European Issues in Children's
Identity and Citizenship 7

# History Teaching, Identities and Citizenship

*Edited by Luigi Cajani*

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# Series Introduction:
# European Issues in Children's Identity and Citizenship

*History Teaching, Identities and Citizenship* is the seventh volume in the series European Issues in Children's Identity and Citizenship. The series has arisen from the work of the ERASMUS Thematic Network Project: Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe (CiCe). This Network has brought together over 100 university departments in 29 European states, all of whom share an interest in the education of professionals who will work with children and young people in the area of social, political and economic education. The Network links many of those who are educating future teachers, youth workers, social pedagogues and social psychologists in Europe. The CiCe Network began eight years ago and has been supported by the European Commission's Department of Education and Culture since 1998. We have now formed a CiCe European Association, independent of the Commission, membership of which is open to individuals and institutions. It is now completing its third phase of development, and planning for a fourth phase of activities up to 2011.

These volumes have come from our conviction that the changes in contemporary European society are such that we need to examine how the processes of socialisation are adapting to the new contexts. Political, economic and social changes are underway that suggest that we are developing multi-faceted and layered identities that reflect the contingencies of European integration. In particular, children are growing up in this rapidly changing society, and their social behaviour will reflect the dimensions of this new and developing social unit. Identities will probably be rather different: national identities will continue alongside new identifications, with sub-

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# Memory, history and the quest for the future

## Jörn Rüsen

*Das Vergangene ist nicht tot; es ist nicht einmal vergangen. Wir trennen es von uns ab und stellen uns fremd.*

[The past is not dead; it even has not passed away. We separate it from ourselves thereby alienating ourselves.]

Christa Wolf

Memory keeps the past alive and makes it an essential part of the cultural orientation of present-day life. This orientation includes a future perspective, a direction which moulds all human activities and sufferings. History is an elaborated form of memory. It reaches beyond the limits of one's own life span. It knits the pieces of remembered pasts into a temporal unit that is open to the future and which provides people with an interpretation of temporal change which they need in order to come to terms with the temporal movement of their lives.

This future-directedness of memory and history has not yet been intensively thematised and researched. There are various reasons for this. The most important (in my view) is shown by the coincidence of a loss of confidence in the Western concept of progress (at least

in the minds of Western and Westernised intellectuals) and the emergence of the memory discourse in the humanities. But it is the future which demands a critical review of the two well-developed concepts of memory and history. Globalisation confronts different traditions with the thread of a clash of civilisations as a consequence of the role played by cultural memory and historical thinking in the process of forming collective identity. Are we already provided with a cultural tool to overcome domination, exclusiveness and unequal evaluation in conceptualising identity? The unbroken power of ethnocentrism in the encounter of different groups, nations and cultures (even on the level of academic discourse) gives a clear, negative answer to this question.

There is another radical challenge for a reflected future-directedness of memory and history: the heavy burden of negative historical experience (imperialism, world wars, genocide, mass murder and other crimes against humanity) presses the process of identity building into a clash and a gap – between a horrifying past and a future which stands for its opposite. What mode of understanding can contribute to a turning away from this, towards a different future? How can historical identity be liberated from suffering from a broken string between past and future?

This chapter picks up these questions and tries to find answers on the level of meta-history. By doing so, it makes the humanities responsible for the culture they work on. It thematises the logic of cultural memory and historical thinking, since the challenges they have to answer reach into this realm of principles, which concern sense criteria and basic modes of interpretation and representation. In the first two sections, 'memory' and 'history' will be discussed as basic concepts for dealing with the past for the sake of the future. The manifold dimensioning of interpreting and representing the past will then be analysed. The two sections that follow concern issues of 'doing history' which demand special attention in the intercultural discourse of today: identity and the problems of ethnocentrism. The final section gives a short outlook on the practical dimension of intercultural communication.

## Historical memory

There are different modes of the discourse of history. One can first *distinguish memory from historical consciousness*. This distinction is not very easy, since both concepts cover the same field. But they thematise differently. The discourse on memory (Halbwachs, 1980; Nora, 1989; Assmann, 1992; Assmann, 1995) makes a sharp distinction between the role played by historical representations in the cultural orientation of practical life and the rational procedures of historical thinking by which knowledge of what actually has happened is gained. It emphasises the force of the past in the human mind, mainly in pre-rational or non-rational procedures of representation. It is interested in disclosing all modes of making or keeping the past present. It is less interested in the structural interrelation between memory and expectation, thus ignoring the significant role that future-directed intentions play in representing the past. (This interrelationship of memory and expectation has been clearly explicated by Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophy of temporality (Heidegger, 1980; Carr, 1986, Carr, 1984).

