visible from the beginning of the nineteenth century also expanded the base of sources describing traditional games in a precise way. The nineteenth century also founded the first studies dealing only with games or folk entertainment. An example of it is a Polish work *Gry i zabawy różnych stanów w kraju całym, lub niektórych tylko prowincjach* [Games and fun in various states across the country, or only some provinces] written by Łukasz Gołębiowski in 1831 (Gołębiowski, 1831). Ethnographers began to undertake the study of games and not only of the native population, but also of foreign nations and peoples. Examples of this type are works of Stewart Culin (Lawrence & Wythe, n.d). Works of researchers of different cultures are also useful (Kabzińska-Stawarz, 1983). Ethnographic descriptions are one of the best sources of information about the old traditional games. An important part in the development of this type of work played descriptions made by travellers such as German geologist Karl Sapper (1906) or Thomas J. Collins (Culin, 1907: 140). Thanks to those two travellers and Lieve Verbeeck we have today a good game – Puluc called also bul. Puluc is traditional ritual board game of Mayas played during important feasts, for example the vigil before the day of planting corn (Verbeeck, 1998). This game belong to the type of cross and circle games, though the board of this game at first sight is not similar to other games of this type, like Indian Pachisi or Aztec Patolli (Cross and circle game, n.d.). The game is played on a longitudinal board divided into a couple or more over a dozen spaces. Players are divided into two teams which throw twice specially prepared throwing-sticks or throwing-grains of corn. A similar method of throwing is known in the games of Indian Pachisi and Korean Yut. The goal of the game is catching and taking enemies as captives and taking them to one's own base – called the home field. The player captures the pawns of the opponent, when his own pawn lands on the field occupied by the pawn of the opponent. In that case those pawns form

a stack with the capturing pawns on top. This stack is driven by the owner of the pawn on top. In the opinion of Lieve Verbeeck, Puluc symbolizes 'farmers' life' of Maya (Verbeeck, 1998). Another interpretation says that Puluc reflects the Mayan art of war.

Due to works of other travellers, anthropologists and ethnographers we know relatively much about games from the type of Mancala, which are called 'count and capture' games (Elliot Avedon Virtual Museum of Games, 2010a). In games of this type players sow (throw) grains (pawns) along a special track to fields in the shape of a hole. The player takes all the grains from one chosen hole and puts one grain into each hole on the track of the game. If, after his move, the player forms a special layout of grains on the board, then the player can take some pawns as their own points. Many different myths and tabu rules are connected with those games which can help us to understand African Cultures better. Old works describing other cultures are also useful sources. In Herodotus' works, we can find a mention of board games (Bronikowski, 1862: 44). Also Carolus Linnaeus described Tablut game which is a variation of the Lapland game called Hnefatafl (Ashton, 2010).

Other important sources of information about traditional games are special museums and archives of games and toys (Salzburg Museum – Spielzeug Museum, Deutsches SPIELEmuseum, Schweizer Spielmuseum, Elliot Avedon Virtual Museum of Games, Deutsches Spielarchiv Nürnberg). Today, very important roles in the study of traditional games are held by ethnographic cathedrals at the Universities, where researchers from different fields use their skills of historical research on board games (Das Institut für Spielforschung und Spielpädagogik). Scientists and players organize themselves in associations on a national and international level (Association of Game & Puzzle Collectors, Europäische Spielesammler Gilde, Board Game Studies Association). The effect of the work of these institutions is organizing various international conferences, in which researchers exchange their knowledge about games (Colloquium Board Game Studies Association). Another outcome of the work of these institutions and international cooperation is the issue of either individual journal publications or traditional board games (Board Games Studies). The publications of experts in the field of games such as Erwin Glonneggera (1997) or Lech and Wojciech Pijanowski (2006) are helpful.

### 3. Short History of Board Games

The origins of board games we can probably date back even to prehistoric times. Some evidences for the existence of historical games come from the land of the ancient Middle East. This is where, the first board games like Senet and Royall Game of Ur have come into being. Senet was the favorite board game of Egyptians which was played probably by representatives of all social strata, and even myths indicated that it was also the entertainment of the gods (Ruiz, 2001: 123, 167). The emergence of Senet is dated back to about 3200 BC (Glönnegger, 1997: 28). The beginning of the Twenty Squares game is dated back to 2500-3000 BC (Elliot Avedon Virtual Museum of Games, 2010c). The most famous copy of this type of a game is the Royal Game of Ur dating from 2300-2500 BC (Glönnegger, 1997: 26). Both games were played outside of the territory of their creation. Senet was played, for example, in ancient Israel (Sebbane, n.d.) and the game of Twenty Squares in Egypt was also known as Aseb (Thibault, n.d.). Researchers combine the origins of board games with primitive religious rites. Other researchers bind them with counting equipment (types of counters) (Harteveld, 2011: 9). To this day, those factors are being taken into consideration, not only in relation to the aforementioned games, but also in relation to Go and Mancala (Craig, 2002: 72). Mancala's beginnings are not clear, and it is dated back to the middle of the second millennium BC or the sixth century AD (Schädler, 1998: 1). The name of the game Mancala comes from the Arabic word 'naqal' meaning 'to move', which reflects the general rules of this game (Mancala, n.d.). In some sources we can find information that this game was invented by Arabians (Allan, Fleming, Phillips, 2012). Probably Arabians taught people from other countries of Central and East Asia how to play Mancala. However in the Near East this game could have been known before times of Arabic domination. Ulrich Schädler (1998) point that Mancala could have been played by Romans and Greeks in Roman Empire times. According to Archeological evidence from Israel we can say that Mancala was played there at the time of of the Byzantine Empire. (Sebbane, n.d.).

Another game, which can be used in rituals is Go, the most popular strategy game of the Far East. Many experts recognize this game next to Chess as the best strategy game of the world (Go, n.d.). The beginning of this game is dated back to 1000 BC, but it dates back even

to 2200 BC (Smith, 2011: Part 1). Chess, the most popular strategy game of Western civilization, has its beginning probably about the sixth century in Persia. From this period comes the oldest written source mentioning Chess (Meri & Bacharach, 2006: 148). Dated back to the sixth century, the oldest archaeological finding is also combined with Chess (Cazaux, 2012). In the same source that mentions Chess, the history of Backgammon appears (Meri & Bacharach, 2006: 148). It is probably the most popular game of chance in the world; its origins are derived from ancient games, which are observed in the Middle East and the Mediterranean basin. Until the nineteenth century, traditional board games, which were modified, dominated the culture. There were new games created, but usually we don't know their author, probably because these games were not the outcome of the work of one person but sometimes a few generations of players. Development of printing technology caused the start of games production on a massive scale. Traditional games are published in graphic design and have added details referring to colourful illustrations which decorate them. Examples of this phenomenon are *Parcheesi* (Elliot Avedon Virtual Museum of Games, 2010a) and *Luda*. They are games published in the second half of XIX century in Anglo-Saxon countries, which are modifications of the Indian board game called *Pachisi* derived probably from XVI century (Costikyan, 2005) This game was released in Germany in *Mensch ärgere dich nicht* version in 1914 (Wenzel, 2014). In this way games of the circle – cross type became traditional games of nations of all continents. Those Games are games of chance and running-fight games like Mayan *Puluc* or Aztecs *Patolli* or Indian *Pachisi* (Running-fight game, n.d.). Most of those games have boards in the shape of a circle or a cross. People have played these games for a hundred years in India, the Far East and Middle America, however in other regions these games are also well known e.g. in North and South America, Europe and Africa. In the opinion of anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, the existence of games of the same type among nations of Asia and Indian tribes of North and Central America was evidence of contact between the peoples of Asia and America before Columbus (Totten, n.d.). Not only some rules and the shape of board games connect the games of Asia and preColumbic America. In both Indian culture and in Aztec Culture the theme appears of couples of gods in love with each other. In an Aztec game, *Tezcatlipoca* and his wife *Xochiquetzal* play together (Ecola.com.pl, 2014b). In India *Siva*

and Parvati (Asian Games: The Art of the Contest, n.d.) or Krishna and Radha play together.

Another Example of the modification of the traditional Indian game is the game of Snakes and Ladders, which is an adaptation of an ancient Indian board game used to explore religious truths (Gloggenner, 1997: 53). Abstract games similar to Chess or Checkers were also created. At this time new games, like Halma, were designed under copyrights; some were quizzes and games of life (simulated life), but a lot of them were modelled on the games of the Goose or Snakes and Ladders. In this period the first copyright card games were created. They were using newly designed card sets not based on traditional card games (Whitehill, 1997). In The XIX century and the beginning of the XX century is the time of the foundation of leading board games companies like: Milton Bradley (1860), Selchow & Co (1867), Parker Brothers (1883), Schmidt Spiele (1911) (Schwarz, 2007), Hasbro (late 30-th years) (Funding Universe, n.d.). In the second half of the XX century the first publishing houses of war games were founded (Avalon Hill Company, 1954). They contributed to the development of card games and both narration and game mechanics became different from ancient board games. In the 70's first editions of ancient games like Royal Game of Ur (Selchow & Righter, 1977), Senet (Cadaco, 1977) were released. Publication of these games was connected with the development of the historical reenactment movement in the second half of the XX century (Giles, n.d.).

#### **4. Traditional Board Games as Sources and Tools for Teaching**

Games have become part of all cultures of the world. They have appeared in history from the beginning of historical times. Since ancient times games have referred to the system of values, which have been reflected on the board. Due to that fact nowadays games have become a tool of learning and understanding the symbolism of ancient peoples. Extant artifacts allow also to refer to a sense of the aesthetics of the players, the artistry of the artisan and indicate the status of the owner of these games. Members of all social strata played board games. However, the workmanship of board games, and sometimes their rules, could be different depending on the status of the owner. With this knowledge, it is possible to guess the material status of the players (Bible History Daily, n.d.). Analysis of the materials used to

manufacture the board game allows students to make conclusions about the natural resources and trade routes, the value of the raw materials from which they are made, their prevalence or rarity. Games also show us the directions of cultural exchanges, even on a global scale.

Learning the rules of games from different cultures and times introduces the student to the history of everyday life. Entrance into the world of entertainment combining *sacrum* and *profanum* shows the constancy of the needs and behaviours of people, regardless of the era and cultural area. In this way traditional board games have teaching potential. It is evident from the very beginning of contact with the game. The name of the game itself introduces the correct context, which is complemented by the rules of the game. Iconic transfer contained in the board and pawns forces us to understand the symbolism and values. The informal educational message, hidden in the formula of the game stimulates analytical thinking, logic and strategic forces to solve problems. The use of traditional games in education has many functions: incentive – arousing the interest of the students; inspiring – prompting further research and reflection discovering in this way culture circles, social and religious systems; information (cognitive) – using the game as a specific historical source, which in combination with the iconographic and textual materials from the era, make it possible to combine information from different sources; illustration – presenting daily life in different eras; summarizing – synthesizing system characteristic values in a particular period.

Work with games is located in all levels of the taxonomy of learning objectives: knowledge, skills and attitudes of cognition. Use of games allows use of imagination and skill generalization, comparing, explaining, intellectual predisposition and a broader look at the historical sources. It can be an incentive to use the literature of the epoch and studies (including foreign), and to use the resources of the Internet, especially the websites of individual museums. That all has an influence on forming a subjective relation to the cultural heritage of past generations and gives the possibility of cultural transmission.

Use of traditional board games is possible mainly in after-school activities. Mathematicians have appreciated their value, using them in such forms of activities. This gives the opportunity for joint interdisciplinary action. In primary schools, the game can be used to

stimulate an interest in the past. In secondary schools apart from games extend and complement knowledge, and are suitable for projects on games modelled on literature.. In upper secondary schools traditional board games can be a tool to synthesize knowledge about the era and the expression of their system of values, as well as an opportunity for reflection on cultural texts.

In the case of using games in school history clubs or during school trips it is necessary to develop a system of rules of conduct. It should include an introduction by the teacher about the history and the origin of the game and containing a description of the culture circle, from which it is derived. The original forms of the game would be an important guide (who played with what and how), which will reflect the natural and social conditions of the area. Then the introduction of the rules of the game, discussion about them, and explanation of symbolism contained in the board and the pawns. Depending on the age of the students the teacher may indicate that similar games belong to one group, or that games created independently in different areas, but have similar rules. This allows students to visualize the process of interpenetration of cultures. The next step is the game. Emotions that accompany games and direct contact between the players shape a lot of social skills. Use of traditional board games can strengthen another aspect, namely learning through play. Even if in the end many students have doubts about the games' usefulness to learning history, it may, however, as Marc Bloch said, also be entertainment (Bloch, 1960: 30). After the game, it is sometimes necessary to take some time to calm down emotions, thank the players and discuss how the players liked the game. Educational opportunities of traditional board games open new fields of activity for the teacher. They provide a new way of looking at history teaching, and the universalism of games, at different levels, can play an inspiring role in the teaching process.

### **5. Using Senet in Teaching about Ancient Times**

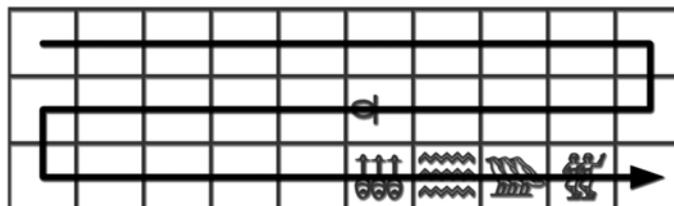
With help of Senet a teacher can pass a lot of knowledge to students. In the beginning the teacher may present the board game of Senet. This can show the difference between social strata of the ancient Egyptians and the aesthetic of the ancient Egyptians. As an example the teacher can show that some types of Egyptians pawns look more like modern pawns. Through the analysis of symbols on boards

students can better understand the symbolism of ancient Egypt. The symbols indicate the religious meaning of this game, which was mentioned in the Book of the Dead (The British Museum II). Students can discover the ancient Egyptians' belief in the afterlife by learning the rules and story of the game. The goal of the game is to move the pieces around the board passing through at least one of the specially marked squares, which is called the House of Beauty.

In religious meaning the object of the game is to take all the souls to the Egyptian reed fields (Sekhet-Aaru), which was the heavenly paradise of the ancient Egyptians. Another religious object of the game could be trying to be accepted into the gods' pantheon by winning the game (Bellessort, n.d.). At the start seven pawns per player are placed alternately along the 14 first squares. The players take turns, using four special sticks which are marked on one side to determine the moves. The number of marked sticks in the throw indicates the number of squares the player may move by, see below:

The number of marked sticks	Value of throw
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
0	5

The players continue to throw and count the throws until the unlucky number 2 or 3 is thrown. The points thrown in successive throws may be used in any order and the player may move one or more of its own pieces. The thrown points cannot be divided or added to. One square can only be occupied by one piece. The direction of the game is illustrated below:



The capturing takes place when the piece lands on the square already occupied by an opponent's piece. The captured piece moves to the square it was captured from. The pieces are protected when they are set on adjacent squares in a vertical line. The protected pieces cannot be captured. Squares are stages of path to 'heaven'. On square number 26 is the House of Happiness, also called the House of Beauty (the 'per nefer'): the place of mummification. Every soul-pawn has to stop here. The next square is the House of Waters, probably symbolizing waters around Aaru. This is an unlucky square. Every soul should avoid the House of Waters. The piece lands in the House of Waters, when it is captured on one of the specially marked squares or when the player is forced to move the piece from the House of Beauty and player has to use a throw with value 1, or when the other squares are occupied. The player can move the pawn from here directly to Heaven provided that a 4 is thrown (the player gets only one try per turn, while the rest of the player's pieces cannot be moved) or the piece may be moved back to the House of Re-birth (square 14). The next square is the House of Three Truths, also called the House of Three Gods. This square is a symbol of judgement of the soul of the deceased by three Gods (Osiris, Nephthys and Isis). Square 28 was the House of Re-Atoum (called the House of Two Truths). Additionally square 30 had the hieroglyph of the sun. This square was also called the House of the Horus. From each of these Fields the soul can reach 'heaven'. To get to Heaven from the House of Happiness, the player must throw 5, from the House of Water 4, from the House of Three Gods – 3, from the House of Two truths – 2. From the House of the Horus the player can move the soul to Aaru using any throw. It is necessary to remember, that these rules are a reconstruction on the basis of residual sources. Probably the details of the game were different in other times and regions. At the end the teacher can present a talk on Egyptian myths, in which Senet

is mentioned. The teacher can demonstrate areas of Egyptian influence by showing where Senet was played (Ecola.com.pl, 2014; Hageman 2005).

Other traditional games can also be used in teaching. Untypical rules, which are so different from traditional European games, show the uniqueness of the intellectual tradition of Africa and they show the attraction of African cultural heritage for other nations. Multitudes of versions of Mancala Games show us a variety of tribes in Africa. Mancala shows us the beliefs of African Tribes (Bikić & Vuković, 2010: 193-194). The game is used in many rituals. For example Yoruba people play this game during burial ceremonies to amuse the spirit of the dead (O'Connell M., n.d.). They play Mancala also during wedding ceremonies or 'marking the ascendance of new kings' (Ayo or Mancala Board, n.d.). Mancala boards are often very lavishly decorated. On these decorated boards we can find lots of symbols like the non-poisonous python, a symbol of life and eternity for Yoruba (ibid.). Mancala appears in Myths. For example the Masai believe, that Sindilo the first man was the first player of Mancala (Did you know ...?, n.d.). Another story describes that Mancala was invented for King Shamba as a way to fight with gambling (Allan, Fleming & Phillips, 2012). With those games many different social rules are connected, which can help us to better understand African cultures. For example in some tribes it is possible to play with people with equal status (O'Connell, n.d.). The spread of Mancala to other cultures shows us different trade routes and slavery trade routes.

Similar analysis of the description of rituals connected with Puluc games allows us to better understand the culture of Maya, which culture is still living, which many people do not know. That analysis shows how important corn is for the culture, economy, and religion of the Maya peoples. Students can discover, that the religion of Maya is syncretic and connect old Maya beliefs with Catholic rituals. Learning the rules of this game we can see how Mayas work today on the land. We can learn how war was perceived by ancient Mayas. With Puluc, students can better understand the history of the Maya people. The unusual rules of this game make Puluc very exciting entertainment. Memory of this funny game can encourage students to discover the interesting culture of Maya.

## 6. Summary

Reconstruction of traditional games and their usage in the educational process open a new field for the teacher's activity and broaden the range of used historical sources. Work with traditional board games allows students to acquire knowledge and skills and to form attitudes toward research. Traditional games allow students to participate actively in the process of cultural transmission from different eras. These games show the process of cultural diffusion and are a sign of the continuity of historical phenomena. The emotions that accompany the games and direct contact between the players influence a lot of social skills. The learning of the cultural heritage of ancient civilizations through play gives a chance to build an emotional attitude to them. Games are a universal medium with different levels of difficulty, and with adequate mentoring, can enrich the learning process.

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## TEACHING MIDDLE SCHOOL HISTORY THROUGH GRAND STRATEGY VIDEO GAMES: THE CASE OF *EUROPA UNIVERSALIS*

Piotr Podemski

*Most scholars have acknowledged that video games – or ‘electronic games in which players control images on a television or computer screen’ – have become ‘cultural artifacts [...] that invite all sorts of study, discussion, and analysis in school’ (Hutchinson, 2007: XXI). However, it is the grand strategy genre, in particular, requiring players to immerse into a complex virtual reality, ideally packed with accurate historical data while assuming responsibility for a wide range of domestic and international policy matters (and NOT just fighting battles) that deserves special attention with respect to history teaching. Many of those can be described as quality games, i.e. ones that do not only provide entertainment but can be regarded as good examples of edutainment, combining genuine enjoyment with meaningful educational gains, or ‘offer defensible explanatory models of historical systems’ (McCall 2011: 25). In the present paper the author’s intention is to share his theoretical considerations based on direct classroom experience regarding the use of Europa Universalis, a largely popular grand strategy computer game, to supplement traditional classroom-based history teaching to middle school students.*

### 1. Can History Be Taught Through Games?

It is common knowledge that to many, and too many, teachers and parents the sheer prospect of teaching history through video games will still seem an utterly appalling idea. Scholars professionally dealing with this field have found out this is due to a number of misconceptions. Most people view games in general as trivial entertainment as opposed to educational resources. They also believe since students tend to spend too much time playing computer games anyway it makes absolutely no sense for teachers to further promote such vices. In the critics’ opinion – at least partly challenged by medical and psychological research (Kutner & Olson, 2008: 2) – games are violent and thus provoke real life violence, just as they are socially isolating as players will often spend long hours in front of the screen rather than develop meaningful interactions with family and friends. When it comes to history proper, a common preoccupation is that

since players wield the power to more or less independently determine the course of action within the game reality, they will learn an alternative version of history at best, provided such a resulting sequence of fictional events can still be regarded as history at all (Hutchinson, 2007: 65-68).

However, a number of scholars have come up with rather convincing counterarguments advocating the view that in fact many, certainly not all, games can best be defined as 'multimodal texts (texts that mix words and images)' in a world in which 'the idea of different types of "visual literacy" would seem to be an important one' (Gee, 2003: 13-14). Some even go so far as to claim that 'learning systems that teach' offering 'as authentic a historical experience as possible' in the process, making them 'harbingers of a new way of learning – one that is immersive, interactive, and virtual' (Hutchinson, 2007: 6). They can, and should, serve interdisciplinary educational purposes, often difficult to pursue in a traditional classroom. It is while playing their favourite video games that young learners willingly engage in actively navigating the world and reading maps as well as they selectively collect data and carry out critical statistical analysis. Facing complex and changeable circumstances they can develop their skills of tactical analysis and situational awareness that will subsequently be applicable also in other contexts. Rather than isolation, games' enthusiasts will argue, they are more likely to enhance social stimulation through the creation of gamer communities sharing common interest, exchanging experience and opinions, thus paving the way for social interactions of a broader nature (Egenfeldt-Nielsen, 2010: 162). When associated with thrilling developments, controversial decision-making games will foster genuine debate among students making the historical content reliable to their own personal experience. And finally, they provide a rather rare, usually unavailable, occasion to develop a sense of real heart-felt empathy towards the other and the unknown as students tend to identify with the nations they play (including other races). Last but not least, if what quality games teach is alternative history it unfolds in worlds created to mirror the general historical realities and therefore even if the specific facts are wrong, the crucial gain is that, chances are, good students will develop their historical thinking, getting a grasp of the *longue durée*, the civilizational framework of what potentially could or could not happen in the given economic, social and cultural reality (Hutchinson, 2007: 145).

Other teams of experts have developed some more arguments. One point of view is that since video games have anyway grown tremendously successful and are a vital phenomenon of mass culture (according to GameTrack Digest by The Interactive Software Federation of Europe in the Third Quarter of 2014, 75% of children aged 11-14 in the UK played computer games, compared to 94% in France, 86% in Germany and 85% in Spain),<sup>2</sup> they obviously present an enormous potential for educational purposes that one certainly needs to fully take advantage of, rather than fighting the pointless battle in an attempt to ignore or challenge it. If 'learning by playing' has always been a deeply-embedded concept in pedagogy, it must be acknowledged that the natural human need for achievement and competitiveness stimulated by the games is a powerful tool generating commitment to the role, interest and motivation hardly obtainable in standard classroom history education (C. Watts et al., 2009: 14). Grand strategy games might also be perceived, with all its potential values, as a more sophisticated form of role-play, a teaching strategy widely recommended for classroom use well before the computer era (Lim et al., 2009: 208). It also comes as no surprise that in the bilingual context of Canada it has been pointed out that games can be used as powerful resources for learning specialised historical terminology in a foreign language, in particular in reference to bilingual and international classes (Meyer, 2009: 337).

To sum up – as Levstik (2008: 228) has argued – it is thanks to quality history video games that the past can be made engaging and meaningful to students, who often find 'nothing to convince them that school history has anything worthwhile to say to them'. At the same time, games have the potential to expand and supplement standard history lessons enabling students to directly experience and develop a deeper understanding of crucial metahistorical concepts such as trade, wealth, tax, time, change, cause, colony, migration, market, political literacy, which ought not to be downplayed as it implies acquiring a great deal of vital disciplinary knowledge (Lee, 2005: 32). However, it must be stressed that whether or not such a potentially beneficial impact of video games on history education can truly be appreciated depends on the general paradigm of the latter that one decides to embrace. The followers of the conservative 'great school', aiming to disseminate monumental myths regarding their nation's past, including an all-powerful master narrative and a carefully selected collection of

factual knowledge all students should bear in mind at all times, will most likely remain immune to the charm of history video games. On the contrary, those who view with favour the concept of 'New History' perceived as critical inquiry allowing learners to develop their sense of multiperspectivity and historical thinking might see quality games as a promising learning system developing key competences regardless of their factual inaccuracy (Husbands et al., 2003: 16).

## 2. Why *Europa Universalis*?

*Europa Universalis* (EU) is not simply a game since with time it has become a rather impressive grand strategy game series. It has been developed by a programmer team led by Johan Andersson working for Paradox Interactive, a Stockholm-based Swedish software company founded in 1999, in its own words 'world-renowned for its strategy catalog', including 'the critically acclaimed *Europa Universalis*'.<sup>3</sup> What can truly be described as the Paradox Interactive global success story started in 2000 when the original *Europa Universalis* (or the first version, later to be modified and enriched) was released. The game's main idea is to enable players to directly experience the complexities of leading a nation in – as Andersson himself put it – a 'believable world' featuring a great variety of political, economic, religious, cultural, diplomatic and military aspects. 'Faith, power, wealth. Global conquest and diplomacy from Columbus to Napoleon' was the official slogan of the original edition set in the early modern era historical context of profound transformations between the year 1492 and 1792.<sup>4</sup> Due to some IT concerns regarding that first version, an updated *Europa Universalis II* was promptly launched on the market in 2001.<sup>5</sup> It received a great deal of positive feedback (Metascore of 87 out of 100 according to the specialized website metacritic.com) from fans and critics who deemed it 'the best strategic game ever made', 'playable' (or even 'replayable' – 'This might be the game I've played more times in all my life'), 'amazing', 'awesome', 'hopelessly addictive', while – even more importantly from the point of view of history education – also making references to its 'amazing depth', 'complexity', 'an intriguing challenge', 'the learning curve [which] is Himalayan' or 'so much interesting information in the game, some drudgery and a lot of time spent reading statistically-based screens and news about what's happening in other parts of the world'.<sup>6</sup>

*Paradox Interactive* has taken advantage of the resulting commercial success developing a wide range of *Europa Universalis*-inspired games set in a variety of historical periods, thus de facto covering much of any school history curriculum. To educators willing to use it to illustrate the realities of different eras in history, in this way they have provided a comprehensive teaching tool. *Europa Universalis Rome*, released in 2008,<sup>7</sup> does not only allow one to play the Roman Empire but also to taste the challenges experienced by a Greek city-state, an Egyptian pharaoh or the king of Persia. Similarly, *Crusader Kings* dating back to 2004,<sup>8</sup> is a great opportunity to explore the medieval era, not only from the crusaders' standpoint as you may choose to play a Muslim kingdom and grasp some of their perception of what the wars of religion were and how crucial or insignificant they turned out to be for the history of their civilization. The early modern era, as we have seen, is covered by the original *Europa Universalis*, which – however – has been constantly facelifted in terms of its IT performance so as to satisfy the expectations of the ever more demanding market (the recent version is *Europa Universalis IV*, published in 2013<sup>9</sup>). The economic and social changes of the long 19<sup>th</sup> century, with emphasis put on industrialization and democratization, are illustrated by *Victoria. An Empire under the Sun* (the first edition in 2003, the second in 2010<sup>10</sup>), which again does not confine one's options to playing Britain and terrorizing the world into submission but also allows them to adopt the perspective of pre- and post-Meiji Japan or face the tough choices awaiting the militarily helpless Chinese emperor. The 2002 *Hearts of Iron*,<sup>11</sup> another element of the *Europa Universalis* family, requires players to solve the dilemmas of the interwar period, World War II and the early Cold War, either playing one of the dictators or a democracy or a small non-European nation that will anyway be affected by the great questions of the day, at least as far as international trade is concerned.

Apart from its wide scope and breadth, there are a number of its specific characteristics which make *Europa Universalis* worthy of serious consideration as a vehicle for history education.

An obvious educational outcome is the knowledge of historical geography. *Europa Universalis* worlds consist of an immeasurable number of provinces and regions (hundreds of them) with their historic names and characteristics (more or less populous than others, rich or poor in economic resources, with a dominant religion, more or less prone to rebel against a government). Whenever spending their

time playing the game, students are compelled to be continuously making reference to those very geographic terms they would otherwise hardly ever learned although they can turn out most useful for their general knowledge (e.g. Picardie, Viborg, Anhalt, Bryansk, Mosul, Herat, Brunei, Macau or Potosi). They also need to bear in mind the regions' individual profiles in order to exploit their potential and to avoid trouble. Furthermore, these characteristics are hardly static, being historically determined only at the beginning of the game and subsequently evolving as a result of ongoing independent processes, which the player has the tools to counteract, and/or as a result of the player's own actions. Thus learners will not only learn the physical geography of various parts of the world, but also its economic, social and cultural implications as well as the mechanisms, unavoidably simplified but still convincing, ruling global change in history and the ways they can be influenced by human-devised policies. Maps come in all shapes and colours as one can zoom in and out in order to study a region's details or the global perspective, just like they can choose thematic approaches: maps showing political boundaries, trade opportunities, commercial links, local wealth, religious divisions, social moods and reasons for tensions, each nation's territorial claims and ambitions etc. (EU4 Manual, 18-30).

Geography only constitutes a gateway to the *Europa Universalis* world as it is the key method of presenting the underlying fundamental layer of the game – the economy. Depending on its natural resources (e.g. the graphically presented raw materials available), infrastructure (roads and/or railways, workshops/factories) and human potential (population growth, level of education) – all expressed in specific numbers and constantly changing in a logically understandable way – the provinces make their contribution to the nation's wealth in terms of taxation and a given quantity of the commodity produced. These can be sold on the international market (but prices evolve so one may decide to store them awaiting a better deal in the future) or urgently needed for domestic use (e.g. even provided one has developed the necessary technology, their factories cannot produce any gunpowder if they fail to produce or obtain from foreign sources sufficient quantities of sulphur, possibly unavailable). Irrespective of how much one can afford to appropriate from their treasury (resulting from their economic policies and at times there are few opportunities e.g. when playing a nation that is hopelessly poor and economically backward),

players need to determine their spending priorities (the military, a welfare state, research and development etc.). Taxation is another complex economic issue: one needs to devise a taxation policy with reference to individual social classes (e.g. taxing the rich heavily) but if forced into misery (data on living standards for each province is always available, and changing) these may react with riots or mass scale emigration. Otherwise, if running a substantial budget deficit, one will hardly be able to make visible progress in promoting education, fighting corruption and crime, assisting the poor, building up an army and navy for protection and most importantly sponsoring research projects in order to pursue modernization. Another potential source of income might be protectionist duties on imported foreign goods but whether to embrace the liberal or the mercantilist approach is yet another policy decision to be made, with far-reaching consequences gamers need to carefully weigh (EU4 Manual, 36-47).

Most Marxists could well be satisfied with the game's determinist approach to historical explanation. Unarguably in *Europa Universalis* it is 'being [that] determines consciousness', i.e. economic realities (and adopted policies) largely shape one's chances of succeeding. Nevertheless, religions and cultures also matter in the global race. What might be considered as one of the main points of criticism towards the game's key assumptions in terms of spreading stereotypes, prejudice and ethnic or denominational labelling, an aspect of the *Europa Universalis* world is that each religious doctrine is assigned its mathematically expressed positive and/or negative characteristics which impact one's performance within the game (e.g. Catholics are presented as more loyal to authority, while Calvinism favours scientific progress and Sunnism makes its followers better soldiers eager to fight the infidels). Although those clichés might be, at least partially, historically justified they remain clichés which many people could deem offensive and unacceptable, in particular in the context of education. On the other hand, it seems unthinkable for the *Europa Universalis* team to have totally ignored this cultural-religious aspect within the game while making attempts to meticulously reflect economic and social diversities across continents. What needs to be pointed out is that players are in some circumstances free to change their state religion embracing one they deem more convenient from the point of view of their country's overall performance, yet realistically this is bound to provoke fierce resistance from the more

conservative sections of the population and is not a policy easy to enforce (EU4 Manual, 49-55).

Science and technology are another vital microcosm within any *Europa Universalis* series game. Whether in an ancient city-state, a medieval kingdom, an Indian tribe struggling to oppose European expansion, tsarist Russia or Hitler's Reich, gamers will be expected to smartly channel the resources allocated to research into specific fields (e.g. army, navy, commerce, culture, industry, within *Victoria*) and projects, all intertwined with each other and generating, as usual, a mathematically tangible aftermath (V2 Manual, 69-72). Thus in order to succeed gamers need to exercise their decision-making skills, calculating (at least estimating) alternative gains and losses for every decision. The game's internal logic will prevent any attempts at absurd strategies (e.g. attempting to develop tanks if you have no necessary industrial technologies, which in turn result from your cultural and academic progress). Hence, playing *Victoria* or any other EU game, it is unavoidable for learners to closely follow the developments in the history of science and innovation, whose at least general meaning they need to understand to be able to apply them in their own game. Terms such as combustion engine, assembly line, limited access-roads or synthetic polymers (with in-depth explanations readily available at hand) are some of those players will come across and – contrary to the traditional classroom – they will be driven to learn and use them for a purpose.

An improved understanding of historical terminology in context as a potential benefit is not exclusively confined to the economic and technological aspects. Gamers also deal with a variety of political systems and, for instance when playing *Crusader Kings*, they need to distinguish between a despotic, feudal and absolute monarchy, thoroughly defined. Again, each form of government is associated with some well-defined consequences e.g. in terms of internal stability and rebellions, innovation and conservatism etc. Provided they have developed the necessary ideological doctrines, players are allowed to change their nations' political system but since this implies a revolutionary transition it will come at a cost (a period of turmoil, riots and possibly even a civil war) (CK2 Manual, 23-40). Similarly, the demographic aspect is also presented as a rather complicated system of several interrelated elements defined using more or less sophisticated historical terms. For each province the player is provided

with a complete portfolio featuring a workforce profile (e.g. the percentage of peasants, workers, craftsmen, officials, soldiers and capitalists, for the 19<sup>th</sup> century), the ideologies dominant among the local population (such as conservatism, liberalism or socialism), their ethnic backgrounds (e.g. as a result of immigration and/or colonization) as well as the issues people in the area regard as major and minor problems facing them. Obviously, all these pieces of information matter when it comes to decision-making and the impact of these facts can be reversed or strengthened with smart social policies (players can promote industrialization, immigration or population growth in a province, if only they are willing to commit some of their resources to achieve such a goal) (V2 Manual, 26-38).

In an oversimplified vision of grand strategy games they are frequently viewed as complex mechanisms ultimately meant to allow players to wage war and satisfy their basic instincts of aggression and conquest, but that is most definitely not the case with *Europa Universalis*. Although wars are a part of each and every EU series game, within the logic of the game pointless aggression and waging war for the war's sake are strongly discouraged and severely punished. Already declaring a war with no valid reason will result in a substantial stability crisis bringing about massive armed resistance from one's own population, which can seriously affect one's freedom of action or even the very 'playability' (this happens when one loses control over their state). Any long war, even justified, is bound to provoke dissatisfaction and revolt so EU wars must be made quick and aimed at achieving a specific tactical goal. Even successfully conquering half of Europe, regardless of the abovementioned costs, will not result in its annexation as this needs to be accepted by the defeated enemy in the form of a peace treaty (EU4 Manual, 66-73). Thus it does not pay out to fight incessant wars since risks are huge and potential gains negligible. Finally, if one follows the policy of starting short and successful wars one by one, one's international prestige will suffer greatly and the ultimate result will most likely be that they will be confronted by an all-powerful grand coalition which they will not be able to match with their own military potential. Therefore, it can be claimed that *Europa Universalis* is certainly not a computer game spreading violence. On the contrary, while playing it learners will be taught a lesson on how ruling a state is not exclusively, or even primarily, about commanding your armies and that all wars ultimately

prove costly and destructive to all belligerents. In full accordance with the principles of the 'New History' pedagogy *Europa Universalis* encourages players to focus on the economic and social aspects of history, instead of seeking their glory on the battlefield.

Even if it is the historical realities of the *Europa Universalis* world, irrespective of the actual course of action players will choose to pursue, that perhaps constitute its greatest educational value, real historical facts as they happened in history are also present in the game. Whatever the player's individual decisions regarding the nation they play, historical events will continue to happen in the outside world and they will affect the player's own situation. Tribes of barbarians will be exerting pressure on the Roman limes in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, Pope Urban II will proclaim a crusade in 1095, Columbus will present the Spanish monarchs his idea of an expedition to the West in 1492, the Spring of Nations will break out in 1848 and Adolf Hitler will come to power in 1933. The basic assumption is that apart from the predictable developments resulting from logical processes, some events in history have caught humanity by surprise and this element of uncertainty should not be excluded from the game. On the one hand it teaches learners that history should not be interpreted as linear in purely deterministic terms, while on the other it leaves the necessary space for some factual knowledge to be passed on to the players. In fact, this seems yet another vital educational aspect as playing each nation one gets familiarized even with some less known problems and events from its past e.g. the Lollard heresy in medieval England, which is certainly more than an average middle school student abroad would have learned in the classroom. Whenever a historic event occurs, it is explained with a few lines of text and normally, if affected, players are confronted with a choice of policy to be adopted in reference to the new problem (CK2 Manual, 15-28). Needless to say any decision will be followed by specific consequences, hence one is motivated to study the options carefully in order not to provoke a major crisis. Therefore, even if teaching specific facts can hardly be a goal of a computer video game, thanks to its delicate balance between players' freedom of choice and real historical processes going on around them, *Europa Universalis* actually does provide gamers with an impressive quantity of valid and accurate factual knowledge.

To sum up, the player's overall achievement is measured by a combination of various factors, e.g. in *Victoria*, including the country's

population and its level of literacy (education), the number of provinces and factories, the armed forces, but also international prestige, accumulated capital reserves, the degree of political freedom and social welfare one's subjects are allowed to enjoy. Here again, it is well visible that the vision of history in *Europa Universalis*, simplified for the sake of 'playability', actually offers a well-balanced formula for explaining historical complexities and considerable educational benefits, while it is certainly not an instance of easy (and violent) entertainment for blood-thirsty teenagers.

### 3. How To Do It? An Example of Good Practice

Since *Europa Universalis* may be deemed useful in history education, what seems necessary is reflecting upon the ways it ought to be introduced into a broader context of school history curricula. The proposals below stem from such a theoretical reflection as well as a direct experience of working with *EU* in the classroom.

The proposed target group is middle school pupils (aged 13-16 within the Polish system of education which the author represents) who have achieved – according to Piaget's classic approach – the formal operational stage, 'characterized by increased abstract thinking and the use of metacognitive skills', making adolescents 'able to think abstractly about possibilities, and to compare reality with things that might or might not be' (J. Watts et al., 2009: 336-337). Taking into consideration the quantity of information *EU* players need to acquire in order to use the game sensibly and successfully, younger age groups ought to be excluded. High school pupils, on the other hand, will most likely already consider the game full of unacceptable excessive simplifications judging it by the standards of the pre-academic preparation they are offered at this stage.

Another vital issue concerning one's teaching strategy is working within a suitable timeframe. Since playing any full *Europa Universalis* campaign, including the time necessary for reading the instructions and understanding the mechanics of the game world, will rather take several days than several hours, it needs to be carefully planned as an auxiliary extra activity for volunteers willing to improve their knowledge of history, accompanying the study of a given section of the curriculum at school (i.e. *Europa Universalis Rome* while studying the ancient world in the classroom, *Crusader Kings* when studying medieval

Europe, *Europa Universalis IV* for the early modern era, *Victoria* for the 19<sup>th</sup> century world and *Hearts of Iron* when dealing with the causes, practices and effects of World War II). Hence, for instance, if the school history curriculum allocates twenty teaching hours to the study of medieval Europe with two teaching hours of history every week, this will give the student ten weeks to play a full *Crusader Kings* campaign (one hour every two or three days) to strengthen the knowledge of the Middle Ages resulting from the concurrent lessons in the classroom. Within this strategy the teacher's role will be confined to carrying out a classroom demonstration of the game (a warm-up phase) in order to raise the students' motivation as well as to assigning them specific roles and tasks as guidelines for using the game. Teachers might consider it purposeful to make sure students play a variety of nations, in particular those crucial from the point of view of the diversity of their experiences in the given period, which can provide a smart start for the follow-up phase. Multiplayer mode can be used with students allowed to play together in the school computer room or organizing session to play via the internet from their homes. Alternatively, individual students could play independently only to compare and contrast their impressions at the end of the entire project.

What is absolutely crucial, indeed, is the already mentioned follow-up phase which allows teachers to make sense of the activity and render the experience pedagogically meaningful. Depending on the scenario of using the game adopted, the follow-ups might differ, however they certainly ought to include a plenary classroom discussion of the results. Specific questions asked may vary from the most general ('What did you learn about the Middle Ages from the game that you hadn't known before?', 'What fact, phenomenon or event struck you most?') to the more analytical ones ('What were the strengths and weaknesses of the nation you played?'; 'What were the turning points in the history of this nation?'; 'What were the greatest successes and the worst errors you made and was there a better alternative?'; 'Why did you decide to declare war on this country?'). Such a discussion will enable individual students to share their experience, emotions and knowledge while bringing up some historically valid topics to the whole class. After learning by doing or – to be more precise – learning by playing, it will also make history a heart-felt account of students' own stories, making history their story. Otherwise in order to practice the art of historical narration, as a part of the follow-up phase students

can be asked to write short accounts of the ‘histories’ of the nations they played requiring them to cope with the selection of facts and to develop their own historical interpretations. Individual accounts can subsequently be cross-read in the classroom to look at the similarities and differences in how the same historical period can be perceived by different communities worldwide.

However, a number of problems can be anticipated that need to be addressed at different stages of the proposed activity. Taking into consideration the common misconceptions regarding computer games and their (non-existent) role in education, some parents and co-teachers may not show enough understanding towards the teaching strategy of making students learn history through playing *Europa Universalis*. This can be the case as such methods remain relatively uncommon and innovative in the everyday school reality and hence may not be appreciated. Moreover, since *Europa Universalis* has been popular with players worldwide, there is a good probability students might be getting excessively attracted and spending too much time in front of the screen, to the detriment of their other duties. Concerned parents will seldom associate students’ engagement in playing a grand strategy game with increased motivation to learn history. Another problem is the gender factor: research has shown that ‘due to different interests and preferences’ probably ‘grounded already in infancy and socialization [...] males have been found to prefer strategy, action, adventure, sports and simulation games. [...] The reason or motivation to play computer games has also been identified to differ between genders’: whereas for male players a vital factor is ‘achievement’, for females it is ‘relationship’ (Steiner et al., 2009: 152). Thus it is hardly surprising and corroborated by the author’s direct classroom experience that most boys are more likely to enjoy playing *Europa Universalis* than most girls and little can be done to alter this. Some students – girls or boys – can also feel overwhelmed with the quantity of information the game authors expect them to digest before being able to enjoy playing it. This will probably exclude some less motivated students from participating in the activity. Depending on the kind of individual pupils’ motivation (success or knowledge?) some may also choose to economize on their effort by resorting to the published ‘tips’ or unfair modes of winning the game without any knowledge or decision-making thanks to unlimited resources of cash, manpower or any commodities one normally has to strive hard for. If this happens,

any attempts at edutainment fail and playing for the fun of an easy win turns out to be far more powerful than one's assumed ambitions in the field of education.

#### 4. Conclusion

The ideas presented above should exclusively be understood in terms of some suggestions and proposals to be critically considered. Undoubtedly, there are many other (and perhaps better) ways *Europa Universalis* can be used for history education, and there certainly exist other games one could regard as much more appropriate for classroom and/or educational use. It is all a question of the educator's own initiative and individual teaching style. The one point that certainly deserves to be made, though, is that video games, a powerful and influential element of mass culture probably destined to grow further in the future, must not be ignored or challenged by educators refusing to acknowledge its educational potential. Whether we wish it or not, adolescents who happen to be our students will continue to spend extended periods of time at their computers and it is our responsibility as educators to find both attractive and pedagogically meaningful ways of exploiting those games, which in turn may even provide us with unprecedented new opportunities to make history again relevant to the lives and experiences of contemporary teenagers.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/video%20games> (30.01.2015).

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.isfe.eu/sites/isfe.eu/files/attachments/gametrack\\_european\\_digest\\_q3-14.pdf](http://www.isfe.eu/sites/isfe.eu/files/attachments/gametrack_european_digest_q3-14.pdf) (10.04.2015).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.paradoxplaza.com/about-us> (30.01.2015).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.worldcat.org/title/europa-universalis-1492-1792-faith-power-wealth/oclc/54687839> (30.01.2015).

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.worldcat.org/title/europa-universalis-ii/oclc/49980714&referer=brief\\_results](https://www.worldcat.org/title/europa-universalis-ii/oclc/49980714&referer=brief_results) (30.01.2015).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.metacritic.com/game/pc/europa-universalis-ii> (30.01.2015).

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.worldcat.org/title/europa-universalis-rome-spqr/oclc/298485305> (30.01.2015).

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.worldcat.org/title/crusader-kings/oclc/57240176&referer=brief\\_results](https://www.worldcat.org/title/crusader-kings/oclc/57240176&referer=brief_results) (30.01.2015).

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## EDUTAINMENT IN GLOBAL HISTORY

Urte Kocka

*Since 2012, the TV documentary 'Mankind: The Story of All of Us' has been trying to show problems and turning points in history both of importance and influence for the whole world. It is made as entertainment, but aims to educate as well. It shows mainly how dependent humans are on nature's gifts: the possibility of human ingenuity for inventions and entrepreneurship means that nature provides us, as a species, with everything we need for a life which is good and ever improving. The documentary has the optimistic outlook that humankind – with its potential for collective learning – will avoid those dangers with the power to destroy life and the earth.*

### 1. Introduction: Visual Media in History Classrooms

New media have spread worldwide! They have become mass-phenomena, and some writers consider them to contribute to democratization around the world, and in particular, 'the art of film-making' (Schul, 2014: 15), because it is easily accessible to everybody in the world. Whichever way we look at it, the worldwide visualization of national and regional lifestyles and their historical backgrounds in movies, documentaries, and video games is a matter of fact, and one which needs to be considered by historians and teachers. Young people nowadays are living in a world of digitalization, worldwide communication, and visual culture. In many cases this digital world makes up a large part of their everyday life. And given that media products are commercialized, they will sell best if they are entertaining; if they bring fun and excitement to a large number of people. Historical topics seem to serve these purposes very well, at least an immense number of movies, documentaries and video games deal with history topics from all parts of the world. These visual products are everywhere and cannot be ignored. Therefore it would seem important that history classes should pay more attention to them.

Even traditionally you can't think of history classes without pictures as visual sources and interpretations of history. The same is true for movies. History related movies have even been interpreted as being the 'Gateway to History', and heralded as being able to 'increase (the students') enjoyment of the subject' (Weinstein, 2001: 29, 30).

Historical simulations in computer games are thought to be ‘an educational strategy that combines fun and the game [...] for cognitive development’ and ‘an active form of mental exploration, which calls for creativity, thinking skills, and thinking’ (Corona et al., 2011: 409). Concerning documentaries it is said that ‘Young Adults enjoy viewing non-fiction’ (Phillips & Teasley, 2010: 51). All these positive and enthusiastic judgments of visual media demonstrate how the entertainment value of these products seems to have been documented.

Films and electronic materials present history in a playful way and hopefully allow learning to happen through fun and pleasure. This is not always guaranteed in the presentation of content given by teachers and textbooks! And we know from educational research that visualization and fun help to memorize, think, and learn about the past in a more long-lasting manner.

Of course, the inclusion of computer based interactive learning platforms in history classes is more or less well established; even history textbooks nowadays can’t do without virtual help and refer to internet links and DVDs, as well as creating their own software for teaching and learning history in addition to the traditional print-editions they use. These materials for history classes are mostly well done from the perspective of some history didacticians and textbook publishers, and are used by teachers and students in the classroom or for homework.<sup>1</sup> But these materials do not seem to be designed for the purpose of entertaining and pleasurable learning. Critics say that all these already used and established materials have the same effect as a teacher lecturing on a history topic in an oral presentation (Sénécheau, 2012: 212).

My paper deals with an entertaining TV documentary being shown outside the classroom for everyone, both students and adults at home. I will concentrate on the TV documentary ‘Mankind: The Story of All of Us’,<sup>2</sup> and touch briefly on the TV documentary ‘Big History’. They were produced in the same context, at the same time, using some of the same film shots, and their specific characteristic is their global scope and global impact.

What about their educational value? What about dealing with them in history classes?

In my opinion Big History as a relatively new approach to history and its media appearance in everyday historical culture is necessary and welcome in the age of globalization.

## **2. Documentaries as Film Production for Edutainment**

Most documentaries are shown on TV channels; they are made for everyone. They belong to our historical culture, and there are a lot of them. At least three different kinds of documentaries are shown (Fieberg, 2012: 10): one, which really wants to communicate a major historical event for educational purposes to a broad public (e.g. a centennial event); two, the documentary drama, which dramatizes an event to stress an unbelievable side to what happened (e.g. the murder of John F. Kennedy), and a third type sets in scene an epoch or an event as living history (e. g. location and clothing are reenacted). Frequently all three formats can be found in one and the same documentary. This is the case in the two above-mentioned documentaries. The central question is: How and with what intention are the documenting materials combined with the commentaries of the speakers or with fictional film episodes? (Fieberg, K. 2012, 10) In order to judge the educational aim and the intention of the documentary, it is necessary to know the time, circumstances, and contexts when and in which the film was produced, and how the filmmaker constructed the past. Many documentaries tell more about the time in which they were made than about the past that they are looking to document.

But in many cases the audiences take documentaries as 'real history', history as it 'really was', the historical truth. In this respect it is very important for the audiences to know how to interpret and analyze documentaries and find out for what purposes the documentary was made and what messages it set out to convey. In history classes, already in early school years, digital and visual literacy has to be taught. According to Phillips and Teasley (2010) 'Teachers should help students to recognize that these films are works of art constructed by film-makers to tell a story or present a particular point of view' (p. 52). If students pick up 'critical tools' for analyzing documentaries, they will hopefully use them 'for the rest of their lives' (Phillips & Teasley, 2010: 55).

For that reason documentaries are not only entertainment in history, but also education for learning about history in a reflective

way. Many publications in history didactics provide good advice on how to train and reach critical visual literacy and critical historical thinking. The documentaries introduced here are worthwhile for discussion and for the purpose of learning the mentioned skills in history classes.

### **3. Documentaries with a Global Impact: 'Mankind: The Story of All of Us' and 'Big History'**

#### *3.1 The Context*

Both documentaries were produced for nearly 2½ years in the U.S. and they started to be shown worldwide in November and December 2012, in 12 and 16 episodes, week by week. They belong together, even using a lot of identical film shots. They have to be seen in the broader context of Global History, which started to be taught in the U.S. in the 1960s, first at universities, but in the 90s also at colleges and at high schools, in addition to Western Civilization Courses and National History (Dunn, 2009: 55-69). Global History tries to stress the connection between countries, the cross-cultural influences, and interrelations across borders. It brings new questions and perspectives to history as it is traditionally taught, reflecting more and more the globalizing world and the world being perceived as ONE world. Curricula of this kind of Global History for high schools were written and adapted more and more, in colleges as well (Dunn, 1996: 31-39).<sup>3</sup>

One of the authors of these curricula was David Christian, a historian teaching in the U.S. as well as in Australia.<sup>4</sup> His idea of history reached even further in that it went beyond the history of humans. He wanted to show the interconnectedness of human history and the evolution of the cosmos, the inclusion of human history in cosmological occurrences, starting from the Big Bang, coming up to the present and looking to the future. He calls his approach 'Big History'. He introduces this in the opening of the documentary 'Big History'.<sup>5</sup>

In 2008 Bill Gates, the founder and chairman of Microsoft and a philanthropist, saw an online version of Christian's Big-History-College-Course and got excited about the idea of teaming up with Christian to start a Big History project, being offered 'to a broader audience'. They decided to work on a free online version of a Big

History course for high school students and ‘independent learners’.<sup>6</sup> For this purpose the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation financed a team of researchers and advisers from universities and high schools who worked on this Big History Curriculum and Project. In 2011 David Christian gave an 18-minute lecture about his idea of Big History at the TED-Conference in Long Beach, CA, where he was given standing ovations.<sup>7</sup> This date is said to be the time of launching the whole project. The curriculum itself was launched in 2013/14. Nowadays hundreds of high schools around the world are teaching interdisciplinary ‘Big History’ following this curriculum.