The discourse on historical consciousness (Jeismann, 1985; Rüsen, 1989; von Borries *et al*, 1991; Rüsen, 2001; Tempelhoff, 2003; Kölbl, 2004) includes rationality in the sense-generating procedures of the human mind. It is especially interested in those forms of representation which give the past the distinctive shape of history. Additionally, it thematises the impact of history in the future perspectives of human life.

In an abbreviated form, one could say that memory *presents* the past as a moving force of the human mind guided by principles of practical use, whereas historical consciousness *represents* the past in a more explicit interrelationship with the present, guided by concepts of temporal change and by truth claims: it stresses the temporal distinctiveness of the past as a condition for its relevance for the present. Memory is an immediate relationship, and historical consciousness is a mediated relationship, between past and present. Memory is related more to the realm of imagination, historical consciousness more to cognition. Memory is stuck to the past; historical consciousness opens this relation to the future.

But these distinctions are one-sided. It is much more useful to mediate or even synthesise these two perspectives on presenting and representing the past.

*Three levels of memory*

The memory discourse has brought about a very useful distinction of three different modes of dealing with the past in social life, which are also worthwhile applying to the issue of historical consciousness (Assmann and Frevert, 1999).

(1) *Communicative memory* mediates between self-understanding and the experiences of temporal change. In this medium, memory is a matter of forming generational differences. It is a field of cultural exchange in which a milieu, as a social unit with floating limits and changing memberships, shapes itself in a way that lets people feel they belong together and yet are different in the temporal dimension, in terms of their lives across different generations. Communicative memory is reflected in discussions about the importance of the historical experience of specific events and of special symbols for the representation of a political system.

(2) When there is a higher degree of selectiveness of the represented past, communicative memory becomes *collective memory*. In this form, memory gains greater stability and has a more important role to play in cultural life. People committed to the symbolism of collective memory gain a stronger feeling of belonging in a changing world. This is also an important element of social stability for a broad variety of social units, such as parties, civil movements, schools of thought in the academic field, interest groups etc.

(3) In time, this stability may lead to *cultural memory*, which represents the core of historical identity. Here, memory is a matter of rituals and highly institutionalised performances. It has its own media and a fixed place in the cultural life of a group. Cultural memory represents the political system as an entire structure and its permanence in the temporal flow of political affairs.

These three types of memory represent different levels of selection and institutionalisation with related levels of permanence and resis-

tance to change, and long-term historical processes can be interpreted by using the hypothesis of transforming communicative into collective and collective into cultural memory. Every historical memory is changing over the course of time but, while communicative memory is fluid and dependent on current circumstances, and collective memory shows first signs of organisational or institutional permanence, cultural memory becomes an institution with a high degree of permanence (Straub, 2002).

*Responsive and constructive memory*

Memory can be differentiated according to different criteria, including the way in which the past is represented. In an ideal typological sense there are two possibilities: *responsive* or *constructive* (van Beek, 2001). *Responsive* memory is triggered by the intensity of a specific experience that had burned itself into the minds of the people, so to speak. The memory hurts and a quasi-autonomous force compels people to react, to interpret and to work through it. This kind of memory becomes imprinted on the mind, bringing the past into the present as a powerful and lasting image. One of the most relevant examples of such memory is the Holocaust. The dominating concept for analysing this mode of experience in historical memory is the concept of trauma.

In the *constructive* mode, the remembered past is a matter of a discourse, narration and on-going communication. Here, memory has moulded the past into a meaningful history and those who remember seem to be masters of their past as they have put memory into a temporal perspective within which they can articulate their expectations, hopes and fears.

**Historical Consciousness**

*Historical Consciousness* is a specific form of historical memory. It is rooted in it – to a great extent even identical with it – but it is also distinguished in important aspects. The specificity of Historical Consciousness lies in the fact that the temporal perspective, in which the past is related to the present and through the present to the future, is designed in a more complex way. Especially in its modern forms,

Historical Consciousness pushes the past away from the present, thus giving it the appearance of being something else. This is not being done to make the past meaningless for the present, but – on the contrary – as a means of ascribing to the past the special importance of a historical relationship. A historical relationship is determined by a temporal tension between past and present, by a qualitative difference and its dialectics and argumentative-narrative mediation in time.

The vital power of memory lies in it keeping alive the past which those who remember have experienced. The past becomes historical when the mental procedure of going back into time reaches beyond the biographical lifespan, back into the chain of generations. Thus, the future prospects of historical thinking reach far beyond the life expectancy of the individual, into the future of coming generations. In this way, the historical relationship to the past is enriched by an enormous amount of experience. Only in this specifically historical kind of memory can the weight and the significance of historical experience come into view and be evaluated. It also changes the ways of meaningfully appropriating the treasures of past experiences. These ways of appropriation become much more complex, since they can employ a wide range of narrative strategies.