### 3.2 *The Purpose and Aim of ‘Big History’ and the ‘Story of All of Us’, Spread Worldwide in TV Documentaries*

They are described as ‘the attempt to understand, in a unified way, the history of Cosmos, Earth, Life and Humanity from the Big Bang through the present in an interdisciplinary way.’<sup>8</sup> Christian and Gates are driven in a missionary way to propagate Big History, because of their great concern about the future of the world with all its environmental problems and natural catastrophes, but they also think in an optimistic way about the ability and possibility of collective learning, which is said to be unique for the human species. They try to give their Big History Project high educational value and promote it worldwide.<sup>9</sup>

Big History and the history of humankind fit together. Big History includes the history of the whole globe. It claims to bring together science and humanities. Humankind is shown as part of the cosmos by its genesis, by the function of the body, including the brain, and by its ability to use the resources of nature for the further development of earth and life. All human history, all artifacts and inventions are related to and included in cosmological, biological, geological, anthropological evolution, changes and developments. In this understanding human history and cosmological development are a combined, shared, single history: one story.

### 3.3 *Mankind. The Story of All of Us’*

This documentary has 12 Episodes:<sup>10</sup> They are: 1. Seeds of Change, 2. Iron, 3. Rise of the Empire, 4. Fall of the Empire, 5. The Plague, 6.

Rebirth (Survivors), 7. The Others (New World), 8. The World Tilts West (Treasure), 9. Wilderness (Pioneers), 10. Revolution (Revolutions), 11. Speed, 12. New Frontiers. Titles vary a little from country to country due to translation and the interpretation of the historical events, but the content is the same. In the twelve episodes the 'Story' starts with the Big Bang and develops to the first humans in Africa, food gatherers and hunters. Agriculture and settlements brought more and better food and living conditions. The struggle for food and even better living brought trade and new inventions, but competitors and war at the same time. It is said that the Egyptian Chariot led to mass-warfare.

All 12 episodes are structured in the same way: humans use nature's gifts, which provide food and shelter, wood and metals for tools, warfare and communication. The striving for inventions of new and better tools and technologies is shown as a constant characteristic of human history through the centuries with the aim of a better and more comfortable life, even if it is only gained by warfare to conquer enemies and competitors.

In this documentary education and entertainment go very closely together: the documentation of cosmological evolution is presented in entertaining simulations; we see for instance the Big Bang, cell mutation, dinosaurs, the ancestors of humans, the first humans, as well as asteroids, hitting the earth and volcano eruptions. The education is provided through explanations from well-known American scientists, e.g. physicists, biologists, anthropologists, geologists.

In a similar way, the documentary uses archaeological evidence when looking at human history, it presents human and animal bones, caves, firestones, tools, technological artifacts, and architecture dating to the present, which are then explained and dated by archeologists and historians. The slowly developing and advancing human history is entertainingly reenacted by professional actors and actresses as living history in a lot of colorful, dramatic scenes.

To make the inventions and historical events evident and believable, experts and researchers in the humanities explain and interpret them as important turning points in human history, e.g. the building of cities and empires, the settlement on conquered land, the promotion of trade and communication up to the present day. They are shown as demonstrations of progress and are presented as important in terms of the changes they made on human lives and history in the whole world.

Over all there is a persuading narrator, a so-called ‘Voice of God’ (Schul, 2014: 16), a well-known male voice, in the U.S. for instance this was the voice of Brian Williams, who presents the daily news on the NBC TV station. In other countries, where the documentary was and is still shown, there are other well-known male voices as narrators. They explain in a persuasive way the missing links between the episodes, e.g. the interconnectedness of empires and their fall which had consequences for the whole world, and also explain natural catastrophes such as severe draught, which forced the Mongols to leave their land and conquer other land and change the world.

The entertainment does not only come with colourful fictional plays and scenes, but also with a lot of surprising aspects: e.g. the small and easily manoeuvrable horses of the Mongols being themselves a war weapon, or the finding of the pathogenic agent of the cholera by observation and experiments in a slum-quarter in the city of London in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or a lot of war-scenes with newly invented weapons through the centuries up to the atomic bomb.

Students may have seen the documentaries outside the classroom. If they do not attend a school teaching the Big History Curriculum, they probably will have questions e.g. about the meaning of Big History. A fundamental discussion for all students – also for those, who did not see the documentaries – may take place about humans’ dependency on cosmological occurrences and environmental changes.

The teacher may as well decide to show one or two episodes in the classroom in order to analyze and interpret them and to train critical visual literacy and critical historical thinking in the sense of the ‘Evaluation’ I have proposed.

It is true, Big History is criticized by historians for not being precise and detailed enough.<sup>11</sup> But given its engagement and concern for environmental problems it is necessary to know about it and about the documentaries in order to discuss the mentioned problems in and outside the schools because these problems belong to our historical culture and everyday life.

### 3.4 *Evaluation*

#### 3.4.1 *Mission and warning*

There is an assertive educational mission and warning in the documentary: the thresholds of technology and inventions have to be considered as well as their potential danger to challenge the basic resources of the globe, the environment and life. Humans have to take care of nature and the environment for their own benefit, applying their ability for collective learning, which is judged optimistically to be growing in speed and capacity to cope with future dangers. In this respect, in a time of much environmental concern for the whole world this kind of historical edutainment makes sense and is welcome.

#### 3.4.2 *Innovative global perspectives*

Moreover there are new elements and innovative global perspectives in the film, which are important in a time of globalization. The didactical and methodological structure of the whole film matches with some principles of Global History as it is presently practised: The film does not show special events in national or cultural history just for their own sake. It shows turning points in human history. This history slowly develops by combining natural resources with human inventions which changed history for a great many people, nations and cultures. They are presented with the help of generalizing notions and concepts, so that national, regional, local history events can be integrated into more complex and connected narratives of encounters with other humans or other environmental conditions. To give two examples: The history of – to Westerners – not so well known countries and regions is mentioned, e.g. that of Timbuktu in West Africa or of the Easter Island in the Pacific, but with respect to their role in world history until today – it is recounted for instance that the gold of Timbuktu gave cause for a broadening of trade between regions. The cutting down of all the trees on the Easter Island – because the trees were mainly needed to transport the giant head statues they were building for their gods – is presented as a warning example of an environmental catastrophe and the end of human history on the island.

### 3.4.3 *The story of one world*

The documentary wants to show the story of *one* world, in which humans keep their history going by their constant abilities and predispositions of curiosity, ingenuity and entrepreneurship, interconnected by a lot of globalizing actions. This interpretation of the human species fits very well into a time of fast changes and transformations of traditional life styles in a globalizing world. But the film does not talk at all about the disadvantages for the people who are left behind.

### 3.4.4 *Eurocentrism*

The 'Story of All of Us' will convince many viewers because in most episodes it follows the traditional – and to Europeans and North Americans well known – paths in the presentations of Western Civilization, now stretched out to the whole world by special events, turning points and inventions, which are seen as influential to people from all around the world. The 'western' and in a lot of episodes Eurocentric perspective cannot be denied. Other perspectives of other parts of the world on this kind of interpretation of history are not incorporated or reflected.

### 3.5 *Open Questions*

Whose history is it? What about other perspectives on humankind and nature, from other parts of the world?

If collective learning is so important for the future of humankind as the documentary says, why do we see so much warfare in the documentary?

Are ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and competition, which amongst other things are used to perfect ways of killing people, really the main character traits of humans?

Is there really *one* world, *one* humankind, and *one* story? Does humankind not grow more and more diverse?

Can we really understand and explain the inclusion of human history in cosmological timings and evolution? Can we cope with them by learning and by education aimed at a more liveable and better future?

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> So in two articles which show the use of digital media in history classes: Selander (2013: 18-21) and Brink & Henry (2013: 5).

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately the title is not politically correct. It should be 'humankind' instead of 'mankind'.

<sup>3</sup> There is also an online curriculum, which is updated from time to time: <http://worldhistoryforall.sdsu.edu> 02/24/2014 Since the 90s the 'National Center for History in the Schools' at UCLA is the predominant place where these curricula for Global or New World History were written.

<sup>4</sup> Information about David Christian can be found in sources such as the British newspaper 'The Observer' 28.10.2012, 25

<sup>5</sup> His introduction in: <http://www.history.com/shows/big-history/videos> (17.11.2014) and referring to the documentary: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyXoxj6jF7c> (17.11.2014).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ibhanet.org> (26.08.2014)

<sup>7</sup> For the history of the Big History Project and for his speech at the TED Conference: <http://www.ibhanet.org> (26.08.2014).

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ibhanet.org> (26.08.2014) This is the first statement of the International Big History Association.

<sup>9</sup> In an keynote speech in Hong Kong with the title 'Big History: Education and Research in an era of Global Challenges' David Christian starts with the question of what knowledge his grandson Daniel (at that time a baby) would need when he grows up, being confronted with all the sometimes dangerous global challenges such as climate change, energy shortages, but also collaborative work across different countries and cultures. He answers by saying that he will have to have an understanding of science and humanities and need to know 'a global history' of how everything fits together. The project also wants to 'advance a major breakthrough in modern education [...], a unifying narrative, giving the big picture'. This gives rise to the need, therefore, for 'research and development of school courses, teacher training, university courses, executive courses.' <http://www.ibhanet.org> (26.08.2014) David Christian's keynote address in Hong Kong

<sup>10</sup> The documentary was advertised and reviewed as a full page article in the British daily Newspaper 'The Observer', 28.10.2012, 25. The episodes are to be seen: all 16.11.2014.

<sup>11</sup> Armitage, 2012; Schäfer, 2006.

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**THE MODERN CONTEMPORARY WITNESS  
AND HIS DOUBLE ROLE  
AS A 'HISTOTAINMENT'-FIGURE  
AND AN OBJECT OF ORAL HISTORY  
– A DILEMMA FOR HISTORY TEACHING?**

Markus Furrer

*Some historians speak of the 'birth of the contemporary witness' in the last decades; this may be observed happening in both television and exhibitions. In both these cases the authentic power of the witnesses is being used. Their narrated biographical dimensions become the essence of history. Where are the causes of this development? There are two significant aspects: First there is the growing importance of memory culture as a new paradigm. Second is the effect of consumer society. Individuals are looking for a new history, one based on feelings and events as opposed to a coolly structured history. In society we need a history with an emotional and sensual quality. So in commercial television we can speak of the career of the figure of the contemporary witness who is an important historical identification figure. As we know the production of history has become ruled by the market and consumer society. But how do we deal with the figure of the contemporary witness in classes? Do we accept the dynamics of the market? This contribution based on a theoretical framework tries to show how contemporary witnesses have to become part of contemporary history at school.*

Historians have talked of the birth of contemporary witnesses since the late 1980s. The basis of this observation lies in the strongly growing importance gained by contemporary witnesses in public perception. Parallel to this, the term 'contemporary witness' has become widespread in the German language instead of the more limited terms such as 'witness of the deed', 'eye witness' or also 'living witness'. Contemporary witnesses give testimony about the times in which they live, thus the condensed meaning.

Contemporary witnesses are predominant in the publicly conveyed view of history in mass media, in particular in TV broadcasting. On the internet, portals for contemporary witnesses provide a platform allowing each of us to share experiences and memories with others (Henke-Bockschatz, 2014). All this results in a mixed bouquet of biographical self-portrayals. As well as TV broadcasting, historical exhibitions more and more rely on the suggestive force of accounts of

contemporary witnesses. The stories told focus on what might be called a biographical ‘crystallization nucleus’ (Sabrow, 2014: 13). The contemporary witness thus becomes a leading figure of public remembrance in the new historic-cultural practices, as Saskia Handro (2014) aptly puts it. All this happens against the background of a strong societal trend towards self-historization.

Simultaneously, the role of the contemporary witness underwent a great change from criticism to affirmation: initially – and thus we look back to the 1960s and 70s – the contemporary witness stood for a democratic counter-narrative ‘from below’. In particular oral history as a method experienced a significant upswing. However, as contemporary witnesses and their victim status gained importance in public and their former counter-narrative has become a new master narrative of our times, the role of the contemporary witness inexorably changed towards affirmation. The character of the contemporary witness and the way he appears and is used in the media thus primarily serves an illustrative purpose today. The contemporary witness in the culture of remembrance has therefore only little in common any more with previous traditions of oral history research. Correspondingly, two approaches arise from this in history teaching – that is in the dealing with and the analysis of contemporary witnesses (Abrams, 2010; Bosshart-Pfluger, 2013; Wierling, 2003).

In the following paper I shall shed some light on the significance of contemporary witnesses in the media (above all in films but also on the internet and even in currently implemented museum-related pedagogic concepts). I will also consider the question of how contemporary witnesses have undergone a change.

Later I will deal with the way oral history as a method opens access to the past. As mentioned above, the culture of remembrance and historical method drift apart more and more. This again raises demands for history teaching in which skills related to history and the culture of remembrance as well as those of the historical critical method are to be taught. The new Swiss history curriculum devotes a separate section to contemporary witnesses: ‘Students are able to gain knowledge about the past from discussions with contemporary witnesses.’

Furthermore, these considerations go beyond the school context and are aimed at questions related to how society as a whole deals with remembrance. Then I will come to talk about the function and role of contemporary history and history teaching in general. Contemporary

history is a critical discourse instance and adds a specialist historical meta-reflection to teaching. This happens on two levels and needs to be made fruitful for history teaching. On the one hand, it is the analysis and reflection of the contemporary culture of remembrance and, on the other hand, it is the acquisition of a certain methodological knowledge of oral history.

## **1. The Importance of Contemporary Witnesses in the Mass Media**

### *1.1 Technological Change*

Commonly the science of history starts from the assumption that the broad focus on the past (as it can be noticed in Western industrialized countries since the late 1970s) bears features of a compensatory reaction. What this means is that in the sense of Reinhard Koselleck (2000: 331-335) the space of experience and the horizon of expectation drift apart more and more. The cultural studies scholar, Aleida Assmann, therefore also ascertains that the temporal structure of past, present and future has broken apart (Assmann, 2013: 320). Since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the transitory status attributed to the past and its actual *telos* for the future have increasingly lost their force of attraction. This fundamental change and break with the extreme experiences of violence in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the remembrance of victimhood is commonly explained as a change in perspective from heroization to victimization. This is accompanied by a change of contemporary witnesses. The recollectional moment received a strong boost with the end of the Cold War in particular and the history of previously neglected and suppressed groups of victims raised public awareness and interest. At this very point the contemporary witnesses acquired crucial importance. Yet, that alone is not enough to explain the change as Christoph Classen points out. He attributes it less to the moral-normative level initially mentioned (such as the experience of violence) but rather at the social level of modern consumer society and the media-isation connected with it (Classen, 2012: 310-311). The way modern consumer society has developed in the West with the social revolution (Eric Hobsbawm) since the post-war period the relationship between the individual and the world has fundamentally changed. The market model with the underlying

principle of competition has tended to pervade all spheres of life. Along with this, there has been a permanent production of new and unexpected things, which is crucial to our discipline, whereas at the same time experiences have been devalued and traditional ties dissolved. This change also entails social pluralization, individualization and a decrease of norms, which at the same time and at a broad level contributes to feelings of loss with respect to structure and order. This in turn evokes a longing for 'security in time' (Jörn Rüsen). And therein Classen also locates the 'career of contemporary witnesses' in commercialized TV broadcasting since the 1980s.

When it comes to media and contemporary witnesses it needs to be said that media are important prerequisites for preserving memories. Also the distribution of interviews needs a media environment and it is often a media event that then triggers an impetus for remembrance and that evokes the wish to give testimony (Keilbach, 2012: 281). What has now arisen more strongly since the 1980s is the fact that remembrance and consumerist modernity go hand in hand. The media have reacted to the obvious need for endowing history with meaning. In the 1980s a real boom of privatization took place with respect to audiovisual media. Processing history on TV was thus oriented towards the laws of the market and consumer society. Therein the contemporary witness embodies, as it were, the subjective, life-biographically connoted capturing of time and stands for the pluralization of perspectives as well as the emotional foundation of the paradigm of remembrance (Classen, 2012: 314). Thereto Classen (2012: 315-316) points out: 'The audiovisual representation of the people mostly filmed in close-ups who (often noticeably moved) disclose their experiences creates the impression of closeness and immediate involvement. Voice and mimics, even more the signs of emotion such as tears and speechlessness create a para-social space for interaction which corresponds to the gesture of the immediate live experience in the medium of TV.' It is now crucial that the audience when watching history-related TV broadcasts especially, in contrast to fictional movies, perceives all that they see as 'true' and 'authentic'. The picture medium is anyway already associated with the assumption that pictures provide objective images of reality. The contemporary witness here joins in as well. All that relies on individual testimonial biographies and on eye-witness accounts will be perceived as 'true' and 'genuine'.

### 1.2 *Need for Authenticity*

A need for authenticity is connected with the above-mentioned. Authenticity is something that is ascribed to contemporary witnesses in particular. According to Sabrow (2012: 27) contemporary witnesses are a kind of 'historical relic'. Authenticity arises from a broad cultural need for an immediate encounter with the past. Authenticity stands for 'guaranteed', 'genuine' and 'reliable'. An experience is more important if it is authentic (Pandel, 2012). Today's society does, however, not at all long for the return of the past in a nostalgic sense but much rather wants to ascertain that past times are really over and the horrors and uncovered grievances will not repeat themselves. Historical broadcasts are faced with the public's demand for authenticity. Evoking and creating feelings of authenticity with the audience is even a necessity for a successfully conveyed media understanding about the past. And in this context again the contemporary witness stands for this authenticity. With his face he, as it were, stands for the truthfulness of a pact between producer and audience by guaranteeing the historical statements of the broadcast (Gries, 2012: 54).

And where genuine contemporary witnesses cannot be asked and shown any more, the medium resorts to the means of fiction of authenticity. In concrete terms, this means that professional actors instead of 'genuine' contemporary witnesses evoke emotions in the audience and ensure 'projection surfaces' and opportunities for identification. As a starting point the 1979 US TV series 'Holocaust' stands for this approach.

The function thereby is it again to enable to attribute horrors and grievances to the past. Aleida Assmann (2013: 320-321) explicitly points out this mechanism. She observes that in today's world nobody can feel secure with respect to the past anymore and thus states that the concept of the past had broadened and would thus need considerable awareness. The consequence of this: whereas the past more and more impacts on the present, the power of a future that should promise better living conditions wanes.

### 1.3 *Biography as a Model*

Biographical references have become more and more popular over the past decades. Historians put this down to the desire for models in unclear and complex times. In particular biographical references lend

themselves to models that show us how people act on an individual basis. They have also always had and still have high entertainment value. Biographies about great men sit on the bookshelves in sitting rooms of the educated bourgeoisie. As a rule, media presentations of contemporary witnesses (prime examples are the film excerpts of the media historian Guido Knopp, who was heavily criticized in Germany) do, however, not present their biography but aspects from their life and, moreover, accounts are conveyed in extracts and as illustrations often totally out of historical context. The problem lies in reduced presentation and simple affirmation. It is also in this context where media presentation and the use of portrayals of contemporary witnesses strongly differ from the method of oral history as well as critical biographical research. Contemporary witnesses in the media as well as in museums today lack that critical function the way oral history processes it. The media's contemporary witness much rather resembles a living place of remembrance and satisfies the public desire for authentic encounters.

## 2. Oral History as a Method

This leads us to reflect on some aspects of the method of oral history. In historical sciences oral history is a specific procedure of contemporary history aimed at collecting accounts about experiences from contemporary witnesses. This method is still young and dates back to the 1940s. It is – and therein lies the difference from older oral methods – based on technological developments which, in the first place, made it possible to develop a method of systematically collecting reports from sources by means of interviews and of subsequently analyzing them (Bosshart-Pflugger, 2013: 136). Lynn Abrams (2010: 9) thus distinguishes four forms of oral history and makes a difference between the original interview, the recorded interview, the analysed transcript and the interpretation of the interview, respectively.

Oral history draws from the large reservoir of impressions which are stored in people's mind and from which they recall individual inter-linked elements in the act of remembering (Wierling, 2003: 94). This leads us to the critical question concerning the value of the source of memories. Johannes Fried, who has sketched out a 'neuro-cultural science of history', calls for research critical of the mind. Whoever draws from memory-based testimonies – and these also exist in numerous written forms – has the burden of proof (Fried, 2004: 376).

From memory research we know that memories are not simply images of experiences and not even of immediate subjective experiences but that they are reproductions of pictures embedded in complex biographical layers of experiences. In particular there are those memories that go back to especially impressive or dramatic experiences – moreover, also those that take place again and again in daily life and are of routine nature. For this the image of priming is used. But also permanent or momentary blockades of interconnected memories by stress phenomena or fear are well known as well as interferences, that is stoppages and black-outs and disturbances by concurrent or underlying memories. In cognitive psychology remembrance is neither seen in the sense of a simple storage or retrieval model nor in a radically constructivist sense as a mere product of the present (Erl, 2005: 84). The knowledge value of accounts recalled from memory for historical reconstruction lies in providing insight into a process of processing, constructing and finding meaning characterized by strong emotions. Furthermore, it is important to know: interviewees always recall experiences from the perspective of the present. Behind this, however, the effects of social relations and collectives are concealed but not their image. Therein lies the core of what makes the interviewees representatives of history according to Dorothee Wierling. The knowledge interest of a historical analysis thus lies in the historical experiences of the interviewees. Life stories refer to experiences of the past that left deep traces with people as well as to patterns of interpretation in the present (Frings & Kaminsky, 2012: 138).

The contemporary witness constitutes one of the particularities of contemporary history standing for what is in comparison to other epochs, a dynamic and not yet finished process and bestows it with an intense way of passing down experiences (Steinbacher, 2012: 145). What is more, oral history enables the ‘working out’ of the contradictions and manifoldness of experiences (Dejung, 2008: 114). The final purpose of interpretation is therefore not certainty but plausibility (Wierling, 2012: 129). By means of historical reconstructions we do not create truth either but empirical validity (Jörn Rüsen). All this contrasts with the medial contemporary witness and the diffuse common understanding that broad sections of the population as well as our students acquire by consuming television history.

### 3. Demands on History Teaching

An area of tension has thus become evident that also arises when teaching contemporary history. The contemporary witness who is of high importance with respect to almost all questions and access possibilities has a double role: on the one hand, in particular in the environment related to the culture of remembrance, he is a significant figure of identification and, on the other hand, for the historical science analysis he is a crucial object of research. Tensions are thus implicit. How can one deal with them in history teaching?

In schools one has no option but address both levels. In the sense of Hans-Jürgen Pandel (2013: 226-229) it is a question of imparting so-called 'generic skills' to students. The students' specific skills and ability to assess the contemporary witnesses used by the media on the basis of their own reflection and to also question their role thus coalesce. Factuality, fictionality and fictitiousness need to be differentiated. A kind of contrast is provided by the general insights and knowledge of the method and analysis of oral history. Even though history teaching cannot orient towards the field of professional activity of historians, insights into methods critical of sources can, nevertheless, be imparted. These insights, however, need to be linked to the everyday life of those who do not deal with history on a professional basis. And in this context, the new genres such as 'histotainment' or 'docutainment' must also be taken into serious consideration. It is in this form of conveyance of history in a broad societal context that people are confronted with history or remembrance. Thereby the science of history is given the function and role of criticism and reflection. Historical science and its methodology are, as it were, the opposite of histotainment products produced without reflection (Furrer, 2013: 30-31).

In concrete terms, this now means that it is not about battling edutainment: the use of contemporary witnesses by the mass media is to be understood as a social reality and this consequently entails requirements for teaching. At the core, it is about distanced observation and analytical exploitation of the phenomenon to which students should also have access. The following three aspects can be discerned with respect to certain methods of oral history:<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1 *Disenchantment of Contemporary Witnesses – Source-Critical Refraction*

By means of a critical approach to sources the function and role ascribed to the contemporary witness as used by the mass media can be reflected on analytically. For this purpose references to the methods of oral history that foster and promote a totally different approach to contemporary witnesses is of great benefit. Interviews with contemporary witnesses are of twofold use for historical learning: first of all, in a historic-cultural context by students critically examining testimonies with seemingly high authenticity content conveyed by the media and, secondly, as an opportunity for students to actively research by themselves by being, to a certain extent, able to be included in the entire process of gaining information and knowledge.

### 3.2 *Discussion About the Contemporary Witness' Capacity for Finding Closure with the Past*

As pointed out above, the role of the contemporary witness has changed from being a carrier of a rule-free counter-narrative (in the sense of a history from below) to a dominant figure of today that serves the purpose of illustrative authentication. This function needs to be approached within the framework of generic analyses and it must be shown in what way such mechanisms are included in edutainment-representations and what effect they have.