The mental process of historical consciousness can be briefly described as making sense of the experience of time by interpreting the past, in order to understand the present and anticipate the future. In a more detailed and somewhat artificial manner, the basic mental procedures involved can be organised into four elements:

■ the *perception* of another time as different: the fascination of the archaic, the obsolete, the mysterious trace, the insistent memorial, and so on

■ the *interpretation* of this time as temporal movement in the human world, according to some comprehensive aspects (eg, as evidence of the permanence of certain values, or as examples of a general rule, or as progress, etc)

■ the *orientation* of human practice through historical interpretation – both outwardly as a perspective on action (eg, as the in-

crease of political legitimacy through political participation, as the restitution of the world before its destruction, as the institution of 'true' conditions against the decline of morals) and inwardly, as identity conceptions (eg, 'We are the children of the sun,' or 'We as a nation stand for the universality and fulfilment of human rights,' or 'We belong to the communion of saints,' or 'We represent true spirituality as against others' materialism')

■ and finally the *motivation for action* that an orientation provides (eg, a willingness to sacrifice, even die or kill, for the sake of historical conceptions of national greatness, the missionary spirit, etc). Here, historical consciousness definitely leads into the future.

In the historical culture of the public sphere, collective memory is being overpowered by a torrent of historical images. The forms of consciousness created by literacy – and, above all, the distancing effect of rationality – could quickly decrease in significance and particularly in political efficacy. The grammar of history is becoming an imagology of presentations, in which every era is contemporaneous, and the fundamental idea of a single linear movement of time is disappearing. The constitutive difference of temporality can be suspended into a universal contemporaneity which can no longer be narratively ordered. Whether there can be a specific historical order within the orientative temporal continuity between past, present and future has become at least arguable. The very term *post-histoire*, and the related discussion of a mode of life without genuinely historical interpretation (Niethammer, 1992), suggests that these questions are now open.

At the same time, there has been an immense increase in empirical access. New storage media allow new modes of historical experience, and radically call into question earlier criteria of significance. At the same time, new communication media such as the Internet allow no single, politically sanctioned decision. The abundance of possibilities and the diversity of new voices require new strategies, new forms, and new contents of historically-grounded participation and exclusion. In every case, fixed conceptions of the

permanence and substance of individual and collective identity are being outstripped by the diversity of global communication, in favour of more dynamic and more open differentiations. This process provokes reactions, often expressed through these same new media, that stubbornly insist on ethnocentric distinctions.

History is founded on a specific time experience. It is an answer to a crisis, which has to be treated by interpretation. This argument can also be read the other way round: if we want to understand a manifestation of historical thinking, we have to look for the crisis, the critical time experience, that it meets.

Crisis constitutes historical consciousness. I do not think that crisis is simply an experience without any meaning. Contingency always occurs in the framework of cultural patterns of meaning and significance, but it occurs in such a way that these patterns always have to be mobilised – and sometimes even changed – in order to come to terms with the contingent event.

I would like to distinguish *three types of crises* which constitute different modes of historical sense-generation. These types are 'ideal-types' in the Weberian sense, that is, they are logically distinct but, in historiography and other modes of historical thinking and sense-generation, they occur in mixed forms and can only rarely be observed in a pure form.

(1) A *normal* crisis evokes historical consciousness as a procedure for overcoming it by employing pre-given cultural potentials. The challenging contingency is brought into a narrative within which it makes sense, so that human activity can come to terms with it by exhausting the cultural potential of making sense of temporal change. The patterns of significance utilised in such a narrative are not new. In fact, they are a re-arrangement of already developed elements, which are pre-given in historical culture. Let me give the unification of Germany as an example of this mode of coming to terms with a crisis. I suggest that a conservative German could use a traditional (exclusive) concept of national history in order to give to the challenging experience of German unification the significance of a normal crisis. From

this perspective, unification means a return of Germany to the path of national development. Such a concept would irritate Germany's neighbours and complicate the process of European unification.

(2) A *critical crisis* can only be solved if new elements are brought about through substantially transforming the pre-given potentials of historical culture. In such a case, new patterns of significance in interpreting the past have to be constituted: historical thinking creates and follows new paradigms. In the example of German unification, it could bring about a new idea of national identity which transforms traditional nationalism into a more open and inclusive one, related to the necessities of the process of European unification.