### 3.3 *The Question about the Satisfaction of Cultural Needs by Contemporary Witnesses*

Eventually, students need to be shown why our societies deal with the past in this way and why there exists the form of historical culture we see all around us. Thereby – and this can be put into practice by reference to the method of oral history – it is finally also about exploiting the contemporary witness as an intriguing source for the immediate past. By using this method the students' critical dealing with sources is developed as, in doing so, a source is, as it were, exploited by their own activity.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion and Outlook

Personal memories are the most widespread and most effective forms to hand down past experiences. This can be made use of in history teaching by putting methodical and didactic focus on oral tradition as an important part of historical learning. To make contemporary witnesses part of history teaching can thereby, as demonstrated, even be of double use: first of all, in a historic-cultural context by students critically examining testimonies with seemingly high authenticity content conveyed by the media and, secondly, by actively researching themselves and by means of the methods of oral history questioning contemporary witnesses. The latter approach especially with its explicit activity orientation appears to have a great effect on students as they are actively involved in gaining information and knowledge. By this method they create the sources by themselves, which not only generally sharpens their view to become critical of sources but also ensures that they approach contemporary witnesses used by the mass media with a critical attitude. The methodical skills thus acquired even seem to be a precondition for a critical media analysis. In numerous current methodical instructions on history teaching oral history has therefore become an issue. Whereas in English-speaking countries under the influence of the USA, where oral history sprang up as early as in the 1930s (Bosshart, 2013: 136-137), the method was utilized for teaching at an early stage as well (Neuenschwander, 1976), it took longer in German-speaking countries until the method found any mention in history textbooks. In 1986 Joachim Rohlfes (1986: 79) still wrote of a 'novel type of source' when referring to oral history. But meantime, the method is widely presented in historical-didactical handbooks and method manuals, even if it still lags behind other 'classical' methods. It is often mentioned that using this method is very time-consuming but that it is worth dealing more thoroughly with this source type for the above-mentioned reasons. The method sometimes finds mention in the context of project work. As in other areas, however, little is known about how the method is used and put into practice in schools. Yet, best practice examples provide some method hints. Thus, it becomes clear on what topics contemporary witnesses can be questioned by students. Here contemporary witnesses especially appear as informants illuminating areas of the history of society and everyday life (such as tourism, consumer history etc.). With increasing age students find more and more interest in questions of

the significance and meaningfulness of historical experiences and therefore in the later course of life of those questioned. Other than having methodically clear instructions as to how to interview contemporary witnesses, students also need to have dealt with the topics beforehand. Instead of an interview analysis it is proposed for the school purpose, as a first step, to make a summary and then a systematization of the account which can for example take place by means of a time bar. Students can thus establish two columns, in one of which they place the life events of the contemporary witnesses and in the other they place the most important events at that time. Such methodical instructions are basically directed towards research-based approaches as practised by oral historians (Wood, 2001; Wider, 2003; Hart, 2009). The systematic and reflective procedure required by this method, which is also applied in history teaching sharpens the students' view for historical processes. At the same time it provides a critical tool which helps live in modern consumer society.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See the comment of M. Sabrows to the contribution of Saskia Handro: <http://public-history-weekly.oldenbourg-verlag.de/2-2014-14/musealisierte-zeitzeugen-ein-dilemma/> (17.03.2015).

<sup>2</sup> Henke-Bockschatz, 2014: 11. A selection of books with relevance for history teaching are: Ernst, 2014 and Justen, 2014.

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## THE SERIOUSNESS AND FUN, WHEN EDUTAINMENT IS ASSOCIATED WITH HISTORY TEACHING

Barbara Wagner

*When looking for edutainment at the outset of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we see how important the history of wars was. It was very similar after WWI and WWII. Teachers approved when pupils played re-enacting the killings and violent scenes. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century questions are being asked once again about violence in children's play, however now edutainment is associated with modernised methods of learning, introduction of new technologies and computer games. It is difficult to formulate safe topics for edutainment, just as it would be a utopia to ban the production of 'bad toys'. Teachers are not of the same mind as to how much seriousness and entertainment should be involved in teaching history. Some teachers think of edutainment with enthusiasm, considering enjoyable and active methods of learning the most important. But there are also teachers who disapprove of playing history, claiming that history 'is fascinating as it is' and that the process of learning history can be fun.*

### 1. Introduction

Considering relations between fun and reality is an important goal of the didactic method. Imagination and fantasy provide a basis for thematic games, including those about history. But apart from this, knowledge about the past and information from school textbooks can also be treated as a part of the history-themed games. For example when the children play sailors, they want to know what a ship looked like. Teenagers, when playing an online war game want to know who won the real mediaeval battle. Children who play history games need to have knowledge about the past, because their imagination and fantasy are not enough. When they grow up and become adults, they put most effort into their professional careers and have no desire for playing. There are however some exceptions, even among the adults. Some of them also enjoy playing games that take place in the past.

Innovative approach to the issue of 'history edutainment', which is now so intriguing to us living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has a long tradition (Regiewicz, 2013). Educational history games have been known for a long time. However, we are going to start in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, passing

over previous examples (Mokrzecki, 1992) showing methods of teaching history.

## 2. The Antecedents

### 2.1 *The First Half of the Nineteenth Century*

The publication of 1827 *Polish history – a historic game in the form of a lottery*, can be easily treated as evidence that history edutainment existed in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> The title itself states that it contains a historical game arranged as a lottery. The publication comprises forty small sheets of paper. Each sheet contains the names of events and a very brief description. Each sheet contained four to seven events. The earliest event on the first sheet referred to 500 B.C. meaning the time when the Scythians arrived at the Dnieper. The last date on the last sheet was 1815 meaning the rearrangement of Europe after the Napoleonic wars.

What was the gist of the edutainment proposed to students who lived almost two centuries ago? The students drew sheets at random and shared their knowledge on the events in the sheets. The whole game was: drawing a sheet; satisfaction with finding appropriate events; boasting the historical knowledge, and victory. The winner was the student whose knowledge about the selected events was the best and who shared their knowledge in the best way.

Additionally, the students did not have to provide any assessment of the events. The short descriptions of events contained a strong suggestion of how to assess the events. The students were told to praise winners of battles, admire kings expanding their states after victorious wars (Gacki, 1827).

### 2.2 *The Twentieth Century*

A hundred years ahead, after World War I, Europeans thought that the war was the most tragic thing that could have happened to Europe. In the 1920s a broad pacifistic movement developed in Europe. The pacifists wanted to convince the community that a peaceful life was possible on the entire continent and any fight among the states in Europe could be abandoned. The pacifists focused attention on the upbringing of the young generation in a sense of friendship to other nations.

Teachers involved in the pacifist movement watched carefully their students' games in which they re-enacted the roles of heroes they had in history lessons. The teachers noticed the negative impact of the history of Rome on the playing students. They saw that children created hostile groups to arrange conspiracies. Pacifist teachers were concerned with the games of the children who re-enacted Roman soldiers since:

- when the students staged battles, they destroyed school equipment;
- when the students staged the conquest of Africa by Romans, they cut down shrubs and trees in school gardens.

That is why pacifist teachers decided to change the curriculum of history teaching. In their classes they restricted the material on the history of ancient Rome and replaced it with the history of Ancient Greece. The teachers hoped that the knowledge of Ancient Greece would be more moral and ethical (Witkowska, 1920).

After World War II, and even for over ten years after it was over, students could be watched who arranged games based on family memories and on school books full of war-related subjects. During school breaks students organised games simulating events from the Nazi occupied countries. Some children played the roles of Germans, some other the roles of their victims. The children playing the roles of German soldiers simulated shooting at hostages and prisoners. The children playing the hostages were falling down simulating death.

Later at high school, senior students were convinced that the natural way of conduct in the past was based on violence, force, murder. Additionally, high school students were not willing to learn about history. Students preferred to analyse battles and wars. Additionally, they were willing to learn about economic history in Europe and globally, industry development, particularly of armaments history.

### **3. The Contemporary Times**

#### *3.1 Teachers*

At present there are various attitudes among teachers towards edutainment in history lessons and edutainment outside school. Talks with teachers working in schools prove they disagree. In Poland

teachers have a different understanding of the issue. Several types of attitudes can be distinguished:<sup>2</sup>

### 3.1.1 *Enthusiasts*

They are enthusiastic about edutainment. They declare their willingness to modernize teaching methods. They want to make history more attractive for pupils of every age, starting from the youngest children to teenagers in the oldest classes. For them the activity of pupils is not only the most important but also an enjoyable method of showing the past, even producing 'fascination in history'.

Enthusiasts pursue general didactics to find deliberations on relations between play and reality. According to general didactics, imagination and fantasy manifest in theme games in which children are keen to re-enact – for example – the life of people in the past, battles and historical events. Children aged 9-10 develop profound interests, are avid collectors of military vessels, ships. Their in-depth knowledge, familiarity with details, technical and military awareness is extraordinary. Also when being older the games contain a category of reality. The reality can be the battlefield or armed soldiers. The school ought to seek harmonisation between the pupils' work and play because as they mature and reach adulthood they do not want to play as much. Adults devote more effort to their jobs and professional careers and are less eager to play (Okoń, 1995: 33-275). However, there are exceptions among adults, who are happy to play history. Teachers-enthusiasts want to seek 'joyful' topics, which make history fun and enjoyable. They argue that with laughter pupils are 'more open' and achieve a better understanding of history.

Interestingly, the majority of enthusiasts are teachers with long-term experience, whereas trainees and young teachers are a minority. It can be said that experienced teachers seem to have a 'more fatherly' and 'more motherly' attitude towards their pupils than their younger colleagues.

### 3.1.2 *Moderate enthusiasts*

They claim that edutainment should be applied in all possible situations but only in the early stage of education. They argue that laughter and games should accompany children. Fun is one of the methods of education. Moreover, a happy child proves the quality of the teacher's work. Children are cheerful when they play. Later on, as

children get older, games should be limited. Adolescents become more critical and instead of sincere laughter they are more ironic.

According to moderate enthusiasts, in the final classes before examinations, attention must be given to serious learning rather than fun.

### 3.1.3 *Sceptics*

They see the place of edutainment beyond the school only. They claim that pupils can play history when they are no longer taught at school, when they participate in 're-enacting history'.

They do not support the entire 're-enacting history' movement, seeing the disadvantages of 'history-themed games'. They caution against public performances with numerous inaccuracies, e.g. a scene of a medieval feast where the women are dressed in the historical clothes but at the same time have varnished nails and wear fashionable glasses. Another example – a WW2 battle with soldiers dressed in German uniforms speaking Polish and a German commander voicing orders in Polish.<sup>3</sup> The public viewing the battle laughed at the inaptitude of the amateur actors. The performance was grotesque.

### 3.1.4 *Opponents*

For them the syllabus and knowledge about actual events and historical processes are crucial. They want to convey information using the most effective methods. Edutainment – according to them – is a waste of time. They want to appeal to pupils showing them the gist of past events and their impact on the present day. They claim that pupils do not come to school to play. In their opinion there is no need to organise special performances both in and outside the school.

They believe that the greatest fun for the pupils is to attain knowledge (Brynkus, 2013). Contact with historical sources (paintings, museum objects, old films and photographs) and monuments (in the vicinity of the school and seen during school trips) can be both fun and fascinating.

What is interesting, among edutainment opponents are many trainees and young teachers. According to them teaching history is aimed at preparing pupils for external examinations and games do not provide them with skills necessary for passing school tests.

### 3.2 *Students*

But students keep re-enacting the roles of knights and soldiers willingly. Many students are fascinated with various battles and wars. Considering what affects edutainment, we have to point to broadly understood entertainment based on feeling history. Common images of wars and battles are affected by TV programs and films and computer games. Here are the two elements:

#### 3.2.1 *The Content of TV Programs and Films*

For many years scientists have been noting that children who watch violence on the screen are more aggressive in relations with other children. Teenagers watching violence on the screen become crueller. Scientists have also noted an increase of criminal behaviour. Young people who watch historic films with scenes of battles, fighting soldiers, torture, murder of civil population, come to a conclusion that violence is the most effective way to solve conflicts. Even more, young people think that power should be won through fighting.

Scientists alert that teenagers accept violence and are not sensitive to other people's pain. Scientific research proves the negative impact of film violence on students' fantasies. Scenes of violence in films adversely affect the young generation, intensify aggression. Obviously, when describing the problem, note should be taken of such features of students as: age, gender, family situation, nationality.

#### 3.2.2 *Principles of Computer Games*

Computer games are very attractive forms of entertainment for teenagers and children. Young people spend many hours in front of computers. Their parents and teachers are very worried. Parents and teachers have no doubt that computer games affect the players in a very negative way. In computer games it is possible not only to watch aggression but also to act aggressively since the player affects the course the game takes. Players are not just watchers of violence but also exercise violence. Research has also identified another problem. It has been identified that for boys who play computer games devoted to history and presenting historic figures, the historic subject matter of the games is of little importance. Shooting and killing was the most important aspect for boys (Braun-Galkowska & Ulfik-Jaworska, 2002: 67-123).

The young generation is a part of the consumer society which in the contemporary culture looks for pleasure and fun. The consumer society also wishes to draw on history (understood broadly as achievements of historiography and as historic memory) for its own entertainment (Kantor, 2013: 134-148).

### 3.3 *'Re-Enacting History'*

'Re-enacting history' requires an active approach. The participants take part in battles, military parades. The participants re-enact the past, for some time they live in the past. The game is their hobby which requires lots of time and historic knowledge (Bał, 2013). The participants make copies of clothing, helmets, swords, arms themselves. Sometimes the hobbyists (having staged a battle) even try to verify scientific theories, e.g. how difficult it was to use certain pieces of armament.

In many countries, a popular way to 'play history' is to make historic re-enactment. Re-enactment is a costly hobby. The reasons for the interest in re-enactment are complex, they are e.g. due to:

- an intention to intensify knowledge on the past;
- a wish to test the role of a man fighting with enemy;
- an intention to hold an experiment how they can fight for their lives.

Re-enacting history means drawing on events from the past for entertainment that is shown to the public (Szlendak, 2012). People are willing to watch: re-enactment, tournaments, military parades, archaeological picnics. They serve as entertainment and they attract crowds. Often they are combined with serious ceremonies of historic anniversaries that are important for the specific town or village. The participants are split into onlookers and actors. Sometimes professional actors are hired.

The aspects of fighting and violence are a popular theme of re-enacting history. Probably not all the onlookers watching a reconstructed battle are aware that in fact the battle was more of bloodshed. The onlookers have fun, they applaud the winners, they are happy with the history of 'their army' or pay tribute to 'their army' defeated by the enemy. The onlookers watching reconstructed battles take photographs.

Another example of 'playing history' is to re-enact street events in cities which can be re-enacted by professional or amateur actors. A re-enactment of a demonstration against communist authorities. The

demonstrating people shout demanding freedom. The militia attack the demonstrators, beat them with clubs, and use tear gas. The viewers of the spectacle are moved. Several high school students who watched the staging say that everything was new to them. But it turned out that the re-enactment was watched by a participant of the event. The gentleman was trying to clarify with no success: 'For the young people, a street re-enactment is just fun. Thirty years ago we were really afraid – many people were beaten, many were killed' (Szlendak, 2012).

The students who have come to watch the re-enactment want history presented in another way than they get it at school. Teenagers watching the spectacle do not have to know history but want to have fun. However, let us remember that involvement in such a game is incidental. One may only trust that they will want to learn more about history when they go to school the next day.

It is hard to set the limits for popular forms of entertainment. It is hard to set 'safe' subjects for edutainment. The situation is similar to the issue of 'military toys'. Some toys like soldier figures or airplane models – we can try to accept them as good toys. There are also other toys like plastic pistols and guns – we can try to accept that those are bad toys. However, the reality is more complex, the split is more difficult, and a ban on the production of 'bad military toys' is a utopia.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The culture in which our children grow up – following the same way of thinking – is full of military themes. Such a situation has been present for generations, and the military threads have been made stronger or weaker, depending on external factors and geopolitics. Even nowadays the fashion for a pacifist upbringing resembles a recurring wave. As the upbringing is only a part of the general culture that reflects a complex structure of connections, it cannot be omitted. At this moment the debate about the role of the military toy resulted in a dramatic thought: 'Let's end all wars, disband the armies, and open the borders, halt weapon production [...] change human nature, and then the game and the military toy will disappear. But not before.'

History teaching contains a number of serious political issues that are related to winning power, war, and killing. It would be good if they generated empathy. The importance of edutainment is to inspire historical imagination, evoke emotions in relation to the past.

Of course now, when the issue of provoking emotions is proposed, the history teacher's reflections move inevitably towards the psychologist's area of interest. History teaching is close to psychology, which also analyses how to classify the emotions of a single human being and how to shape the emotions of many people. And from this point, when we consider the collective emotions, it is only a step to the ethical issues of teaching history, over which the naïve pacifists pondered after the First World War.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> History teaching going on Polish territory (divided into partitions in the nineteenth century) was described in several books, e.g. Maternicki, 1974; Bieniek, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> These types are specified by the author on the basis of her own observations in the years 2009-2014. The author also discussed with the students of history at the University of Warsaw.

<sup>3</sup> The public notices not only unfortunate words but also poor gestures of the amateur actors. For example – an actor playing the role of a soldier captured is smiling and seems to be enjoying himself instead of demonstrating anger and wretchedness. Such mistakes in re-enacting are recorded by professional magazines for teachers. Daszyńska (2014).

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## AFFORDANCES<sup>1</sup> AND CONSTRAINTS OF HISTORY EDUTAINMENT IN RELATION TO HISTORICAL THINKING

Eleni Apostolidou

*‘Edutainment’ for history education is realized in the environment of historical culture (Erdmann, 2008). This paper discusses the cognitive advantages and disadvantages of several informal learning environments, like museums and films, in relation to students’ familiarization with the discipline of history. Do students in these environments realize the provisional nature of historical accounts, or do they consider them as ‘copies’ of the past (Lee, 2005)? The discussion develops in the context of the conversation about divergences and convergences between professional historiography and popular historical culture (Grever, 2009; De Groot, 2009; Lowenthal, 1981 & 1985; Munslow, 2007). This paper suggests that ‘edutainment’ is an asset in history teaching but it ought to be used with caution as several means or practices have intrinsic defects that prevent students from a critical approach to the past.*

### 1. Introduction

History Edutainment refers to the ‘hybrid mix of education and entertainment that relies heavily on visual material, on narrative or game – like formats and on more informal, less didactic styles of address’, (Buchingham & Scanlon, 2005: 46). Games and CD-ROMs used in the museums and permitting the exploration of knowledge in interactive ways (Deliyannis & Papaioannou, 2014: 116), ‘managed learning environments’<sup>2</sup> that relate to specific curriculum teaching units (Buchingham & Scanlon, 2005: 54), popular history series<sup>3</sup> and other editions (Scanlon, 2008), constitute only few of the possibilities. The above means either produce ‘curricularized learning at home’ (Buchingham & Scanlon, 2005: 45) or support types of informal and lifelong learning like in museums and heritage sites.

Historical Edutainment is realized within the context of the contemporary historical culture. Historical culture is defined as ‘the “external side” of historical learning [...] involving schools, governmental bureaucracy, guidelines, schoolbooks, museums, exhibitions, [...], nationally organized commemoration services, mass

media and the like' (Růsen in Erdmann 2008: 31) and in Grever's words, 'the conditions that are necessary to deal with the past', (Grever, 2009: 54).

This paper aims to discuss the affordances (advantages) and constraints of teaching history in informal environments (like museums) or by informal means (films) in terms of historical thinking. The paper is informed by the sociocultural theory of cognition following the assumption that educational means, or '(cultural) tools [...] including sign-systems [...] are not simply servants of individuals' purposes and action, but in important ways, shape and transform such action, including mental functioning' (Penuel & Wertsch, 1998: 26).

Additionally, museum exhibitions or films (like electronic games and t.v historical programs) are treated as historical representations while the paper discusses whether the latter representations are informed by the discipline of history and the aims of contemporary history didactics. In the following section I will therefore explore the aims of contemporary history didactics and the place that the students' historical culture has in the teaching of history today.

## **2. Contemporary History Education**

History educators today speak in terms of historical literacy and historical consciousness. While historical literacy implies students' familiarization with the 'processes' followed by historians, historical consciousness refers to the development of students' ability to orientate themselves in the present and the future, after having interpreted their past experiences; Students are expected to make sense of their world in time only if 'they understand the nature of historical claims so that they can arbitrate between rival stories on historical grounds' (Lee, 2007: 60). This would require from students to realize that narratives are written from various perspectives because they answer different questions and also that there is not 'one reality and one true story corresponding to it' (Gonzalez de Olega, 2012: 249).

On the other hand history educators emphasize the crucial role of historical culture for students, calling at the same time for relevance in history classes (Barton, 2009: 279; Ribbens, 2007: 68; Stearns, 2010: 58; Van Boxtel, 2010: 54; Von Borries, 2009: 302). While they find students' familiarization with the discipline of history important, they caution that 'too much focus on the past may detract from encouraging students to see the relevance of history in understanding

the present' Stearns (2010: 58). Along the same lines Barton doubts that limiting the history curriculum to the purposes and procedures of professional historians will make it meaningful for students (Barton, 2009: 279) and fears that in the end students will lack motivation to study history.

Additionally much emphasis is put on the environments in which students contact the past: Von Borries (2009: 302) reminds us that it is usually through 'people, newspapers, films, TV, books, specialists and tourist guides that students and people in general receive pre-fabricated historical narratives' and thus learn about the past. Van Boxtel (2010: 54-58) after defining heritage as a part of historical culture, she urges for a 'dynamic' approach in heritage education' that will include students' reflection on heritage practices, students' expression of their own experiences related to heritage and students' discussion of different perspectives. Finally Ribbens (2007: 68) emphasizes the central role of historical culture in the sense-making process of the past in which students participate and the variety of the environments in which students meet their past and construct their identities. He reminds us that, in a recent survey on Dutch and British youths' historical consciousness, most of the adolescents selected their family past as the most important past of theirs.

On the whole, history educators seem to agree that students' past experience from non-formal education environments along with identity issues crucial to them, ought to be taken into consideration in curriculum planning and in history classes procedures. Students' sense of the relevance to the past to their own lives is important if students are to enter sense-making processes. In the next section of the paper I will discuss museums and films as examples of edutainment environments in relation to how they aid students to make sense of the past.

### **3. Edutainment Environments: Museum and Films**

#### *3.1 Museums*

'Materiality' and 'authenticity' constitute the main educative advantages of material culture in general, of the museums also, since the latter exhibit collections of objects (Nikonanou & Bounia, 2014: 190). On the other hand, materiality and authenticity enhance the experiential nature of the encounter between visitors bearing 'their

personal and social agendas and the museums objects in a way that visitors can create meaning, i.e. to learn' (Nikonanou & Bounia, 2014: 181).

Lowenthal also mentions 'credibility' as a result of the material culture's 'tangibility': 'to be certain there was a past, we must see at least some of its traces' (Lowenthal, 1985: 247). Similarly Pearce states that 'the sign which carries meaning is able to do so because, unlike ourselves who must die, it bears an 'eternal' relationship to the receding past, and it is this that we experience as the power of 'the actual object'', (Pearce, 1994: 25).

If history didactics today aims to introduce students to the exploratory processes followed by historians, objects in museums constitute the perfect case, since as Lowenthal puts it 'relics are mute; they require interpretation', (Lowenthal, 1985: 243). Lowenthal adds that artifacts bear 'no intentional bias': as long they are authentic they are reliable. According to Nakou artifacts are more accessible to younger students compared with written historical sources, a characteristic that makes them more attractive in history lessons (Nakou, 2001: 65). The latter cognitive advantages of material culture have also been attested by empirical research; the 15-year-old Greek students below seem to articulate historical reasoning when asked to opt for the monuments that should be preserved in the case of a road that would be constructed.<sup>4</sup>

Maria: I opt for the preservation of the neoclassical building because although 19<sup>th</sup> century if compared to the 5<sup>th</sup> century is closer to us, still the *way in which* they built their houses *then* was so *different*, one can *learn how* those people lived (Apostolidou in Nakou, 2009: 129).

Christina: I select as second the temple of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, first because I think that it is very important to be able to see *how they would construct a temple in the 5<sup>th</sup> century*, what sort of technical means they had, and second because (if we preserve it) we would *be able to see a cult space of some other Gods, something different from what we see today* (ibid).

As noted by Apostolidou, these students focus in the differences between past and present and instead of conceiving of the ancient people as their ancestors, they see them as people of the past bearing differences from them (Apostolidou<sup>5</sup> in Nakou, 2009: 129-130). According to Halbwachs the above tendency ought to be a characteristic of the historian's thinking: 'history is interested in differences and contrasts (while) highlighting the diverse features of a

group [...]’ (Halbwachs, 1980: 81). The student in the second excerpt, Christina, referring to different cults, uses the past relics to describe ways of life in the past and past mentalities. She also attempts to reconstruct a past socio-economic framework speaking of technical means (technology) that the people of the ancient period used. According to Nakou, the latter stance, and especially in a museum or material culture environment, could be a characteristic of historical thinking: when ‘objects are related to human actions and thoughts, they are used as sources’ (Nakou, 1996: 63<sup>6</sup>). Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that these students did not exclusively refer to the temple as indicative of a national identity extending from the 5th century BC till present, a stance that could be expected because of their origin (Greece).

Another advantage of material culture is its everyday character; Objects function as ‘intertexts’<sup>7</sup> between us in the present and the people in the past, since everyday life is what we share with past generations. Objects therefore create past familiarity to students, who otherwise see the past as a ‘foreign country’, and the people in the past as ‘stupid’ (Ashby & Lee, 1987: 69).

A cognitive drawback of material culture, and especially museums, origins from the fact that they construct interpretations of past reality usually supporting several national narratives and becoming part of cultural heritage. As Appadurai (2001: 14) put it ‘[...] national imaginations require signatures of the visible, and museums and archaeology as a practice are about signatures of the visible’.

The latter refers to traditional museums, contemporary modern museums present objects in their historical context to facilitate visitors in their ‘reading’ of the exhibition, while the contemporary post-modern museum, ‘which attempts to form equal relations between the museum and its visitors in the procedure of knowledge construction, presents the objects open to alternative interpretations’ (Nakou, 2006: 5). According to Appadurai, the challenge for the museum curators is to ‘organize things so that there is an opening of memory in which there is room for others, for contesting perspectives (also)’, (Appadurai, 2001: 15). The above correspond to the aims of contemporary history didactics, since what is demanded from students is to the provisional character of all past interpretations. The latter also reminds us of Van Boxtel’s concept of a ‘dynamic approach to

heritage', where students are offered the opportunity to explore different perspectives (Van Boxtel, 2010: 58).