(3) A *catastrophic crisis* destroys the potential of historical consciousness to digest contingency into a narrative that is meaningful and makes sense. In this case, the basic principles of sense-generation themselves, which bring about the coherence of a historical narrative, are challenged or even destroyed. A good example of such a challenge is Saul Friedländer's remark that, looking back at the historical experience of the 20th century, one needs to ask the question: What is the nature of human nature? (Friedländer, 1998). Those principles transgress into a cultural nowhere, or even have to be given up. Therefore it is impossible to give such a crisis a place in the memory of those who had to suffer from it. When it occurs, the language of historical sense falls silent. It becomes *traumatic*. It takes time (sometimes even generations) to find a language which can articulate it.

This distinction is, of course, artificial. As with any ideal type, it is a methodological means of historical interpretation and, as such, it is contrasted to the mode of historical thinking active in everyday life. Without elements of catastrophe there would be no really challenging crisis and, without elements of normality, no catastrophic and critical crisis could even be identified as a specific challenge, not to speak of the possibility of radically changing the perception and interpretation of history. It is exactly this artificial character of my distinction which can render it useful for comparative purposes.

All three types of contingency as crisis lead to history; however, they bring about very different kinds of historical interpretation. In the first case, the narrative order integrates the challenging contingent experience. It becomes *aufgehoben* (negated and conserved at the same time) in the Hegelian sense of the word. In the second case of critical crisis, such an integration is achieved only by changing the narrative order. In the case of trauma, the challenging experience also becomes historicised, but the pattern of historical sense is shaped by it in return: it relativises its claim for a coherent narrative order, which covers the traumatic event, or it places senselessness into the very core of it. It leaves traces of incomprehensibility in the feature of history brought about by an idea of temporal change, which turns the experience of the past, the practical life activities of the present and the expectation of the future into a unity of time as a sense-bearing and meaningful order in human life. It imprints disturbance and rupture into the historical feature of temporal order as an essential cultural means of human life. It marks the limits of sense in treating the experience of time. It furnishes the coherence between experience and interpretation with the signature of ambivalence and ambiguity.

## Three Dimensions of Historical culture

Historical culture is historical memory and historical consciousness working in its social context.

The interpretive work of historical consciousness and its product, the cognitive structure called history is concretely manifested in a society's *historical culture*. Historical culture is multidimensional, like every other culture. It has religious, moral, pedagogical, political and rhetorical expressions: its cognitive substance is always the knowledge of *wie es eigentlich gewesen* (how it really was). We can distinguish three basic dimensions of historical culture as ideal types, each quite different in its logic and thus accountable to different criteria of meaning.

■ the *political* dimension, concerned with the legitimation of a certain political order, primarily the relations of power. Historical consciousness inscribes these, so to speak, into the identity

conceptions of political subjects, into the very construction and conception of the I and the We, by means of master narratives that answer the question of identity. There is no political order that does not require historical legitimation. The classic example, applicable to every culture and every epoch, is genealogy. Even the pure rule of law, that appeals only to the applicability of formal decision procedures, must be historically based if these procedural rules are to be plausible to the participants. Charismatic leadership cannot do without historical elements. Generally, the vehicle of political charisma will refer to the spiritual or natural forces that, within this culture, guarantee the world's temporal coherence.

■ the *aesthetic* dimension, concerned with the psychological effectiveness of historical interpretations, or that part of its content that affects the human senses. A strong historical orientation must always engage the senses. Masquerades, dances, and music can all have historical content. Many older master narratives are composed in poetic form and are celebrated ritually. A formal defect can destroy the effect of such a presentation, and even endanger the world's continued coherence. Historical knowledge must employ literary models to become discursive. In many cultures, historical narrative occupies a secure place in the literary canon as a separate genre. In modern societies, memorials, museums and exhibitions are among the familiar repertoire of historical representation. In older kinds of social systems, objects such as relics, tombs, temples and churches obligate the present to the legacy of the past, indeed, they make the present, in its relationship to the future, responsible for the vitality of historical memory.

■ the *cognitive* dimension, concerned with the knowledge of past events significant for the present and its future. Without the element of knowledge, the recollection of the past cannot effectively be introduced into discourses concerned with the interpretation of current temporal experience. Mythical master narratives, too, have a cognitive status, though science would eventually deprive them of it; if they did not, however, they could

never have provided historical (in the wider sense) orientations. They can lose their orientative power when confronted with a science of the past that possesses a more elaborated relation to experience. Master narratives then become prosaic, as they do already in antiquity, with Herodotus and others.

Special attention should be given to the treatment of burdening, negative and (most radical) traumatic historical experiences (like slavery, apartheid, war crimes etc).