Appadurai feels that modern information technologies and interactive exhibits offer the possibility to manage museum exhibitions where multiple narratives are encouraged (Appadurai, 2001: 15). On the other hand, Nikonanou and Bounia assessing 25 educational digital museum applications and using a museum education perspective find that: 'most of the museum objects presented in the applications have 'closed' narratives, based on elements of a factual nature, while users are not encouraged to develop their own individual interpretations of them' (Nikonanou & Bounia 2014: 190). In the end, it is not the educational means (different types) that necessarily make the difference, but the ways in which the teacher uses them in history teaching.

### 3.2 *Film*

If the aim of history teaching is to simulate response from the students to something that happened in the past, 'this response can arguably best be simulated by the visual [...] since we are living in a world saturated by the visual image' (Haworth, 2008: 158). Along the same lines other historians and educators comment on the environment in which our students live: Kimourtzis refers to the fact that young people have been 'nourished' by the screen, cinema and television, (Kimourtzis, 2013: 35), while Hughes calls for visual literacy and cinematic literacy to be included in the training of both historians and history students (Hughes, 2008: 51).

Another affordance of film as an educational tool is that it can 'recreate a distant age' (Haworth, 2008: 158), or 'miraculously illuminate and reveal (the past).<sup>8</sup> Also, according to Haworth (2008: 159) evocative images and films are more plausible to arouse students' interest and understanding of 'people and spaces within a particular time span'. Additionally Kimourtzis comments on the value of perception and thought originating in senses, a value neglected by contemporary education systems that focus on skills related only to language and numbers (Kimourtzis, 2013: 30). Using the film to teach would make up for an education completely one-sided.

The above are supported by relevant empirical research conducted in Australia: a sample of 371 teachers and students participants answered two questionnaires focusing, first on teachers' rationale for

using the historical film in history teaching, and second, on students' learning experience. The survey findings indicating an augmentation of the student interest, helping them to 'remember' and 'visualize' the past (Donnelly, 2013: 19), are combined with findings from neuroscience that encourage 'the use of historical feature film in the secondary history classroom [...] [while the same findings] also provide a physiological basis for the power of film as a pedagogical medium' (Donnelly, 2013: 17).

A possible drawback of films in the history classroom is their 'seductive authority' (Haworth, 2008: 158) which hides from view the fact that films, like other cultural artifacts, are made by men functioning in a particular context and aiming to transmit certain messages. Also, technically it is possible to use film, not to reveal reality but to distort it. The main technique to do so is continuity editing, that type of montage that creates a reality illusion and in this way allows the director to intervene in the content, even in the documentaries (Park, 2008: 336). Hughes (2008: 53) therefore talks about 'film plasticity', since films 'can be reshaped to produce a variety of meanings'.

Additionally, in relation to the question, 'which types of films are more appropriate to use in history lessons?', the answer is – all of them (equally documentaries, feature/fiction films and historical films): all the above three types of films are characterized by their director's intentionality, and this despite the fact that newsreels and documentaries are supposed to present reality in an unmediated, or less mediated way.

How would educators overcome the above deficit in history lessons? Use them for what they actually are, historical evidence, and familiarize students with the skills of the professional historians; make students focus in 'date, authorship, point of view, authentication and verification' (Hughes, 2008: 49). Ferro offers us a more complete framework of analysis that takes under consideration the ideological and moral positions of the directors in relation to fiction and historical films: it is given that these films, even when they refer to the past (like historical ones), are contemporary products, they can therefore be analyzed like contemporary historical accounts (Ferro 2002: 203-205, Greek edition). In another analysis, he states that all films (documentaries and fiction) are equally documentary objects if we are to analyze them socially and culturally (Ferro in Smith, 2008: 81).

A good practice in relation to using films in history classes is to make students focus more on the 'attitudes and preconceptions of the (film) makers and their social values' than on the relevance of the film to the past it supposedly depicts (Hughes, 2008: 162). The latter practice has as a prerequisite that students are aware of the fact that there is an interpretation issue both in documentaries and fiction films. Another strategy is to use 'bad' movies, like the ones that are known to have committed anachronisms, to persuade students that no picture is to be taken for face value (for example one could teach about the Mycenaean era and the expedition against Troy, through the film 'Troy<sup>9</sup>'), in other words, to challenge the students to locate 'historical' mistakes.

Another safe practice that should prove to be fruitful is to make the class analyze the films in a comparative framework, and this can be done in two ways: by giving the students films that constitute different interpretations of the events, and also by presenting to them films of a different 'genre' (for example, a historical film and documentary on the same subject). Seixas (1993) followed the first strategy; his students did not see 'Dances with the Wolves' as a 'construction' but as a piece of the historical past itself. Only when the students were shown a second film which constituted a different interpretation of the events, did they act in a more critical way. Their exposure to a contested truth produced a deeper understanding of the problem with which they had to deal; the alteration of the research setting appeared to shape their performance.

Park (2008), following the second strategy, presented to her students<sup>10</sup> a documentary and a historical version of the same event: 'Shoah' and 'Schindler's List' for the holocaust; 'October' and 'The Reds' for the 1917 revolution. The questions given to students were *whether there was any difference between the films, and which film better helped them to really appreciate what had happened in the past* (Park, 2008: 113). On the whole, her students analysed the films as historical accounts: despite the fact that students initially paid attention to the primacy of the visual they also referred to the possibility that the visual supremacy of certain films would suggest an 'objective' depiction of reality and mislead the audience. Additionally, the 'Reds' and the 'Schindler's List' were characterized by the students 'mere cinematic presentations' (Park, 2008: 330). Excerpts indicative of some of her students' performance are the following:

*Films (fictions) express the director's intention, like trying to make people believe what is on the screen as it is [...] in contrast, documentaries provide a room for audiences to make a more informed decision on the basis of the facts, 17 years old, male (Park, 2009: 182).*

*Of course there is a possibility of selection even in the documentary, because the process of editing involves a certain choice, 16 years old, female (Park, 2009: 181).*

Park (2008: 330) concluded that 'in this respect, the students participating in the study cannot be seen as mere passive consumers of visual culture'. To conclude films can be excellent aid for history education in cases where different filmic interpretations of historical events are put in juxtaposition, in a way that students, may realize 'the range of choices that are not dictated by the historical record' (Seixas, 1994: 278).<sup>11</sup>

#### **4. Discussion: History Edutainment, Historical Popular Culture: enfranchisement of the public or illiterate versions of history?**

The focus of this paper has been the relationship between edutainment and students' familiarization with the processes followed by historians. First I will discuss the relationship between professional historiography and edutainment. Second, I will conclude on the affordances and constraints of edutainment in relation to historical thinking.

It has been pointed out by historians and theorists that there is 'a growing interest in the past in the public sphere [...] the latter forms a growing market of historical products, [...], a market including private research centers, museums, tourist kiosks [...] film productions and an emphasis on the historical novel in terms of literary production' (Gazi, 2002: 44). As Grever puts it: '[today] narrating history is not the privilege of professional historians [...] beyond the academic arena there has been a rapid growth of heritage institutions, [...], historical films, [...], websites [...]' (Grever, 2009: 45). Additionally, Munslow cites Hayden White saying that 'professional historians are the least qualified to police how the past is used for present and public projects [...] and that they will become increasingly irrelevant not just to how the content of the past is organized but also to how it is expressed in the public realm' (Munslow, 2007: 73). De Groot confirms the above variety that exists in relation to the ways people relate to the past; to

describe the above reality he uses the term 'historiocopia' (De Groot, 2009: 13). He points out that a man during daytime 'consumes' several aspects of the past in many different ways such as, architecture, TV, art, fiction, advertisements and many others. De Groot's work offers an overview of many of these ways in which people contact the past discussing and analyzing each time their contribution to the creation of historically 'literate' people.

An affordance of all this history produced in the public sphere is the 'emancipation'<sup>12</sup> of all history consumers because of the unimaginable ease of access they have to historical material, an ease that may lead to an 'excessive familiarity' with processes that in the past related exclusively to professional historians. The consequence of this may be distorted images of the past: as summarized by Munslow, the past in the mass media (television, radio) is often presented in a simplistic way, since what really matters is the flow of the story and entertainment. What is lacking is the debate between different views that are characteristic of the analytical historical discourse (Munslow, 2007: 73): in all these non-academic presentations of history, documentaries reenactments of historical events by actors or mere participants, reality games with a historical content, there tends to prevail an ethnocentric point of view (De Groot, 2009: 157) with the underlying assumption that the past is 'concluded', 'given', and that it exists solely to justify the present political reality (De Groot, 2009: 156).

In contrast to the above views De Groot and Munslow both recognize the inevitable but also emancipating role of edutainment and popular historical culture and even speak of a 'democratization' of history. Not in the sense that previously marginalized groups came to the fore of the historical arena, but because of the interactive nature of the new media. Participants in the reenactments of historical events (in reality games and in museums) are invited to learn or understand through their personal experience<sup>13</sup>, a trend that reminds us of 'empathy', a concept so familiar to historians.

The above discussion about popular historical culture can be transferred to edutainment: judging from the examples analyzed in the previous section, museums education and history education through films, there are 'gains' and 'losses' in relation to the development of historical thinking in both areas, popular historical culture and edutainment. In the end, there are very few aspects of the nature of each medium (printed, electronic, hardware, audio-visual) that makes

it more appropriate for the development of historical thinking, a lot depend on the use that the teacher, or the museum curator, will make of the specific communication and teaching means. A museum may encourage alternative interpretations or 'closed' ones only, even ethnocentric, even if it uses interactive electronic media (Giortzaki, 2005). 'Bad' films can be used in history lessons in a way that students may realize the complexities of interpretation, bias and provenance of historical sources. Realities of historical content on British television may project a one-sided narrative of specific events, but on the other hand, they stimulate interest for remote places and time eras and include participants that would not visit a museum or read a history book. In the end, subjective experiences of learning end to being fruitful and a means for the people to reconstruct their identities.

Additionally, one cannot ignore students' preferences for history subjects that refer to everyday life, consumption, entertainment: in the context of a small scale<sup>14</sup> empirical research, 15-year-old students, when asked to select history periods, events, themes they most liked from what they had been taught, or that they would like to learn more about in the future, they tended to refer a lot to 'people traditions and ideas', to music, to sports, to films (Apostolidou, 2012: 19). Students exhibited a clear preference for a certain type of historiography and, in consequence, a certain type of reasoning about the past. The followings excerpts could be indicative of the constructs produced when students attempted to justify their choices:

Student A: *I consider Enlightenment very important for the evolution of ideas till today* (Apostolidou, 2012: 18).

Student B: *I would like to know about what the US was in the past, I see all these cowboy films and I cannot locate them in time* (Apostolidou, 2012: 20).

Student C: *I would like to learn more about the industrial revolution because I saw the 'Lord of the Rings' and I was told that it is a comment to industrialization* (Apostolidou, 2012: 20).

Student D: *I would like to learn more about Philiki Etaireia<sup>15</sup> because I find fascinating the secret way in which it acted* (Apostolidou, 2012: 20).

Student E: *I would like to learn more about the Cold War, because I like spy stories* (Apostolidou, 2012: 20).

While student (A) opted for a historical theme not belonging to political or military history, and despite that these types of history often form the focus of curricula, textbooks, and history teaching in Greece, the rest of the students opted for more traditional subjects but not for

the expected reasons: students (B), (C), (D), (E), found motives to occupy with the past, in films and novels.

## 5. Conclusion

In relation to the main question of this paper about the advantages and the constraints of history edutainment for history education, the literature explored so far seems to indicate two things: first, the crucial role of the teacher in the promotion and exploitation of the various means and environments in which students learn about the past. Second, the important role of the students' historical culture, and of the popular historical culture in general, in teaching history: one cannot ignore students' preferences in relation to themes and ways to learn about the past, equating in this way history education to a 'denial of desire' as Barton (2009: 265) put it. Repeating Munslow's (2007: 73) assertion about the end of the historians' monopoly in presenting the past, school history would probably benefit if the environments that formed students' understandings of the past were taken under consideration.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> 'Affordance' as in Wertsch (1998: 38). The term 'affordance' means 'advantage' and is used by the sociocultural school of cognitive psychology. It originates in the works of Soviet psychology and especially in the works of Vygotsky.

<sup>2</sup> Managed Learning Environments allow children to have access at home to material they use in school (Buckingham & Scanlon, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> 'Horrible Histories' and 'Eyewitness' (Scanlon, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> *A road is being constructed and the following will be threatened:*

a. *A 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC temple.*

b. *A neoclassical building of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.*

c. *A traditional manufacture unit of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a 'watermill'.*

d. *A prison that had been used for political prisoners throughout the German Occupation and the Dictatorship.*

e. *A Byzantine church.*

f. *The house of a very important modern Greek poet.* Apostolidou (2009), 157.

<sup>5</sup> Apostolidou presents research conducted in Greece among 15 year old students and explores different types of historical consciousness that the students developed in the context of various tasks. One of the tasks demanded from the students to select the monuments to preserve among many others; the students involved presented equally traditional and more critical types of historical consciousness. Method of data collection: interview.

<sup>6</sup> Nakou (1996) is empirical research conducted in Greece among school students between 12 and 15 years old.

<sup>7</sup> For the use of the term see Levstik and Barton, 1996: 536.

<sup>8</sup> The latter words belong to Elton cited in Haworth, 2008: 158. Sir Arthur Elton (1906-1973), scriptwriter, director and producer.

<sup>9</sup> A 2004 film, director Wolfgang Petersen, protagonist, Brad Pitt.

<sup>10</sup> Ninety-six students of secondary school in South Korea, from 12 to 18 year old, in the context of a PhD thesis that was submitted to the University of London, IoE. Method of data collection: interview.

<sup>11</sup> In 2011 Kokkinos et al conducted a third survey with a similar comparative context using a sample of 115 Greek undergraduate and postgraduate students from the Aegean University and the University of Western Greece. They used the films 'Downfall' and 'Anonyma', considering them as 'films of realistic representation' which at the same time adopt the victimizer's point of view, and 'Last Metro' and 'Pianist' as fictional films, additionally adopting the victim's point of view, the four of them referring to the WWII. This study, which focused on the relationship between pre-existing students' knowledge of the specific historical events and their performance in relation to the 'closed' and multiple choice questions they answered, also encourages the use of feature film in teaching history. Students were found to be interested in controversial issues in history, while they adopted less naïve ideas in relation to historiographical epistemology (Kokkinos et al, 2013: 42).

<sup>12</sup> 'Enfranchisement' in De Groot, 2009: 59.

<sup>13</sup> 'Embodiment' in De Groot, 2009: 180.

<sup>14</sup> Twenty-two students, answered to the questions above in a written form.

<sup>15</sup> Philiki Etaireia was one of the secret organizations that contributed to the preparation of the 1821 Greek liberation war against the Ottoman Empire.

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## FORUM



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**INCREASING CRITICISM AND PERSPECTIVISM:  
BELGIAN-CONGOLESE (POST)COLONIAL HISTORY  
IN BELGIAN SECONDARY HISTORY EDUCATION  
CURRICULA AND TEXTBOOKS (1990-PRESENT)**

Karel Van Nieuwenhuysse

*Contrary to many western European countries that have witnessed or still witness fierce postcolonial debates in broader society with extensions to history education, Belgium has almost not witnessed such debates at all. This paper examines how Congolese (post)colonial history was and is covered in Belgian secondary history education, through an analysis of standards, curricula and textbooks since 1990. It also seeks for explanations for continuity and change in the (post)colonial accounts, which are to be found in evolutions within education in general and history education in particular, in evolving governmental expectations towards history education and governmental interference with memory politics, in the state of historiography, in the way history textbooks are established, and in public memory cultures regarding (post)colonialism.*

For at least two decades, many western European countries have witnessed fierce postcolonial debates in broader society, over extensions to history education (Fuchs & Otto, 2013). In France, for example, the role of French authorities in the former colonies became highly criticized. In reaction, in 2005, French parliament voted a *loi mémorielle* on French colonialism, requiring among others secondary history education curricula to recognize the positive role of the French presence in North Africa. This provoked a storm of protest among historians and history teachers, which met with some success: the clause relating to history education was removed from the 2005 law (Comité, 2005). In the Netherlands, in the last decade, postcolonialism is discussed as well, in relation to issues of slavery and the slavery trade (Oostindie, 2011). Debates for example take place in the media about whether or not 'Black Peter', Saint Nicholas' black attendant, is a racist element in the story of Saint Nicholas, which is very popular among children, and is annually celebrated on December 6. That day, Saint Nicholas, with the help of Black Peter, brings toys to all children that have been good. In October 2013, United Nations consultant Verene Shepherd (re)started the discussion in the Netherlands when she described the figure of Black Peter as racist, and asked to bring the

Saint Nicholas tradition to an end. She called it a return to slavery in the 21st century.<sup>1</sup> Great Britain also struggles with its colonial and imperial past, and witnesses of a certain nostalgia for the days of the Empire (Grindel, 2013).

Belgium, on the other hand, has not witnessed fierce debates in the last decade. Both 2008 (centenary remembrance of the acquisition of the Congo Free State by Belgium), 2009 (centenary remembrance of the death of king Leopold II) and 2010 (50th anniversary of Congolese independence) became the stage for commemorations of (aspects of) the Belgian colonial past. They all passed rather smoothly, without major controversy or history wars (Goddeeris, 2011a, 2013 & 2014). As the colonial amnesia that had occurred after Congolese independence in 1960 (Van Nieuwenhuyse, 2014), gradually disappeared from the 1990s, heated debates in Belgium only took place, rather briefly, at the end of the 1990s with the publication of Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost* (1998) and Ludo De Witte's *The assassination of Lumumba* (1999).

In 1998, Adam Hochschild, teaching writing at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley, published his *King Leopold's Ghost. A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. In this book, he drew a horrible and disgusting picture of Leopold's colonial rule in the Congo Free State. The book, although it contained almost no new information when compared to earlier publications of Belgian historians like Jules Marchal, Daniël Vangroenweghe and Jean Stengers, became a worldwide bestseller, and provoked much polemic, in Belgium and abroad. The characterization 'holocaust' ('black holocaust' in Dutch translation) and the number of 10 million black deaths especially were under heated discussion. Peter Bates' 2004 documentary *White King, Red Rubber, Black Death*, a production of Périscope Productions, in co-production with the BBC and Belgian broadcasting companies VRT and RTBF, and broadcast in many countries, including Belgium, gave the discussions of 1998 a new start. Geert Castryck (2010) notes that the documentary stirred dispute between the communities in Belgium. The francophone media shared the scandalized feeling of the Belgian royal house and the minister of foreign affairs, who labeled the documentary as biased and even wrong.<sup>2</sup> The francophone press also doubted the credibility of the historians interviewed in the documentary. The francophone Brussels newspaper *Le Soir* even insinuated 'that the fact that only Flemish historians took part in the documentary was part of a Flemish-

nationalist plan to hit Leopold II and the royal family, and to undermine the Belgian union.’ (Castruyck, 2010: 9) In Flanders, the remark was made why Belgians had not heard for such a long time about the atrocities in the Congo Free State. Why did Belgian historians not address tricky issues in national history, the critique ran. One year after the publication of Hochschild’s book, another book addressing Congolese colonial history caused a great deal of controversy in Belgium and abroad. The book, from the Flemish sociologist Ludo De Witte, was entitled *The Assassination of Lumumba*. Based on important new documents from the archive of the Belgian ministry of foreign affairs, the author claimed that Patrice Lumumba was assassinated by order of Belgian authorities. The discussions following publication led to the creation of a Parliamentary Enquiry Commission by the House of Representatives, who ordered four expert-historians to examine the alleged Belgian involvement in the assassination, and to find out the truth. After two years of inquiry, the experts concluded that at least a ‘moral responsibility’ fell on the Belgian authorities of that time.

From 2000 onwards, neocolonialism in the Congo came to the attention of the broader public as well, when the United Nations created a Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A first inquiry report of the expert panel, published in April, 2001, pointed the finger for the plundering, looting and racketeering at foreign armies, Congolese criminal cartels and the private sector, especially a number of international companies that fuelled the war directly, trading arms for natural resources, or indirectly, facilitating access to financial resources, which were used to purchase weapons. In an annex, the report provided a list of companies that imported minerals from the Congo, and were considered ‘the engine of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’. Companies from Belgium and other Western countries appeared on the list. At the request of the expert panel, various countries mentioned in the report, created their own inquiry commission to investigate the responsibilities of companies and/or individuals from their country. On July 19, 2001, the Belgian Senate established a parliamentary inquiry commission, ‘charged with the investigation of the legal and illegal exploitation of and trade in natural resources in the region of the Great Lakes, in the light of the current

conflict situation and Belgian involvement in this'. On February 20, 2003, the commission handed over to the Belgian Senate an all in all faint and vague report without solid basis.<sup>3</sup> Contrary to the publications concerning the abuses in the Congo Free State and the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, this publication passed silently, without causing controversy. It did not result in an in-depth debate on neocolonialism in the Congo.

Since the beginning of the 21th century, a – quite critical – consensus in broader society on the colonial past seems to have been established. Belgian failures are recognized, especially concerning the rubber yield and the assassination of Patrice Lumumba. At the same time, however, they are put in an international perspective: other European countries made the same colonial mistakes. Moreover, some counter-arguments are presented, in order to weaken the harshest critique, and, above all, to highlight credits in other fields. The question then arises whether this societal image also applies to Belgian secondary history education since the 1990s. How was and is Congolese (post)colonial history covered here? This is assessed through an analysis of secondary school history curricula and history textbooks. Before addressing the concrete research questions and methodology, a very brief outline of some of the most important events within Congolese colonial history is presented.

### **1. A Short Outline of Belgian Colonialism**

Thanks to convenient diplomacy and close cooperation with the explorer Henry Morton Stanley, Belgian King Leopold II succeeded in acquiring international recognition for his Congo Free State, by closing a series of bilateral treaties during and after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. While Leopold's colonial enterprise was initially loss-making, this changed at the end of the 19th century, because of the emerging automobile industry and the accompanying demand for rubber tires. The harvesting of rubber gained importance rapidly. Leopold II did not deploy the huge profits from the rubber (and ivory) trade in the Congo, but used them for the embellishment of Belgium and the glorification of the dynasty. The increasing international criticism regarding atrocities towards the indigenous people that accompanied the rubber regime led to the acquisition of the Congo by Belgium in 1908.

In the Belgian Congo, economic exploitation led by large companies, went hand in hand with a self-proclaimed 'civilizing mission' of the Belgian colonizers and missionaries in the fields of religion, education and healthcare. The native people were, however, not attributed any actual political participation. As a consequence, when the Congo gained its independence in 1960, the country was not prepared to stand on its own, precisely because the Belgians had refrained from forming a group of competent native administrators and rulers. Moreover, the Congo became politically independent, but remained economically in the grip of Belgium and the West.

Decolonization failed. The army rose in mutiny, Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was assassinated in 1961, and the Congo fell into chaos. The rich Katanga and South Kasai provinces seceded, initially with Belgian support, from the Congo. Only in 1964, these secessions were undone permanently. In 1965, army chief Mobutu seized power and established a kleptocratic dictatorship that would last until 1997. He changed the name of the Congo in Zaire. The West and Belgium supported Mobutu's dictatorship throughout the Cold War, and maintained good relations with the Congo. However, when the Cold War ended, Mobutu gradually lost all his allies, and in 1997, Laurent-Désiré Kabila drove him from power. In 2001 the latter was assassinated, and succeeded by his son Joseph Kabila. Since 1996, especially in the east of Congo, a fierce war rages, that has already claimed the lives of millions of Congolese. At stake are the enormous natural resources in the area. Apart from the neighbouring African countries, western countries and multinationals are also involved in the conflict, which is therefore labelled as the 'African World War'. One consequence of these historical and current developments in the Congo is the fact that it led the ranking of the world's poorest countries in 2013-14.

## **2. Research Questions and Research Methodology**

Textbook analysis on representativeness, balance and the way themes are covered has been widespread among historians and history didacticians for decades. Recent examples are the special issue 'Koloniale Vergangenheiten in Europäischen Schulbüchern' of the *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 30 (2008), on a European comparison

on colonial memory in textbooks, the 2011 *Yearbook of the International Society of History Didactics* on the theme of 'Analyzing textbooks: methodological issues', and the special issue in 2013 (5/1) of the *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* on 'Educational Media, Textbooks, and Postcolonial Relocations of Memory Politics in Europe'. Contributors analysed the way in which different countries deal with their (post)colonial history, including Italy, France, Great Britain, Germany.

In Belgium, history textbooks have since long been the object of much research by among others Marc Depaepe, Frank Simon and Honoré Vinck, and several of their PhD students (historical pedagogy), and Raf De Keyser and Kaat Wils (history and history didactics) and PhD students such as Antoon De Baets, Alexander Albicher, Matthias Meirlaen and Tessa Lobbes. Specifically regarding Congolese (post)colonial history in Belgian history education, some research has been done (Verhaegen, 1992), mostly by undergraduates in order to obtain their master's degree (Willaert, 2000; Fobelets, 2008). This research was limited to smaller time periods, to one type of materials (only few textbooks, no curricula) and to a narrow scope (only the colonial period, or decolonization) (Van Nieuwenhuysse, 2014).

The central research question in this article is broader. The way both Congolese colonial and postcolonial history are covered in curricula and textbook analysis is examined, since 1990. At first, the representations and the narratives of (post)colonialism are examined: the events highlighted, the framework in which the issue is dealt with, the perspective taken (national, transnational and/or neocolonial; white versus indigenous, or reciprocity of colonial encounters), and the terms in which (post)colonialism is presented (patriotic or critical). Attention is also paid to whether or not different accounts occurred in curricula and textbooks according to ideological and/or communitarian lines of fracture.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, explanations are sought for the way in which (post)colonialism is narrated and represented in curricula and textbooks. Those explanations can be situated within developments in history education itself, and within evolutions in both broader society and the state of the historiographical research.

This research concerns Flemish and francophone 11th and 12th grade secondary school history education, since Congolese (post)colonial history is especially addressed in those grades. A distinction is made between public and private, mainly catholic

educational networks, and between Flemish and francophone education. Since the 1960s, education in Belgium became regionalized and in 1989 was formally devolved to the three Belgian communities (the Flemish, the French and the German speaking).

The analysis is not limited to secondary history textbooks, for these are based on and written according to guidelines from standards established by the Flemish and francophone ministry of education, and curricula, formulated by the different educational networks. Standards, curricula and textbooks are very interesting sources, since the context in which they have been given shape, influences their contents. On the other hand, however, one should be aware of their limitations. Standards, curricula and textbooks do not directly reflect classroom teaching discourses, as teachers do not slavishly imitate textbooks, but add their own knowledge and interpretations. Nevertheless, those documents provide an interesting and valid entry to the representation and the narrative of (post)colonialism.

In this research, the standards and all secondary history curricula in both parts of Belgium since 1990 were analysed. Regarding the textbooks, a selection was made so that materials from both educational networks stemming from the Flemish and the francophone part of Belgium were present in a representative and sufficient manner. Preference was given to widely spread textbook series, existing in revised versions, in order to discern evolutions. Ultimately, 10 textbook series were analysed.<sup>5</sup>

Concerning the research methodology, it can be observed that for a long time, two types of research occurred (Vanhulle, 2005 & 2009; for examples, see Van Nieuwenhuysse, 2014). 'Check historians' investigated history textbooks in search for chauvinism, revanchism, racism etc. and examined the extent to which new research results found their way to the textbooks. 'Representational historians' on the other hand concentrated their research on the representation of one event, group, person, etc. in the textbooks, and linked it with existing collective memories within society. In the last few years, a third kind of research rose: the narrative analysis textbook research, in which it is stressed that only embedded in the narrative as a whole, the different parts of the textbooks and the representations of events, groups, persons, etc. get their significance. This paper makes use of a narrative qualitative analysis research, thereby also drawing on the previous

research traditions (e.g. concerning the influence of academic historiography and concerning colonial representations).

### 3. The Coverage of Congolese (Post)Colonialism

Two stages can be distinguished in how Congolese (post)colonial history is covered in Belgian secondary history education since 1990.

#### 3.1 *Critical and Thoughtful Attention (1990s-2000s)*

Previous research on the Congolese account in Belgian history curricula and textbooks between 1945 and 1989 concluded that, especially after the failed decolonization of the Congo, which made the former colony fall into chaos, curricula and textbooks witnessed a Congolese colonial amnesia in the 1960s-80s. Some sort of national diffidence occurred, and caused a silence to fall on the Belgian-Congolese colonial past (Van Nieuwenhuyse, 2014). Colonialism in general on the other hand received much attention. In the 'hunt for a wrong past' in order to learn from it for present society, the 'black pages' of colonialism and slavery were at the center of history education, and were condemned (Lobbès, 2012).

From the 1990s onwards, changes occurred, not only regarding the account on the Congo, but also regarding history education in general. In the 1970s and 1980s, the position of history education came under attack, since critics considered it antiquated and of little social or civic use. From 1990, when education was formally devolved to the Belgian communities, history as a school subject regained a more prominent and stable position in both Flemish and francophone education. It came to belong to the basic curriculum in secondary education. The different regional governments started to set standards, delineating the minimal final attainment targets which history education should achieve. Within each language community, the main school systems maintained their separate curricula, but they needed to be based on standards, in order to achieve identical attainment targets. In defining the standards, a deliberate choice was made in the Flemish as well as in the French Community not to present an extensive enumeration of knowledge that has to be acquired. The standards were primarily aimed at critical thinking skills and attitudes and offered criteria to select subject matter, with, in the case of the Flemish public and the French public and Catholic networks, a brief outline of general themes and

concepts to be treated. As there is no system of central examinations, the freedom to select subject material is real, even though textbooks (which are commercial products, neither subsidized nor controlled by the government) in fact play an important canonizing role (Wils, 2009). Neither national nor subnational history are extensively focused upon in history education on both sides of the linguistic boundary. The basic frame of reference is European.

The issues of (de)colonization and (post)colonialism are not explicitly addressed in the Flemish standards, which do, however, oblige a global perspective, that can be filled in on the level of 'systems', imperia, large-scale regions and spheres of influence. In at least an implicit way, the latter refers to (neo- and post)colonialism. The francophone standards on the other hand do contain explicit references. In the so-called key moments in history, which must be dealt with in history class, both imperialism and decolonization, and north-south relations are explicitly mentioned.

The standards were introduced in both communities in 2000. Until then, the old curricula were still in use. The textbooks published in the 1990s built on the very critical perspective earlier textbooks since the 1970s took on colonialism in general, and extended this critical perspective to Congolese colonialism. *Tijdspiegel*, a textbook for Flemish private education, e.g. mentioned in the revised edition of 1995-96 in an explicit way the 'outrageous way of economic exploitation' of black people at the time of the Congo Free State. The textbook *Documentatiemappen* (1994), for Flemish private education as well, wrote: 'The circumstances wherein the exploitation took place were sometimes horrible. Especially in the yielding of ivory and rubber, black people were forced into slave labour. Many of them were killed or mutilated.' The same textbook also took a very critical stance on decolonization and the decades following independence. It concluded that the Congo 'became politically a centralized republic. [...] Yet economically, it remained tied up to Belgian companies. Economic independence was absolutely out of the question.' Nor was Belgian (and by extension American and western as well) support for the dictator Mobutu, to keep him in power because he was considered 'our man in Kinshasa', obscured. A neocolonial framework was thus taken on. Only in francophone private education, the account on Congolese colonialism was brief and rather uncritical. The textbook *Racines du Futur* (1992), when writing on the Congo Free State,

mentioned vaguely that ‘the exploitation of natural resources took place at the cost of abuses through forced labour by the native people.’ The decolonization and the subsequent chaos were considered a purely internal-Congolese affair. The difficulties the former colony faced after its independence were not explained from a neocolonialism perspective, but from an internal colonialism, in which a small clique of natives exploited and oppressed its own people. This account is all the more surprising given the fact that the textbook *Racines du Futur* (1992), contrary to Flemish textbooks, was written by academics (of the *Université Catholique de Louvain*), who apparently did not adopt recent critical historiographical accounts on Congolese (post)colonialism. Reasons for this deviating account in French private education are not obvious. A first reason might be found in historiography. The academics writing *Racines du Futur* were no experts in colonial history. Furthermore, it might be possible that those francophone academics were perhaps less acquainted with the more critical perspective on colonial history, as it existed at the beginning of the 1990s (and still does) in the Anglo-Saxon, English-language historiographical world. A second explanation might connect to francophone (catholic) society at large in Belgium, which, as mentioned above, adhered more to the Belgian royal house and Belgian union, and perceived criticism of its colonial policy as criticism of Belgium itself (Mertens et al., 2013). Perhaps the textbook writers were influenced by this view, and thus took up a less critical position towards this episode within Belgian history?

Shortly after the standards were established in 2000, new series of textbooks were launched. Most of them continued the critical stance towards colonialism in general (from the 1970s) and towards Congolese colonialism in particular (from the 1990s). Interest in the Congolese colonial past increased. Colonialism was addressed as an example of modern imperialism. The colonial past was presented as a controversial issue, as a historical problem which should be examined and discussed by students, as part of training in historical thinking skills. This movement certainly parallels the abovementioned boost in both societal, and (or because of) international and national historiographical, mainly critical attention to the history of Congo (Vanhee en Castryck, 2002). That boost was concentrated on two issues: the atrocities in the Congo Free State related to the yield of rubber and ivory on the one hand, and the assassination of Patrice

Lumumba, the first prime minister of independent Congo on the other hand.

The question raises to what extent the historiographical attention and political and societal debates found their way into Flemish and francophone history textbooks in the 2000s. The new textbook series published in this decade did not always differ that much from previous textbooks, although the titles did change. The extremely bloody regime of king Leopold II in his private property Congo Free State (1885-1908) on the one hand and the independence of Belgian Congo and the subsequent murder on the Republic of Congo's first Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba (1960-1961) on the other, were the main objects of interest and debate. Both themes were addressed in the framework of modern imperialism and decolonization. This perspective, however, did not bring along systematic comparison of different colonial systems, including the Belgian.

Textbooks since 2000 became highly critical of the colonial past, at least for the remote past concerning the situation in the Congo Free State. The textbook *Historia* (2001, not to be mixed up with the textbook from the 1950s-1970s) for private education in Flanders, characterized the Congo Free State period as one of the darkest chapters in the history of modern imperialism and the history of Belgium. King Leopold II was 'the villain of the piece' in this drama while the Congolese people were the victim of enslavement and inhuman cruelty. Again, French private education formed an exception. The textbook *Construire l'Histoire* (2007-08), written under the supervision of a scientific committee composed of historians, attached to three francophone universities, adopted a very reserved attitude towards Congolese colonial issues.

A more general restraint is striking in the account on the assassination of Lumumba, the second fixed colonial item in the textbooks. They did not bring to the fore the essence of Belgian involvement in the assassination, even though each textbook author could become acquainted with that knowledge, since its details were made public before the textbooks' publication date. The textbook *Storia* (2002) concluded vaguely: 'Lumumba, according to progressive American and Belgian standards, was killed in mysterious circumstances.' A bizarre parallel can be drawn with the textbook *Historia* of 1962, published 40 years earlier when colonialism was addressed in a much more patriotic manner, that also wrote about 'the

mysterious way in which Lumumba was killed'. The textbook *Memo* (2005) for Flemish public education did not mention any Belgian involvement, but only suggested an internal-Congolese reckoning. *Construire l'Histoire* (2008) did not even mention the assassination of Lumumba at all.

It thus appears that the former diffidence with regard to the remote colonial past disappeared, contrary to the recent past, which was still approached in some reserved way. This becomes further clear through the account of the Congo after its independence. No textbook avoided the chaos and misery the Democratic Republic of the Congo experienced in the past five decades in the Congo, yet all textbooks explained the situation mainly from internal-Congolese and intra-African factors. They did not connect the colonial and postcolonial eras to each other. The western, and more specifically Belgian involvement of the past half century in the dictatorship of Mobutu, in the subsequent neither democratic regimes of Kabila Sr. and Jr., in the looting of the natural resources and in the 'Great African War' (Reyntjens, 2009) was only addressed in an indirect, very brief and vague way. Textbooks did not enter into a Congolese postcolonial debate. Similar to the reception in society at large, the UN- and Belgian Senate reports on the illegal exploitation of Congolese natural resources passed silently, and were not included in the textbooks.

A novelty that was introduced in the textbooks from 2000 onwards, be it quietly and very modest, was a Congolese perspective on colonialism. The narrative remained largely seen from a white and western perspective, but some space was cleared for Congolese voices and sources. Previously, this had not been the case. On the other hand, the textbooks did not make the shift towards a 'new imperial history'. They did not concentrate on links between metropolis and colonies, on reciprocal encounters and influences, on cultural and social interconnection and on migration. In this research tradition, however, several studies were already published in the last decade, even in Dutch (Goddeeris, 2011b).<sup>6</sup> Again this shows that academic historiography did not fully trickle through in secondary history textbooks.

### 3.2 *Orientation Towards a Perspectivist and Recent Historiographical View (from 2010 Onwards)*

In the past four years, on both sides of the linguistic boundary, new history textbook series were taking shape on the initiative of academic

historians and history didacticians. In the francophone part of Belgium, it concerns *FuturHist*, a profound revision of *Construire l'Histoire* (2008) meant for francophone public education.<sup>7</sup> In Flanders, it concerns a totally new textbook series, entitled *Passages*.<sup>8</sup> In particular, *Passages* leans much towards academic historiography and regarding the colonial account towards 'new imperial history', in many of its manifestations. It pays attention to the reciprocity in colonial encounters, when describing the dynamics of the exchange emerging from the discovery of the 'New World', in terms of fauna and flora, people, cultural habits, customs, religion, diseases, food, and war and terror. It also concentrates on the influence of colonialism on clothing and costume. Furthermore, *Passages* deals with representational issues a lot, in specific research chapters.

Concerning Congolese (post)colonial history, both new textbooks especially concentrate, similar to other textbooks published in the 2000s, on the Congo Free State regime, and the decolonization of the Congo in 1960. An important difference, however, is that a critical stance is not only taken towards Leopold's rule in the Congo Free State, but towards the events in 1960 and afterwards as well. Congolese decolonization, the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, and the Katangese secession are all brought up within a neocolonial framework. *Passages* and *FuturHist* work up to the essence of Belgian involvement in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, and display no diffidence in doing so. At the same time, they also address, apart from the content-related issues, historiographical difficulties accompanying historical research by order of the government, e.g. the tension between conducting historical research in a disinterested, neutral way versus a context of political and moral judgment.

This 'postmodern' approach is also reflected in the attention paid to the representation of the colonized peoples. The textbook *Passages* (2010) devotes a research chapter to 'The African myth.'<sup>9</sup> *FuturHist* (2010) serves up a similar research, entitled 'Views on the negro (19th century - 1945)'.

Both textbooks do not shun postcolonial debate. The textbook *Passages* (2010) addresses this debate in the research chapter on the assassination of Patrice Lumumba. Students are invited to form a balanced judgment on and discuss questions about the relationship between the former mother country Belgium and the former colony Congo.<sup>10</sup> At the same time it needs to be pointed out that *Passages* does

not pay much attention to what happened in Zaïre/Congo after its independence. In *FuturHist* (2013) on the other hand, this is much more the case. Contrary to *Construire l'Histoire* (2008), the difficulties with which Congo has been faced since 1960, are no longer solely explained through internal-Congolese and -African factors. *FuturHist* (2013) still mentions internal-Congolese factors, but at the same time highlights the connection with the colonial past. The textbook also draws attention to the fact that, after Congolese independence, the colonial economic system continued to exist, and profits kept on flowing to the western (or northern) countries. Neocolonialism is thus given a clear place in the postcolonial debate the textbook tries to establish among the students. It remains somewhat unclear why the tone in *FuturHist* differs significantly from its predecessor *Construire l'Histoire* regarding Congolese (post)colonial issues. For the series leaders and the scientific committee of both textbooks are exactly the same, and the team of textbook authors is almost the same. Perhaps there was more time to read up on Congolese colonial historiography before elaborating *FuturHist*?

It is plain that these two new textbooks add a new dimension to Congolese (post)colonialism within secondary history education, and break new ground with their account. It will be interesting to see whether, and to what extent, the other textbook series will make the same perspectivist turn and include recent historiography.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

Regarding the account on Congolese (post)colonial history in Belgian history standards, curricula and textbooks, examined since the 1990s, it is remarkable that especially two issues are addressed: the Congo Free State and the decolonization of the Congo (including the assassination of Lumumba). In general, the attention textbooks paid to narratives on the Belgian colonial past increased from the 1990s onwards, compared to the preceding decades. Moreover, the Congolese (post)colonial account became highly critical, both towards colonialism in general and the Congo Free State. The more recent Congolese past (decolonization, assassination of Lumumba, Mobutu regime, looting of natural resources and civil war since 1996) and the Belgian involvement in it, was dealt with in a more reserved and less critical way, except for the most recent textbooks *Passages* and *FuturHist*. Similar to the preceding decades, colonial history continues

to be mostly approached from a western and white perspective. In schoolbooks, the colonial rule is still the main focus of attention; the reciprocity of colonial encounters is hardly mentioned. There is little space for African agency (Vanhee & Castryck, 2002). The Congolese perception of colonialism is hardly addressed in textbooks, nor is the influence of Congolese culture and Congo in general on Belgium. New Imperial History did, in other words, not find its way into Belgian textbooks so far, except for the textbook *Passages*. The same conclusion applies to textbooks in several other European countries as well.<sup>12</sup> Because of the white and western perspective on colonialism, as Ait-Mehdi (2012) notes, many chances are missed to reflect with students on otherness, to confront them with multiperspectivity, to create historical significance towards students of e.g. Congolese origin. Considering a 'new imperial history' approach would therefore certainly be worth thinking about in designing curricula and textbooks. Imperialism and decolonization are presented as transnational phenomena, but nevertheless, the history of Congo is treated in a relatively isolated way. International comparisons are not systematically made. Schoolbooks share with the public memorial culture and with popular historical work a 'national' perspective. Again, this conclusion applies to curricula and textbooks throughout Europe, as Susanne Grindel from the *Georg Eckert Institute* recently concluded for German, French and English history education (Grindel, 2012).

In Belgium, a 'national framework' is rather problematic, since from the 1960s onwards, 'Belgian' history education no longer existed. Consequently, there is hardly any coherent national narrative in both Flemish and francophone history education, but the colonial past is quite present as a national issue. Even though Belgian society is riddled with lines of fracture, a quasi-unanimous perspective characterizes the account on the colonial past in curricula and textbooks of educational networks in both communities (although analysis showed that French Catholic textbooks were more reserved). In a certain sense, colonial history functions as a remnant of the Belgian nation and of the unified collective memory in former, Belgian, secondary school history textbooks. School history, in that perspective, differs from recent public debate on the colonial legacy, which is, to some extent, marked by the national divide. For the attachment to the colonial past is, for historical reasons, somewhat stronger in the francophone Southern

public opinion, than it is in the Flemish public opinion. The latter has less difficulty with the fierce international criticism on the Belgian colonial past.

Nevertheless, international (societal) viewpoints do not always find their way into history textbooks, nor does recent historiography fully trickle through, except for the two most recent textbooks *Passages* and *FuturHist*. One of the reasons for this conclusion is the fact that most textbooks are not written by academics, but by history teachers, who are generalists instead of specialists in the various issues addressed in the textbooks. Textbook authors moreover often combine the writing of a textbook with a fulltime teaching job in secondary education. That way, little time remains for them to read up on recent academic historiography. The time pressure imposed by the publishers reinforces this situation, which might explain why also textbooks like *Racines du Futur* (1992), written by academics, and *Construire l'Histoire*, of whom the series leaders and scientific committee are academics, did not adopt recent critical historiographical accounts on Congolese (post)colonialism. Because of this lack of time, it cannot be surprising that textbook authors, except for *Passages* and *FuturHist*, relied heavily on previous editions of their textbooks, and only confined themselves to slight changes. As a result, the gulf with academic history widened (Verhaegen, 1992).

This conclusion does not exclusively apply to Belgium. Tutiaux-Guillon (2006) previously concluded that history textbooks in France often do not conform to the academic history discipline, but form a relatively autonomous 'vulgate.' Cajani (2013) came to a similar conclusion regarding Italian secondary school history textbooks on the Italian colonial past, especially concerning their account on the use of chemical weapons in the second Italo-Ethiopian War (1935-36). While academic historiography concluded long ago that the Italian army used such weapons, Italian textbooks from the 2000s still skirt round this issue.

According to Castryck (2010), academic historians, at least in Belgium, bear responsibility in this matter as well. For they should not only conduct research, but also pay attention to the dissemination of their research results, something they fail at. Castryck refers to the existing lack of specific courses and course materials on African or Congolese history in Belgian universities, which makes it difficult to integrate recent research results in secondary history education. In his opinion, academic historians should address a much broader public.

At the same time, however, it is important to put the role of textbooks into perspective. It needs to be stressed, as mentioned above, that textbooks do not necessarily reflect concrete history classroom practices. History teachers usually do not solely rely on textbooks in shaping their lessons. Maybe they do integrate recent historiographical insights. A master thesis of Ludwig Willaert (2000) does not give a decisive answer about this, although it includes several indications. According to Willaert, teachers' accounts on the Congo include much more nuance and variation, than the textbooks' accounts. It is not clear whether or not that is the result of becoming acquainted with scientific historiography. Nevertheless, this research shows the necessity for teachers to read up on recent academic historiography, in order to bring a nuanced, up-to-date account that exceeds existing, outmoded images.

A final reflection to include in this discussion concerns the question of why Belgium, unlike its neighbouring (and other European) countries, does not witness a postcolonial debate? At first, this has to do with the role the government plays in Belgium. Unlike in many other countries, that role was and is very limited concerning history and remembrance politics – especially after the Second World War.<sup>13</sup> According to Castryck, this was a deliberate strategy, for Belgium only survived the past few decades, given the communitarian struggles, by not constructing a national identity, by avoiding national history (Castryck, 2010: 6; Goddeeris, 2013). As from the 1960s onwards, 'Belgian' history education gradually ceased to exist, Belgian government certainly did not interfere with history education. Unlike Belgian government, regional authorities did interfere actively in memory politics (and to a lesser extent in education), if only to support their own subnational identities. Congolese colonialism, however, being a Belgian enterprise, did not fit into this.<sup>14</sup>

Another reason why Belgian society does not witness a postcolonial debate at present, concerns the fact that in Belgium, only a small postcolonial Congolese community exists, that performs hardly any activity (Salmon, 1994; Goddeeris, 2013). The presence or absence of postcolonial migrant communities, however, precisely largely influences the public debate on the colonial past (Oostindie, 2011; Grindel, 2013). Contrary to other countries, black migrants in Belgium do not take up a leading role in the reflection on the colonial past. As

a result, the dominant (post)colonial narrative is largely determined by white Belgians (Goddeeris, 2011a & 2014).<sup>15</sup>

In that narrative, the dark pages in the history of the Congo Free State and the Belgian moral responsibility in the failed decolonization and the elimination of Lumumba, are recognized, although it is emphasized that Lumumba deserves some of the blame, too. Other dark aspects of Belgian colonial past are highlighted as well: the subdivision into races (which was the basis for ethnic conflicts), and the creation of a colonial rule which evolved into kleptocracy. It seems as if in Belgium, both in history education and in broader society, the idea nowadays reigns that the colonial past is straightened out and does not need to be discussed anymore. As a result, there is no real public debate on the future of colonial heritage, hardly any attention is paid to postcolonial debates in other countries, and no awareness exists of the major differences between Belgian colonial self-perception and foreign representations, in which Belgium is often presented as the worst pupil of the colonial/imperialist 'classroom' (Butlin, 2009; Goddeeris, 2014).

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See [https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/23rd/public\\_-\\_AL\\_Netherlands\\_17.01.13\\_\(1.2013\).pdf](https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/23rd/public_-_AL_Netherlands_17.01.13_(1.2013).pdf) (14.10.2014).

<sup>2</sup> At first, suppression of the broadcast of the documentary was considered. In the end, the broadcast was allowed, although it was agreed that sufficient historical context would be provided before the broadcast, and that the documentary would be succeeded by a debate.

<sup>3</sup> The commission indicated that deeper research was necessary to clear out the role of Belgian actors in an exhaustive way. This, however, was precisely the main goal of the inquiry commission. <http://www.senate.be/www/?MIval=/publications/viewPub&COLL=S&LEG=2&NR=942&PUID=33578926&LANG=nl> (14.10.2014).

<sup>4</sup> For Belgian society is still characterized (since the 19<sup>th</sup> century) by three major tensions: an ideological one between Catholics and non-Catholics, a social one between employers and employees, and a communitarian one between the Flemish and the francophone part of the country. Belgian colonial enterprise was often considered a francophone bourgeoisie led enterprise. On the other hand, though, many Flemish missionaries were active in the Congo. Both could influence the textbook narratives.

<sup>5</sup> List of analysed textbook series, organized according to language community and educational network.

1990s

Language community	Educational network	Textbook
Flemish	Private education	Actua - Chrono - Tijdspiegel
Flemish	Private education	Documentatiemappen
Flemish	Public education	Memo
Francophone	Private education	Racines du Futur

2000s

Language community	Educational network	Textbook
Flemish	Private education	Historia (successor of Actua - Chrono - Tijdspiegel)
Flemish	Private education	Storia
Flemish	Private education	Passages
Flemish	Public education	Memo
Francophone	Private education	Construire l'Histoire
Francophone	Public education	FuturHist. Le Futur, toute une histoire

<sup>6</sup> For example Guy Vanthemsche (2007), *Congo. De impact van de kolonie op België* (translated into English in 2012: *Belgium and the Congo 1885-1980*, Cambridge University Press), Stephen Howe (ed) (2009), *The New Imperial Histories Reader*, and Vincent Viaene, David Van Reybrouck & Bambi Ceuppens (eds) (2009), *Congo in België. Koloniale cultuur in de metropool*.

<sup>7</sup> Series leaders are Hervé Hasquin, historian at the *Université Libre de Bruxelles*, and Jean-Louis Jadoulle, history didactician at the *Université de Liège*. They supervise the writing process which is taken up by history teachers, and coached by a scientific committee composed of three academic historians from resp. *Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis Bruxelles*, *Université de Liège* and *Université Catholique de Louvain*.

<sup>8</sup> *Passages* is written by academic staff member at Leuven University, supervised by two academic historians (being at the same time history didacticians), Kaat Wils and Hans Cools, and a scientific committee.

<sup>9</sup> Starting from the conclusion that from the end of the 19th century onwards, scientists, artists and intellectuals were fascinated by black Africa, the textbook raises these questions: 'Why was Africa that attractive? What image existed in Europe about the African continent and its people? Did the image correspond to reality? Why did governments financially contribute to this representation? And what did the Africans think of this negrophilia?'

<sup>10</sup> 'Does Belgium have to leave the Congo alone? Or did it on the contrary abandon the Congo? Will Belgium and the Congo ever settle their differences of opinion? And if so, how will they do that? Or is the relationship between a former mother country and its colony by definition difficult? Will every help from the former mother country always be considered as a form of paternalism? And is every form of resistance in the former colony to be considered as a sign of ingratitude?'

<sup>11</sup> This will become clear within the coming years, since *Historia* as well as *Storia* plan a revision in 2015. Furthermore, other textbook series such as *Pionier* and *Weerspiegelingen* are preparing an edition covering the 19th, 20th and 21st century.

<sup>12</sup> During the Conference of the International Society of History Didactics in Tutzing, September 16-18, 2013, entitled 'Colonialism, decolonization and post-colonial Historical Perspectives' e.g., Jan Löfström (University of Helsinki) and Markus Furrer (Lucerne University) came to the same conclusion for textbooks in respectively Finland and Switzerland.

<sup>13</sup> A parallel can be drawn to the field of education, in which the presence of the state is traditionally weak in Belgium. Freedom of education has been one of the cornerstones of the ultra-liberal character of its original constitution and the autonomy of the different school systems (of which the Catholic is the largest in numbers) has remained strong ever since.

<sup>14</sup> This also becomes clear within the context of the cross-curricular final attainment objectives, constituting a set of minimum school targets that do not belong to specific subjects and that aim at preparing youngsters to participate actively in society and to develop their personality. One of them concerns remembrance education: 'Students learn from historic and present-day examples of intolerance, racism and xenophobia' (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training (2010), 'Context 7: Socio-cultural Society', <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/curriculum/secundair-onderwijs/vakoverschrijdend/> (14.10.2014). So far, remembrance education does not focus on Congolese colonialism, even though the definition of 'remembrance education' of course allows for that. This is quite significant, as it makes clear that the colonial legacy is not considered as 'important' or 'actual' as the Second and the First World War, by the Flemish government and the main players in the Flemish educational field of remembrance education.

<sup>15</sup> This of course does not mean that the African community in Belgium is not interested in questions of colonial memory and history education. On the contrary, recently the Royal Museum for Central Africa was approached by a collective calling itself 'Colonial memories and the war against discrimination', of which a large number of sub-Saharan organizations in Belgium are member. The collective wants to investigate the possible connections between colonization and discrimination the people of sub-Saharan origin (not only from the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda) endure in post-colonial Belgium. Nevertheless, governments in Belgium do not feel themselves stimulated by the postcolonial migrant community to take up an active role in guiding a critical colonial memory culture.

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**PROCEEDINGS  
IN HISTORY TEACHER EDUCATION?  
RESULTS OF A GLOBAL STUDY  
OF THE IMPACTS OF THE BOLOGNA REFORM**

Elisabeth Erdmann and Wolfgang Hasberg

*The results of a recently published global study about the impacts of the Bologna Reform on history teacher education are presented by the editors. The results show that at least with regard to history teacher education did not strengthen the international correlations beyond the transfer of some structures established in the academic tradition of the anglophone world. The study has discovered not only the diversity of history teacher education between the different countries but also between the universities of a single country. The structure of teacher education at universities can be standardized but not without including them in the discussion.*

**1. Basic Questions**

Creating a homogeneous area of higher education was the prime intention when the Ministers of Cultural Affairs subscribed to the Bologna Declaration in 1999. The fact that this ambition was not achieved, at least not in Germany, was the initial point for editing this book. Because the situation in Germany was an open one, by reason that in some federal states the aims of the Bologna Declaration were not realized till today, one of the main goals for initiating this volume was to preserve experiences from states, which were either successful or not in fulfilling the Bologna requirements in the past. Although, the situation in the involved countries is even more diverse than was expected in the beginning, the treasure of experiences documented in this book can be helpful to track the development of the reforms occurring outside Germany, too. The following standardized questionnaire was a parameter for the articles produced by 22 scholars from Australia (Tim Allender), Canada (Penny Clark, Stéphane Lévesque, Ruth Sandwell), France (Marie-Christine Baquès, Brigitte Morand), Germany (Elisabeth Erdmann, Wolfgang Hasberg), Hungary (Ágnes Fischer-Dárdai, József Kaposi), Japan (Takahiro Kondo), Russia (Alexander S. Khodnev), Slovak Republic (Viliam Kratochvíl, Barnabás Vajda), Slovenia (Danijela Trškan), South Africa (Elize S. van Eeden), Spain (Maria Sánchez Agusti), Switzerland (Vera

Sperisen, Béatrice Ziegler), Turkey (Ismail H. Demircioglu), the United Kingdom (Arthur Chapman), and the United States of America (Keith C. Barton):

- The significance / importance / acceptance of history in society,
- The position of history in the structure of academic education / of university, including the position of history didactics (a structural overview and comparison with the position in society),
- The position of history in school education (a structural overview and comparison with the position in society),
- History as an academic subject in universities (a comparison between history as a scientific subject and history as a subject of teacher education; explanation of the position and standing of history in teacher studies for various kinds of schools / teachers)
- The place of history didactics in study programs, (structural) position in the structure of different study programs and examinations,
- The contents of history-didactical studies,
- The organization of practical courses during or after the university phase (are they organized by people with regard to history didactics or general didactics?),
- The configuration of the post-university teacher education and interlacing of both phases,
- The modifications ascribed by the Bologna Declaration – the discourse of history teacher education in the context of the Bologna process – the estimation and evaluation of the modifications suggested by the reform of Bologna.
- The rich information gathered in this way can be the basis for discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of a two-circle-organization of history teacher education overall.

Here the answers to this questionnaire will not be treated in detail, but only the main results will be mentioned and, in the end, be related to the subtitle of this book: ‘Global Interrelations’. Is the standardization of (history) teacher training a global goal? What are the similarities and the differences of history teacher education listed in the accounts of those European states or of other parts of the world? And last but not least: In which way is internationality necessary or, at least, fruitful for organizing history teacher education?

## **2. Selected Results**

In some cases the authors of national accounts refer to the little experience they have with respect to the implementation of the requirements of the Bologna Declaration (e.g. Slovenia). Therefore it was necessary to access the information on the experience of several states in- and outside of Europe because in some cases (e.g. Great Britain, USA) there is a long tradition of organizing history teacher education in nearly the same way as is prescribed by this European resolution. But in states where reforms in the sense of Bologna were implemented recently, the future of history teacher education seems unclear (e.g. South-Africa, Slovenia).

Looking at single reports, firstly, one can notice that some authors emphasize the public use of history within the political or historical culture to explain the organization of teacher education (e.g. Japan, USA), whereas other accounts do not stress the effect of these considerations. This difference may be caused by the fact that some of the European rapporteurs could refer to accounts published elsewhere. Therefore, in spite of the differences one can conclude that both the political as well as the historical culture, have to be regarded as a base on which teacher education is founded. But this occurs with different intensity, especially in those states where history wars take place, as in Australia or in Canada. Where history or the use of history is controversial, history teacher education is automatically involved. Because those who have strong views on the right interpretation of history must be interested in influencing history teacher education, because history teachers are an important group for the distribution of historically based convictions or even – not in one of the included states – ideologies. The example of Canada shows that the rule of history didactics can potentially be strengthened in order to reach these goals.

Undoubtedly, the political atmosphere and historical culture have a deep impact on teachers' attitudes and the reality of history lessons, in fact a deeper one than history didactics (cf. Australia, Canada, Japan, USA). One reason maybe the disregard of and disrespect for the didactics of history. This is a problem which is much older than the Bologna reform but which was obviously not overcome by the reforms of Bologna. Beyond this problem there seems to be a new correlation between history teacher education and historical sciences. Therefore it seems urgent to stress the experiences of the United

Kingdom as well as in Slovenia whereupon it is necessary that history must already be a subject studied in the BA-phase. Others emphasize that it would be essential that history didactics should already be a part of BA-studies (e.g. Slovenia, Germany, Japan). With these experiences a core problem is noted: if in (history) teacher education BA and MA studies have to be so closely linked, does the division into two consecutive portions of university teacher studies make any sense? Because BA studies which are so closely interrelated, as seems necessary in teacher education, cannot be polyvalent as was aimed by the Bologna Declaration.

Whereas the implementation of the Bologna reform is not yet conducted in all states, even not in all federal states in Germany, it is remarkable that some members of the Bologna-Zone already revert to the old systems, as can be observed in Hungary or Saxony. In Hungary the reason is the declining number of teacher students since the establishment of consecutive teacher education consisting of two phases (3 + 2 years). In Saxony the rollback was caused by the need to raise the numbers of teachers, too. But at one time a more specialized teacher education, tailored to different types of schools, was attempted.

The case of Saxony presents two problems: On the one hand there is a danger that due to the Bologna reform, studies for those students who do not attend a certification for teaching in Grammar schools or Gymnasiums will not only be shortened but will be excluded history studies and be limited in general studies or in pedagogy (cf. France, Turkey). In some studies there is an apparent trend to create all-round-teachers who are able to teach several or nearly all school subjects, at least in primary and secondary modern schools (cf. Switzerland). This would evoke an obscure differentiation between types of schools, although everywhere a horizontal permeability is intended. And it would mean that history lessons would be taught by teachers who are not specialized in history sciences. That would be a great disadvantage for history lessons, as could be observed in the United Kingdom, not least because they will not have studied history didactics (cf. Japan). The practice of special teacher-training following university studies, as exercised in the United Kingdom, is no solution because it cannot even compensate for the theoretical deficits acquired during the university studies. The provision of practical courses during or after academic education may be an obstacle for innovation if the providers are not

familiar with developments either in historical sciences or history didactical sciences.

On the other hand the example of Saxony demonstrates that there is no homogeneous history teacher education in this federal state because studies in Dresden and Leipzig are different. In other federal states in Germany where more than two universities are involved in teacher education the situation is much more confusing. This is not a unique German observation but the situation in other countries is similar. And although the case of South Africa shows that this situation can also be found in states where two-stage-studies have been established for a long time, obviously, the efforts of the s have not been successful in this direction. The question is whether a standardization of history teacher education is really needed. But this question can be extended to all university studies and therefore it is not to be answered here. The result of the overview given by the single accounts is that history teacher education is no more consistent than other studies, although it is standardized by parameters prescribed by the governments.

Rather, courses of study differ even in single states (as the federal states in Germany). The reason may be that history lessons must keep different historical cultures as the basis of history education in mind as far as they intend to make pupils take part in this historical culture. Therefore it remains an open question, confirmed by the inquiries of this book, whether international standardization of history teacher education and history education is possible or even desirable.

### **3. Fundamental Reponses**

All in all, robust studies on the effects of Bologna reform do not exist. The experiences disclosed by the rapporteurs as well as the government arrangements are not based on empirical inquiries. Even if such results were available the structure of history teacher education is so desperately diverse that the findings could probably not be transferred from one country to another. This is valid for those states where the BA-MA studies are long established, too.

In the case of history teacher education one must account for different historical cultures. That means universal history education cannot be preferable because of the variety of historical consciousness in different parts of the world which for example Magne Angvik and Bodo von Borries were able to expose in their broad survey 'Youth

and History'. The fact that there is a connection between the imaginary map of historical consciousness found throughout Europe and the self-concept of history didactics, the structure of teacher education, and history education, could be seen in the attempt to consolidate a European discourse of history didactics and education.

But the Bologna Declaration not only intends to constitute a homogeneous area of higher education in Europe, it also states that Europe would be a unity of knowledge and therefore it wants to support the 'increasing consciousness of the necessity for building a more complete and more extensive Europe'. This is a 'history didactics challenge', too. But on the one hand, the aims of the Bologna Declaration are not accepted in all European states and they are not absorbed by all curricula and textbooks in Europe. In fact there are big differences in adopting the European idea into history lessons. On the other hand, the European identity suffers from a 'Mythendefizit' (deficit of myths) or, another explanation is, it suffers from the enormous number of national myths about Europe, which means that each country has its own myth of Europe. This last explanation makes clear why the teaching on Europe cannot be the same in history lessons in different European or other countries.

If this is true – and there is no reason for doubt – the ambitions of the Bologna Declaration are exorbitant. Nevertheless, the arrangements are made and have to be implemented, not least in the field of history teacher education. Indeed, empirical results about the effect of the new structure of studies are rare or non-existent in many universities where BA and MA studies are established. The structure of higher education may be along the same lines, whereas not only content (historical knowledge) but also attitudes (historical consciousness) and ways of dealing with history (historical culture) are still different. Therefore, it has to be considered that modification of the structure certainly is not without effect on the content and attitudes students acquire by their studies. Related to the appointment of the Bologna Declaration one can state:

The 'adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees' would facilitate the exchange of teachers – but it is not yet realised.

The 'adoption of a system [...] based on two main cycles' maybe 'relevant to the European employment market' – but is this an adequate structure for teacher education in universities? Probably not, because on the one hand, teacher education needs a consecutive

coherence of basic and advanced studies (s. above). On the other hand, those who want to become teachers have to acquire competences which are of such complexity that their acquisition cannot be limited to the MA cycle. Therefore, it is impossible to create a BA study for teacher education which is polyvalent as well as enabling the students to adopt the tasks of other professions as well. This is the reason why in nearly all the countries involved in this survey, special BA studies for teacher education exist.

The 'system of credits' implemented by the is combined with the idea of measuring the workload students have to adduce. In consequence, achievement has to be measured, too. Therefore, often the number of tests rises and, in reverse, the lectures and seminars often take the form of overviews. This development may lead to the conviction or belief that history is an entity which can be learnt by absorbing year dates and facts of the past, instead of learning that history is a construct made by scientific methods. Further, the credit system based on workload may influence the receptive attitude of students, and instead of them enjoying the experience, they conclude that science is an exhausting business whose only reward is knowledge recognition (Erkenntnis). If the outcomes of the do not keep alive the aspiration of cognition (that is the original meaning of to study, lat. *studere*) and limit the demands on learning by rote, an important reason for studying humanities and for learning to become a teacher will be abdicated. The quest for education (better: *Bildung*) seems to be a fundamental reason for both.

The survey about the conditions and the structure of history teacher education shows that cooperation regarding the structure of (history) teacher education or even an adjustment regarding the curricula for teacher education is not yet initiated. In fact, the implementation of the reform proceeds at a different speed or – with Hungary and Saxony in mind – turns in different directions.

This résumé seems to be fatal. Were the efforts undertaken by this survey in vain?

#### **4. Global Interrelations**

'The interest in an inter- and transnational outlook [...] is owing to the perception that the Bologna reform in many respects appear as a transnational 'transfer of culture' (Kulturtransfer), in which many European states try to integrate elements of a 'foreign' educational

system (Bildungssystem) into their different internal (educational) structures. This statement, reported by Susanne Popp at the end of a German conference wherein the 'process of professionalism of history teachers' was discussed, seems to be confirmed by the message of this book. The Bologna Declaration is a structural prescription born in spirit of increasing employability throughout Europe. Although, the authors were Ministers of Cultural Affairs or of Education the paper was not inspired by educational or academic ideas. Therefore it must appear as a foreign imposition to nearly all concerned institutions and persons.

It is not apparent that the Bologna reform strengthened international correlations beyond the transfer of some structures established in the academic tradition of the anglophone world. An approximation of (history) teacher education initiated by the Bologna appointments cannot be asserted, at least not with regard to the content and curricula of history teacher education. One of the main results of this book is to have discovered the diversity of history teacher education in Europe as well as in the global context. Nevertheless, the attempt to hold a conversation with colleagues from all over the world was not in vain.

Firstly, conversations are seldom in vain. Mostly, all participants learn by the experiences of others, especially if they shed light on their own. Secondly, the diversity would not become manifest without this survey. And thirdly, the conclusion makes clear:

- (a) that the structure of university studies can be standardized and harmonized but the procedures of modification should at the best be initiated by the concerned institutions as far as possible or at least should be arranged with them.
- (b) that in the field of history education limits to standardizing and harmonizing have to be accepted because of the differences of historical cultures which change slowly and cannot be modified by political decrees. Therefore, history teacher education always has to fit in with the historical culture which is the origin and the aim of history education. Structural modifications which have always affected the content and the attitude of university studies have to pay regard to this coherence.

In the end, one can conclude that considering global interrelations as performed in the book *History Teacher Education* seems to be useful, in order to estimate the challenges of modifying (history)

teacher education. But beyond such a utilitarian point of view it is simply exciting.

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**ABSTRACTS**  
**ZUSAMMENFASSUNGEN**  
**RÉSUMÉS**

**Arja Virta**

Seeing the past in pictures: children's historical picture books as an introduction to history

*This article deals with children's way of understanding images in historical picture books, the difference between fact and fantasy, between the past and the present, and judging the veracity of the presentation. The data were collected through group discussions with 8 and 10 year old children (n = 38). The objects that were used as the basis for discussions were historical fiction picture books that describe life in the early 19th century. Findings suggest that children can distinguish between fantasy and what they see as real history, but do not question the realism or veracity of the pictures. They had difficulties in explaining why they found the descriptions as real. As to changes and differences between the past and the present, they mainly referred to practical differences in the way of living. As a conclusion, the exemplars of historical culture can be starting points for children's historical understanding at an early age, and therefore a resource for history education.*

*Dieser Beitrag zeigt, wie Kinder Bilder in historischen Bilderbüchern verstehen und welche Unterschiede sie dabei zwischen Faktum und Fantasie, Vergangenheit und Gegenwart machen und wie sie den Wahrheitsgehalt beurteilen. Die Daten wurden mittels Gruppendiskussionen mit Kindern zwischen 8 und 10 Jahren (N= 38) erhoben. Basis der Diskussion war ein Fiction-Bilderbuch zu einem historischen Thema, welches das Leben im frühen 19. Jahrhundert darstellt. Wie die Resultate zeigen, können Kinder zwischen Fantasie und dem unterscheiden, was sie als reale Geschichte sehen, aber sie hinterfragen den Realitäts- oder Wahrheitsgehalt der Bilder nicht. So hatten sie Schwierigkeiten beim Erklären, warum sie ein Bild als realistisch einstufen. Bezüglich des Wandels und der Unterschiede zwischen Vergangenheit und Gegenwart bezogen sie sich hauptsächlich auf praktische Differenzen aus ihrem Alltag. Als Schlussfolgerung zeigt sich, dass die historische Kultur als Ausgangspunkte für historisches Verstehen von Kindern in einem frühen Alter genutzt werden kann.*

*Cet article traite de la façon qu'ont les enfants de comprendre les images dans les livres d'histoire illustrés, mais aussi de faire la différence entre les faits et la fiction ou encore le passé et le présent pour juger de la véracité de ce qui leur est présenté. Les données ont été collectées à partir de discussions menées avec un groupe d'enfants de 8 à 10 ans (n=38). Les discussions portaient sur des images de fiction historique décrivant la vie des gens au début du 19e siècle. Nos résultats suggèrent que les enfants sont capables de différencier les faits historiques de la fiction, mais ces derniers ne remettent pas en question le réalisme ou la véracité des images. Ils ont aussi eu de la difficulté à expliquer pourquoi certaines images leur semblaient plus réelles que d'autres. À propos de leur capacité à établir des différences entre le présent et le passé, ils se sont surtout référés à des pratiques de la vie quotidienne. En guise de conclusion, nous croyons que ces outils culturels*

*peuvent être des points de départ pour développer la compréhension historique des enfants en bas âge et, conséquemment, être une ressource pour l'éducation historique.*

**Susanne Popp, Jutta Schumann and Miriam Hannig**

'Histotainment' by popular history magazines. The 'edutaining' design of history and its challenges for media critical history education

*This article deals with popular history magazines as a product of commercial mass media, which present history with a claim of 'edutainment'. So far, this subject matter has received hardly any attention from historical-didactic research. The article focuses on the impact of the 'edutainment' concept on the selection and the presentation of the historical topics and the preferential ways of mediation, which leads to the question of the historical-didactic quality of the presentation of history in the magazines. Referring to the results of the EU-EHISTO project, the article discusses the magazine's significance for a critical media education within history classes.*

*Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit populären Geschichtsmagazinen als einem Produkt der kommerziellen Massenmedien, die Geschichte mit dem Anspruch des 'edutainment' präsentieren. Dieser Aspekt hat bisher kaum Beachtung in der geschichtsdidaktischen Forschung gefunden. Im Zentrum des Beitrags stehen die Auswirkungen des 'edutainment'-Konzepts auf die Auswahl und den Zuschnitt der historischen Themen und der bevorzugten Vermittlungsformen und führen zur Frage nach der geschichtsdidaktischen Qualität der Präsentation von Geschichte in den Magazinen. Mit Bezug auf die Ergebnisse des EU-EHISTO Projekts wird die Bedeutung der Magazine für die medienkritische Bildung im Geschichtsunterricht diskutiert.*

*Cet article traite des magazines populaires historiques en tant que produits commerciaux et médias de masse qui prétendent présenter l'histoire sous un point de vue ludoéducatif (edutainment). La science de la didactique de l'histoire a, jusqu'à aujourd'hui, à peine tenu compte de cet aspect. Ce sont les effets de la démarche 'éducation-ludification' ainsi que le choix et la tournure des sujets historiques qui se trouvent au centre de cet article. Analyser cette démarche nous amène à questionner la qualité de la présentation de l'histoire, d'un point de vue didactique, dans ces magazines. Finalement, nous discuterons de la pertinence de ces magazines pour développer une posture critique envers les médias en enseignement de l'histoire tout en reliant nos résultats aux résultats du projet EHISTO financé par l'Union européenne.*

**Agnes Fischer-Dárdai and Krisztina Dezso**

Edutainment in the museum. A place where you can experience the history of the University of Pécs in an interactive environment

*The University History Collection at the University of Pécs is an exhibition where the visitor can experience the establishment and development of the institution, which is connected to the city of Pécs in myriad ways. The significance of the founding of the University in 1367 can be seen in a European context: visitors can try out and use educational tools from the Middle Ages. Roaming the halls as a student, instructor or citizen of the city, we are immersed in a world we know only*

*by its details, but the exhibit has the ability to form them into a whole. The personal experience is supplemented by objects, documents, and a system of geographic spaces. The memories of the Middle Ages – which we know only through reading about them – become tangible here. Materials having to do with the more recent life of the University can be seen, heard and handled here – the exhibition aims to affect all senses in order to help the visitor relive University experiences. The collection also encourages return visits and speaks to the visitor as they can add their personal mementos to the collection. It took the cooperative work of several experts to offer the community such a complex experience. The need for the organisation of the preservation and collection of historical memory can be traced back about a hundred years. The current exhibition and museum collection is the result of earlier museum-like activities. The purpose of this paper is to summarise the key steps to this stage.*

*Die universitätshistorische Sammlung der Universität Pécs wurde 2010 eröffnet. Die neue ständige Ausstellung ermöglicht Besuchern aus allen Schichten und Altersgruppen ein erlebniszentriertes Kennenlernen der Geschichte der Universität vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart. Die Einzelbesucher werden im Wahrnehmen durch multimediale Mittel, interaktive Oberflächen, Spiele und anfassbare Gegenstände unterstützt. Ein anderer Teil der erlebnisorientierten Programme bilden die für Besuchergruppen angebotenen und die Ausstellung in den Fokus nehmenden museumpädagogischen Lehrstunden. Die Ausstellung entwickelte sich in den letzten Jahren sehr dynamisch, da die Besucher zu deren Gestaltung mit eigenen Dokumenten, Erinnerungen, Gegenständen beitragen können. Sie ist somit mehr als ein Ort historischer Darstellung, sie ist eine Institution der Universität und für die Universitätsgemeinschaft zugleich eine Hüterin der Universitätsidentität.*

*L'Université de Pécs a ouvert en 2010 les portes de sa Collection de l'Histoire de l'Université. L'objectif de la nouvelle exposition permanente portant sur l'Histoire de l'Université du Moyen Âge à nos jours est de permettre un apprentissage de l'histoire par l'expérience, et ce, pour toutes les couches d'âge. Pour les visiteurs individuels on propose des instruments multimédias, des parcours interactifs, des jeux, et des objets digitaux pour aider l'apprentissage. Une autre partie importante de nos programmes créatifs est destinée aux groupes. Il s'agit d'ateliers pédagogiques basés sur nos collections. Notre exposition a développé dynamiquement ces cours durant les dernières années, parce que les visiteurs ont eux-mêmes enrichi la collection avec leurs documents, souvenirs et objets. Notre exposition est plus qu'une simple exposition, pour l'institution qu'est l'université et pour ses étudiants, c'est un projet de première importance.*

### **Angelos Palikidis**

**'Discovering' 150 years of history in a portmanteau. An educational history programme at the Ethnological Museum of Thrace**

*The subject of this paper is the planning and creation of an educational museum programme in local history at the Thrace Ethnological Museum. The programme is organized around a traveller's portmanteau, which is a faithful copy of such an object from colonial times and contains multimodal material consisting of authentic objects chosen from collections in the museum. During the design phase, we took account of the epistemological framework and methodological principles*

*employed in contemporary museum education and in history didactics, which is why we placed emphasis upon the use of the authenticity of the objects, on the development of genuine experiences on the part of school students and upon encouraging personal expression through the comprehension of, and composition of, multiple narratives. We even designed activities intended to develop historical skills, such as comprehension, analysis and the critical evaluation of historical sources, map reading, the dating of objects, the understanding of changes in the urban landscape. Our concern during the design process was to link Local History to National and World History and to set the place in question, Alexandroupoli, in the broader geographical context of the Balkans and south-east Europe.*

*Wie kann man 150 Jahre Geschichte in einem Portmanteau entdecken? Gezeigt wird dies am Beispiel eines Lehrprogramms des Ethnologischen Museums Thrakiens. Das Programm dreht sich um ein Reise-Portmanteau, gleich wie jenes der Zeit der Kolonisation, ausgefüllt mit ausgewählten authentischen Gegenständen aus den Sammlungen des Museums. Bei der Planung des Programms haben wir den wissenschaftlichen Rahmen sowie die methodologischen Prinzipien der modernen Museumserziehung und der Didaktik der Geschichte berücksichtigt. Dabei bemühten wir uns, die Authentizität der Gegenstände wirken zu lassen und so die Schüler auf der Erlebnisebene zu erreichen. Gleichzeitig versuchten wir, sie zu ermutigen, durch mehrfaches Erzählen ihre Ausdrucksfähigkeit zu entwickeln. Weiter haben wir Lehrtätigkeiten geplant mit dem Ziel, die Fähigkeit zum Verständnis wie auch zur Analyse und zur Bearbeitung historischer Quellen zu fördern, Landkarten zu lesen, wie auch chronologisch Gegenstände einzuordnen und ein Verständnis der Veränderungen des Lebens zu entwickeln. Schließlich haben wir versucht, die lokale Geschichte einerseits mit der nationalen und der Weltgeschichte zu verbinden und andererseits sie in der Geschichte der Balkanländern und Süd-Osteuropas einzuordnen.*

*L'objet de cet article est de traiter de la planification et de la création d'un programme d'éducation muséologique en histoire locale au Musée Ethnologique de Thrace. Le programme est organisé autour de la garde-robe d'un voyageur, qui est une copie fidèle d'un objet de l'époque coloniale et contient du matériel multimodal composé d'objets authentiques choisis parmi les collections du musée. Au cours de la phase de conception, nous avons pris en compte le cadre épistémologique et les principes méthodologiques utilisés dans l'Éducation muséologique et la Didactique de l'Histoire contemporains. C'est pourquoi nous avons mis l'accent sur l'utilisation de l'authenticité des objets, sur le développement de véritables expériences de la part des élèves et sur l'encouragement de l'expression personnelle à travers la compréhension et la composition de récits multiples. Nous avons même conçu des activités visant à développer les compétences historiques, telles que la compréhension, l'analyse et l'évaluation critiques des sources historiques, la lecture de cartes, la datation des objets ainsi que la compréhension des changements dans le paysage urbain. Notre préoccupation au cours du processus de conception était de relier l'histoire locale à l'histoire nationale et mondiale et de situer la question du lieu, Alexandroupolis, dans le contexte géographique plus large des Balkans et de l'Europe du Sud-est.*

### **Karl Benziger**

#### Music, minstrels, and the American Civil War: Entertainment, imagination, and historical Interpretation?

*This essay begins with an examination of Dan Emmett's minstrel song 'Old Dan Tucker' (1843) as an entrée into American stereotypes about slaves and free blacks and the paradoxical interest Americans had about the African American community. This interest helped stoke abolitionist sentiment at the popular level prior to the American Civil War as evidenced by novels such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's, Uncle Tom's Cabin (1853). Likewise, D.W. Griffith's film Birth of a Nation (1915) fortified negative stereotypes critical to Lost Cause narratives after the war. In the wake of America's great civil rights struggles, films such as Edward Zwick's Glory (1989) provide counter narratives to those of the Lost Cause. An examination of entertaining popular interpretations of history are essential when teaching about the American Civil War in both the secondary and collegiate classroom, as they get to the heart of competing narratives about the Civil War and the nature of civil society in the United States.*

*Die folkloristische Dichtung ist unabdingbar für das Verstehen des amerikanischen Bürgerkriegs (und der amerikanischen Identität überhaupt): an den Beispielen des Lieds Old Man Tucker (komponiert von Don Emmett, 1843; Harriet Beecher Stoves Roman Onkel Toms Hütte, 1853; D.W. Griffiths Filmepos Birth of a Nation, 1915 und schliesslich Edward Zwicks Spielfilm Glory, 1989) untersucht dieser Artikel literarische und cinéastische Widerspiegelungen, von oft widersprüchlicher Natur, von Sklaven, Sklaverei und freigelassenen Sklaven und schliesslich die widersprüchliche Rezeption afro-amerikanischer Kultur in der amerikanischen Öffentlichkeit und Unterhaltungskultur.*

*Cet essai commence par un examen de la chanson de Dan Emmett's 'Old Dan Tucker' (1843) pour aborder les stéréotypes au sujet des esclaves et des noirs libres et les mettre en rapport avec l'intérêt paradoxal qu'ont les américains au sujet de la communauté afroaméricaine. Cet intérêt a nourri le sentiment abolitionniste chez les classes populaires avant même la Guerre civile américaine comme l'ont démontré des nouvelles comme 'Uncle Tom's cabin' (1853) de Harriet Beecher Stover. D'ailleurs, le film 'Birth of a Nation' (1915) de D.W. Griffith a renforcée les critiques au sujet des stéréotypes négatifs de la Cause perdue après la guerre. Dans la mouvance du mouvement pour les droits civiques aux Etats-Unis, des films comme celui de Edward Zwick 'Glory' (1989) ont fournit des récits alternatifs aux adeptes de la Cause perdue. Que l'on soit au secondaire ou au collège, une analyse des interprétations présentes dans les produits culturels médiatiques de divertissement est nécessaire lorsque l'on enseigne à propos de la Guerre civile américaines, car ces interprétations sont au cœur de mouvances narratives en pleine compétition et elles tentent de définir la nature de la Guerre civile américaines, mais aussi, plus globalement, la société civile des Etats-Unis.*

### **Konrad Kochel and Maria Stinia**

#### Educational Values of Traditional Board Games

*This article discusses the didactical potential of traditional board games that used to be or still have been transmitted by direct contact from generation to generation. They appear since the*

*beginning of human history and nowadays can help re-create the atmosphere of the times when they were created and the psychological profiles of the past generations.*

*Im Artikel wird das didaktische Potential von traditionellen Brettspielen ausgeleuchtet, so wie sie verwendet worden sind und auch, wie sie immer noch von Generation zu Generation weitergegeben werden. Es gibt sie seit dem Anfang der menschlichen Geschichte, und sie können heutzutage dazu beitragen, sich in die Atmosphäre der Zeit zurückzusetzen, in denen sie geschaffen worden sind, um so auch die psychische Konstellation vorangehender Generationen zu erfassen.*

*Cet article traite du potentiel didactique des jeux de société traditionnels transmis de génération en génération. Ils apparaissent depuis le début de l'histoire humaine et de nos jours peuvent aider à recréer le contexte de l'époque où ils avaient été créés et les profils psychologiques des générations passées.*

### **Piotr Podemski**

Teaching middle school history through grand strategy video games:  
The case of *Europa Universalis*

*Most scholars have acknowledged that video games – or ‘electronic games in which players control images on a television or computer screen’ – have become ‘cultural artifacts [...] that invite all sorts of study, discussion, and analysis in school’ (Hutchinson, 2007: XXI). However, it is the grand strategy genre, in particular, requiring players to immerse into a complex virtual reality, ideally packed with accurate historical data while assuming responsibility for a wide range of domestic and international policy matters (and NOT just fighting battles) that deserves special attention with respect to history teaching. Many of those can be described as quality games, i.e. ones that do not only provide entertainment but can be regarded as good examples of edutainment, combining genuine enjoyment with meaningful educational gains, or ‘offer defensible explanatory models of historical systems’ (McCall 2011: 25). In the present paper the author’s intention is to share his theoretical considerations based on direct classroom experience regarding the use of *Europa Universalis*, a largely popular grand strategy computer game, to supplement traditional classroom-based history teaching to middle school students.*

*Die meisten Forscher anerkennen, dass Video Games oder elektronische Spiele, bei denen die Spieler mit Bildern auf Fernseh- und Computerbildschirmen umgehen, Kulturartefakte sind, die zu aller Art von Studien, Diskussionen und Analysen in der Schule einladen. Dabei sind es die grossen Strategiespiele, die spezielle Aufmerksamkeit in Bezug auf den Geschichtsunterricht verdienen. Sie verlangen von den Spielern, dass sie in eine komplexe virtuelle Realität eintauchen, die sich idealerweise an genauen historischen Begebenheiten ausrichtet und ihnen Verantwortlichkeiten für eine Reihe innen- und außenpolitischer Bereiche abverlangt (und dies NICHT nur bei Schlachten). Viele davon können als Qualitätsspiele beschrieben werden, d. h., dass sie wirklich nicht nur zur Unterhaltung dienen, aber als gute Beispiele von Edutainment betrachtet werden können, die echten Genusses mit bedeutungsvollem pädagogischen Gewinn kombinieren oder auch auf triftigen historischen Modellen und Erklärungen beruhen. Die Absicht des Autors im vorliegenden Beitrag ist es, auf der Basis theoretischer Betrachtungen mit direktem Bezug zum Klassenzimmer aufzuzeigen, wie das weit verbreitete Strategiespiel*

*'Europa Universalis' den herkömmlichen klassenbasierten Geschichtsunterricht an Mittelschulen ergänzen kann.*

*La plupart des chercheurs ont reconnu que les jeux vidéo – ou 'jeux électroniques dans lequel les joueurs contrôlent des images sur un écran de télévision ou d'un ordinateur' – sont devenus des 'objets culturels [...] qui invitent toutes sortes d'études, de discussion et d'analyse à l'école'. Cependant, le jeu vidéo de type grande stratégie, en particulier, oblige le joueur à plonger dans une réalité virtuelle complexe, idéalement construite autour de données historiques précises tout en assumant la responsabilité d'un large éventail de questions de politique intérieure et internationale (et pas seulement le fait de conduire des batailles) mérite une attention particulière à l'égard de l'enseignement de l'histoire. Beaucoup de ces jeux peuvent être perçus comme des jeux de qualité, à savoir ceux qui ne fournissent pas seulement du divertissement, mais qui peuvent être aussi considérés comme de bons moyens ludo-éducatifs, combinant plaisir authentique et apprentissages significatifs en offrant 'des modèles historiques explicatifs valides'. Dans le présent document, l'intention de l'auteur est de partager ses considérations théoriques basées sur l'expérience directe en classe concernant l'utilisation d'Europa Universalis, un jeu vidéo de grande stratégie largement populaire, afin de remplacer l'enseignement traditionnel de l'histoire aux élèves du collège.*

### **Urte Kocka**

#### **Edutainment in global history**

*Since 2012, the TV documentary 'Mankind: The Story of All of Us' has been trying to show problems and turning points in history both of importance and influence for the whole world. It is made as entertainment, but aims to educate as well. It shows mainly how dependent humans are on nature's gifts: the possibility of human ingenuity for inventions and entrepreneurship means that nature provides us, as a species, with everything we need for a life which is good and ever improving. The documentary has the optimistic outlook that humankind – with its potential for collective learning – will avoid those dangers with the power to destroy life and the earth.*

*Seit dem Jahr 2012 wird in den TV-History-Kanälen der ganzen Welt ein Film präsentiert, der den Anspruch hat, Probleme und Weichenstellungen in der Geschichte für die gesamte Menschheit zu zeigen: 'Mankind: the Story of All of Us'. Er zeigt unterhaltsame Filmepisoden, will aber auch belehren. Das Hauptanliegen des Films ist es zu verdeutlichen, wie abhängig die Menschheit, der dank der menschlichen Erfindungs- und Unternehmerskraft ein gutes und immer besseres Leben ermöglicht wird, dabei von den Ressourcen der Erde ist. Optimistisch ausgelegt, zeigt der Film, dass die Menschheit dank ihres Lernvermögens die möglicherweise Leben zerstörenden Umweltgefahren eindämmen kann.*

*Lancé en 2012, le documentaire 'Mankind: The Story of All of Us' a été présenté dans le monde entier par des chaînes destinées aux films historiques. Ce documentaire veut montrer des problèmes et des tournants de l'histoire qui ont influencé le monde entier tout en alliant divertissement et apprentissage. Il a pour objectif de démontrer la dépendance de la race humaine aux ressources naturelles qui – grâce à l'inventivité et l'esprit entrepreneur de l'homme – réussit à mener une vie agréable qui s'améliore continuellement. D'un ton optimiste, on explique dans ce documentaire*

*que l'homme, grâce à sa capacité d'apprendre, est capable d'éviter les dangers qui menacent la vie humaine, mais aussi la terre elle-même.*

### Markus Furrer

The modern contemporary witness and his double role as a 'histotainment'-figure and an object of oral history – a dilemma for history teaching?

*Some historians speak of the 'birth of the contemporary witness' in the last decades; this may be observed happening in both television and exhibitions. In both these cases the authentic power of the witnesses is being used. Their narrated biographical dimensions become the essence of history. Where are the causes of this development? There are two significant aspects: First there is the growing importance of memory culture as a new paradigm. Second is the effect of consumer society. Individuals are looking for a new history, one based on feelings and events as opposed to a coolly structured history. In society we need a history with an emotional and sensual quality. So in commercial television we can speak of the career of the figure of the contemporary witness who is an important historical identification figure. As we know the production of history has become ruled by the market and consumer society. But how do we deal with the figure of the contemporary witness in classes? Do we accept the dynamics of the market? This contribution based on a theoretical framework tries to show how contemporary witnesses have to become part of contemporary history at school.*

*Historikerinnen und Historiker sprechen von der 'Geburt des Zeitzeugen' seit den späten 1980er Jahren. Zeitzeugen beherrschen das öffentlich vermittelte Geschichtsbild in den Massenmedien wie auch in Ausstellungen. Damit verbindet sich ein Authentizitätsbedürfnis. Erzählt werden Geschichten entlang biographischer Kristallisationskerne, die gleichsam zur Essenz von Geschichte werden. Wo liegen die Ursachen dieser Entwicklung? Zwei signifikante Aspekte lassen sich ausmachen: erstens die zunehmende Wichtigkeit der Erinnerungskultur und zweitens die Wirkung der modernen Konsumgesellschaft. Individuen suchen nach einer neuen Geschichte, die auf Gefühlen und Ereignissen basiert und dies oft im Gegensatz zu einer abstrakt strukturierten Geschichtsdarstellung. In der Gesellschaft besteht ein Verlangen nach einer solchen Geschichte mit emotionalen Bezügen. So lässt sich auch die Karriere des Zeitzeugen im Fernsehen und anderen Medien einordnen, der zu einer wichtigen Identifikationsfigur geworden ist. Die Verarbeitung von Geschichte orientiert sich folglich an den Gesetzmässigkeiten des Marktes und der Konsumgesellschaft. Aber wie geben wir mit der Figur des Zeitzeugen im Geschichtsunterricht um? Akzeptieren wir die Dynamik des Marktes? Dieser Beitrag orientiert sich an theoretischen Konzepten und zeigt, wie die Zeitzeugen in der Zeitgeschichte für historisches Lernen eingesetzt werden können.*

*Certains historiens parlent de la 'naissance du témoin contemporain' dans les dernières décennies; cela peut être observé à la télévision ou dans des expositions. Dans ces deux cas, le pouvoir authentique des témoins est utilisé. Leurs dimensions autobiographiques deviennent l'essence de l'histoire. Où sont les causes de cette évolution? Il y a deux aspects importants: premièrement, il y a l'importance croissante de la culture de la mémoire comme un nouveau paradigme. La*

deuxième est l'effet de la société de consommation. Les individus sont à la recherche d'une nouvelle histoire, l'une basée sur des sentiments et des événements par opposition à une histoire froidement structurée. Nos sociétés ont besoin d'une histoire aux qualités émotionnelle et sensuelle. Dans la télévision commerciale, nous pouvons parler de la carrière du témoin contemporain qui est une importante figure d'identification historique. Comme nous le savons, la production de l'histoire est devenue gouvernée par la société de marché. Mais comment pouvons-nous nous occuper de la figure du témoin contemporain dans les classes? Acceptons-nous la dynamique du marché? Cette contribution basée sur un cadre théorique tente de démontrer comment les témoins contemporains doivent faire partie de l'histoire contemporaine à l'école.

### Barbara Wagner

The seriousness and fun, when edutainment is associated with history teaching

*When looking for edutainment at the outset of the 19th century, we see how important the history of wars was. It was very similar after WWI and WWII. Teachers approved when pupils played re-enacting the killings and violent scenes. At the beginning of the 21st century questions are being asked once again about violence in children's play, however now edutainment is associated with modernised methods of learning, introduction of new technologies and computer games. It is difficult to formulate safe topics for edutainment, just as it would be a utopia to ban the production of 'bad toys'. Teachers are not of the same mind as to how much seriousness and entertainment should be involved in teaching history. Some teachers think of edutainment with enthusiasm, considering enjoyable and active methods of learning the most important. But there are also teachers who disapprove of playing history, claiming that history 'is fascinating as it is' and that the process of learning history can be fun.*

*Fragen wir nach Edutainment am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts, so erkennen wir, wie bedeutsam die Geschichte von Kriegen war. Der Erste und Zweite Weltkrieg sind sich dabei ähnlich. Lehrer hießen das nachahmende Spielen von Gewalt- und Tötungsszenen durch Schüler gut. Zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts stellt sich die Frage des Umgangs mit Gewalt in Kinderspielen erneut, wobei sich Edutainment nun mit modernen Lernmethoden und neuen Technologien wie Computer Games verbindet. Dabei ist es schwierig, geeignete Themen für Edutainment einzubringen und gar unmöglich, die Produktion 'schlechter Spielzeuge' zu verbieten. Lehrer sind sich auch nicht einig, wie Ernsthaftigkeit und Edutainment in den Geschichtsunterricht einbezogen werden können. Einige zeigen sich enthusiastisch und betonen die Wichtigkeit von lustvollen und aktiven Methoden für das Lernen. Andere betrachten das Spielen von Geschichte kritisch und betonen, dass Geschichte von sich aus faszinierend sei und der Prozess von Geschichtslernen Vergnügen bereiten könne.*

*Lorsque l'on regarde l'edutainment au début du 19e siècle, nous constatons l'importance que l'histoire de la guerre avait et ce fut très similaire suite à la PGM et la DGM. Les enseignants approuvaient, à l'époque, que les élèves participent à des reconstitutions de scènes militaires violentes. Au début du 21e siècle par contre, des questions émergent au sujet de la violence dans les jeux des enfants. De plus, l'edutainment est aujourd'hui associé à de nouvelles méthodes*

*d'enseignement ainsi qu'à l'introduction des nouvelles technologies et des jeux vidéo. Il est difficile d'identifier des sujets sans controverse pour l'edutainment, tout comme il est utopique d'espérer bannir tout jouet 'mauvais'. D'ailleurs, les enseignants ne sont pas tous d'accord sur le dosage entre rigueur et plaisir dans l'apprentissage de l'histoire. Certains pensent à l'edutainment avec enthousiasme, considérant cette méthode d'apprentissage active comme durable et souhaitable. D'autres désapprouvent le jeu en histoire, clamant que cette discipline est 'fascinante en soi' et que le processus d'apprendre doit être la source de son propre plaisir.*

### **Eleni Apostolidou**

Affordances and constraints of history edutainment in relation to historical thinking

*'Edutainment' for history education is realized in the environment of historical culture (Erdmann, 2008). This paper discusses the cognitive advantages and disadvantages of several informal learning environments, like museums and films, in relation to students' familiarization with the discipline of history. Do students in these environments realize the provisional nature of historical accounts, or do they consider them as 'copies' of the past (Lee, 2005)? The discussion develops in the context of the conversation about divergences and convergences between professional historiography and popular historical culture (Grever, 2009; De Groot, 2009; Lowenthal, 1981 & 1985; Munslow, 2007). This paper suggests that 'edutainment' is an asset in history teaching but it ought to be used with caution as several means or practices have intrinsic defects that prevent students from a critical approach to the past.*

*'Edutainment' wird für die Geschichtsbildung in der Umgebung der historischen Kultur realisiert (Erdmann, 2008). Dieser Beitrag behandelt die kognitiven Vor- und Nachteile verschiedener informeller Lernumgebungen, so in Museen und Filmen, und fragt danach, wie darin Studenten mit dem Fachgebiet der Geschichte vertraut gemacht werden. Sind sie sich der provisorischen Natur der historischen Vermittlung bewusst oder betrachten sie diese als 'Kopien' der Vergangenheit (Lee, 2005)? Die Diskussion entwickelt sich im Rahmen des Gesprächs über die Divergenzen und Konvergenzen zwischen der professionellen Historiographie und der populären historischen Kultur (Grever 2009; De Groot 2009; Lowenthal 1981 & 1985 und Munslow 2007). Der Beitrag zeigt, dass 'Edutainment' ein Pluspunkt in der Geschichtsvermittlung ist, jedoch mit Vorsicht verwendet werden muss, da verschiedene Mittel und Praktiken Mängel aufweisen, die die Studenten daran hindern, sich kritisch der Vergangenheit zu nähern.*

*'Edutainment' pour l'enseignement de l'histoire est réalisé dans l'environnement de la culture historique (Erdmann, 2008). Ce travail examine les avantages et les inconvénients cognitifs des plusieurs environnements d'apprentissage informels, comme les musées et les films par rapport à la familiarisation des étudiants avec la discipline de l'histoire. Cette recherche tente aussi de voir si les élèves dans les environnements ci-dessus se rendent compte de la nature provisoire des contes historiques ou s'ils les estiment comme des 'copies' (Lee, 2005) du passé. La discussion se développe dans le contexte de la conversation sur les divergences et les convergences entre l'historiographie professionnelle et la culture populaire historique (Grever 2009, De Groot 2009,*

Lowenthal, 1981 & 1985, et Munslow 2007). Ce texte suggère que l'«*edutainment*» est un atout dans l'enseignement de l'histoire, mais qu'il devrait être utilisé avec prudence, car plusieurs moyens ou pratiques ont des défauts intrinsèques qui empêchent les élèves d'approcher de façon critique le passé.

### **Karel van Nieuwenhuysse**

Increasing criticism and perspectivism: Belgian-Congolese (post)colonial history in Belgian secondary history education curricula and textbooks (1990-present)

*Contrary to many western European countries that have witnessed or still witness fierce postcolonial debates in broader society with extensions to history education, Belgium has almost not witnessed such debates at all. This paper examines how Congolese (post)colonial history was and is covered in Belgian secondary history education, through an analysis of standards, curricula and textbooks since 1990. It also seeks for explanations for continuity and change in the (post)colonial accounts, which are to be found in evolutions within education in general and history education in particular, in evolving governmental expectations towards history education and governmental interference with memory politics, in the state of historiography, in the way history textbooks are established, and in public memory cultures regarding (post)colonialism.*

*Im Gegensatz zu vielen westeuropäischen Ländern, die heftige postkoloniale Debatten in der Gesellschaft allgemein mit Auswirkungen bis in den Geschichtsunterricht erlebt haben oder immer noch erleben, hat Belgien fast keine solchen Debatten erfahren. Dieser Beitrag untersucht mittels Analyse der Lernziele, Lehrpläne und Lehrbücher, wie die kongolische (post)koloniale Geschichte im belgischen Sekundären Bildungsbereich seit 1990 abgedeckt wurde und wird. Der Beitrag sucht auch nach Erklärungen für Kontinuität und Wandel in der (post)kolonialen Geschichte, die in Entwicklungen der Bildung im Allgemeinen und im Geschichtsunterricht im Speziellen festgestellt werden können. Das zeigt sich bei den sich entwickelnden staatlichen Erwartungen an den Geschichtsunterricht und anhand der staatlichen Einflussnahme auf die Erinnerungspolitik wie auch am Stand der Geschichtsschreibung und ihrer Einwirkung auf Geschichtslehrbücher sowie anhand der öffentlichen Erinnerungskultur in Bezug auf den (Post-)Kolonialismus.*

*Contrairement à de nombreux pays en Europe occidentale qui ont connu ou connaissent encore des débats postcoloniaux féroces dans la société en générale la Belgique n'a presque pas connu de tels débats. Cet article examine comment l'histoire congolaise (post)coloniale était et est présenté dans l'enseignement secondaire belge en histoire, par une analyse des compétences terminales, des programmes d'étude et des manuels scolaires depuis 1990. L'article cherche aussi des explications pour les continuités et les changements qui se produisent dans les récits (post)coloniaux. Nos résultats indiquent que ces explications se situent dans l'évolution au sein de l'éducation générale, mais aussi de l'éducation en histoire plus particulièrement ; dans l'évolution des attentes gouvernementales à l'éducation en histoire et de l'ingérence du gouvernement dans la politique mémorielle ; dans l'état de l'historiographie ; dans la façon dont les manuels d'histoire sont établis et dans les cultures mémorielles publiques en ce qui concerne le (post)colonialisme.*

**Elisabeth Erdmann and Wolfgang Hasberg**

## Proceedings in history teacher education? Results of a global study of the impacts of the Bologna Reform

*The results of a recently published global study about the impacts of the Bologna Reform on history teacher education are presented by the editors. The results show that at least with regard to history teacher education did not strengthen the international correlations beyond the transfer of some structures established in the academic tradition of the anglophone world. The study has discovered not only the diversity of history teacher education between the different countries but also between the universities of a single country. The structure of teacher education at universities can be standardized but not without including them in the discussion.*

*In dem Beitrag werden die Ergebnisse einer gerade erschienenen globalen Studie über die Auswirkungen der Bologna-Reform auf die Geschichtslehrerbildung von den Herausgebern des Bandes zusammen gefasst. Es zeigt sich, dass die Bologna-Reformen die internationalen Beziehungen – zumindest was das Geschichtslehrerstudium betrifft – nicht verstärkt haben, abgesehen davon, dass einige Strukturen der akademischen Tradition in der englischsprachigen Welt auf die übrigen Länder übertragen wurden. Die Studie zeigte nicht nur die großen Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Ländern auf, sondern auch die zwischen den Universitäten eines Landes. Es wurde auch deutlich, dass die Struktur der universitären Lehrerbildung vereinheitlicht werden kann, aber keinesfalls ohne die Einbeziehung der Universitäten.*

*Dans cet article les éditeurs d'une étude générale justement publiée présentent les résultats sur les répercussions de la réforme de Bologne sur la formation des enseignants et des professeurs d'histoire. Il s'avéra que les réformes de Bologne n'ont pas renforcées les rapports internationaux – au moins concernant la formation des enseignants et des professeurs d'histoire – mis à part que quelques structures de la tradition académique dans le monde anglophone sont transférées aux autres pays. L'étude a démontré non seulement des différences énormes entre les pays, mais encore entre les universités d'un pays. Tout laisse à penser qu'on peut standardiser la formation des enseignants et des professeurs mais en aucun cas sans associer les universités.*

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## AUTHORS' INDEX

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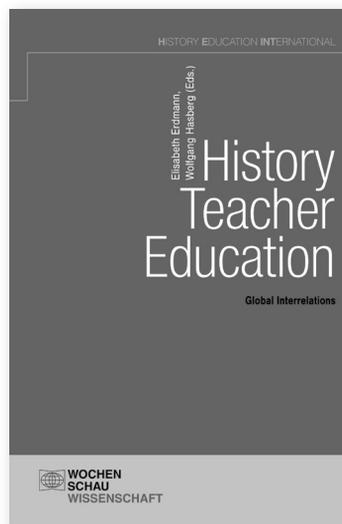
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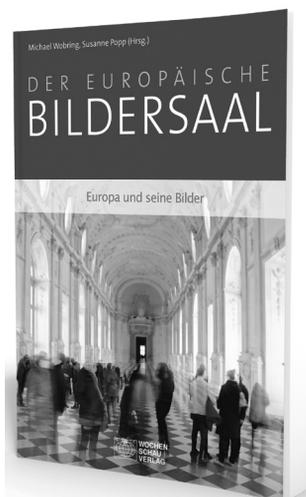
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