## Identity and Ethnocentrism

Historical memory and historical consciousness have an important cultural function: they form and express identity (Assmann, J. 1995; Megill, 1998; Straub, 2000). They delimit the realm of one's own life – the familiar and comforting aspects of one's own life-world – from the world of others, which usually is a strange world. Historical memory and historical thinking carry out this function of forming identity in a temporal perspective; for it is the temporal change of humans and their world, their frequent experiences of things turning out different to that which was expected or planned, that endangers the identity and familiarity of one's own world and self. The change calls for a mental effort to keep the world and self familiar or – in cases of extraordinarily disturbing experiences of change – to re-acquire this familiarity.

Identity is located at the threshold between origin and future, a passage that cannot simply be left to the natural chain of events, but has to be intellectually comprehended and achieved. This achievement is produced – by historical consciousness – through individual and collective memory and through recalling the past into the present. This process can be described as a very specific procedure of creating sense. This procedure welds experiences of the past and expectations of the future into the comprehensive image of temporal progression. This temporal concept shapes the human life-world and provides the self (the 'we' and 'I' of its subjects) with continuity and consistency, with an inner coherence, with a guarantee against the loss of its essential core or with similar images of duration within the changes of subjects.

The location of the self, in terms of the territorial reality of living as well as in terms of the mental situation of the self within the cosmos, has a temporal dimension. Only through this dimension of time does the location of the self becomes fixed as the cultural habitat of groups and individuals. In situating themselves, subjects draw borderlines with others and their otherness within the locality and temporality of a common world, in which they meet and differentiate from each other in order to be subjects themselves.

Such boundaries are normatively determined and are always value-laden. In that peculiar synthesis of experiences, which determine action and purpose of what one historically knows and wishes for, oneself can be defined as remembered experience and intended goal at the same time; it is fact and norm, credit and debit, almost un-distinguished.

This is especially important for the differentiation between self and other, sameness and otherness. In order to survive in one's own world and with one's own self, and to find living here and now meaningful and liveable, each individual's own way of life is provided with positive perspectives, values and normative preferences. Negative, menacing, disturbing aspects are repressed and pushed away towards 'the other', where they get extra-territorialised and liquidated.

It is part of the utility of historical memory and of historical thinking's intentional approach to the past that whatever counts as belonging to one's own time and world order, and legitimises one's self-understanding, is subject to a positive evaluation; thus it is in this way generally accepted as good. In this way, negative aspects of the experience of time in relation to the world and to oneself are eclipsed from one's own world and from the inner space of one's own self, they are pushed away to the periphery and kept in that distance. The identity building difference between self and other is working in each memory, and any effort to remember is in itself an asymmetrical, normative relation. Ethnocentrism (in all its different forms) is quasi-naturally inherent in human identity.

This asymmetrical relationship between self and other, between sameness and otherness, makes historical memory controversial and

open for conflicts. Just as the stressing of one's own group-identity will be met with consent by its members, it will be denied by those beyond the border-lines who do not recognise themselves in these time-tableaux, let alone consent to them. Degrees of such an asymmetry vary enormously: their general quality is that of tension, that is, they are always on the brink of a *bellum omnia contra omnes* among those who exclude each other in constituting their own selves. Of course, all parties usually have a common interest in preventing an outbreak of this tension. Therefore they seek and develop ways of intra- and intercultural communication in order to tame, civilise or even overcome the ethnocentric asymmetry.

*Ethnocentrism* is a widespread cultural strategy to realise collective identity by distinguishing one's own people from others. I use the word here in a more general sense, not in its strict anthropological meaning where it is related to an identity focused on the social unit of a tribe. It simply means a distinction between the realm of one's own life as a familiar one from the realm of the lives of the others, which is substantially different; and it realises this distinction with values which put a positive esteem on one's own group and a negative one on the other group (under specific conditions of self-criticism, it can be seen as the other way around). Masayuki Sato gives illustrating examples of cartography (Sato, 1996).

Ethnocentrism defines one's own identity by a specific distinction from the other: the otherness is placed beyond the limits of one's own life form in such a way that the value system which regulates our relationship with our own people is different from the value system we use to deal with others. We tend to attribute mainly positive values to ourselves and the contrary concerning the otherness of the other. Otherness is a negative reflection of ourselves. We need this otherness to legitimate our self-esteem (Neumann, 1985; Müller, 1987; Müller, 2000).

Identity building along the lines of this cultural strategy of ethnocentrism inevitably leads to clashes between different collective identities. These clashes are grounded on the fact that the others do not accept our devaluation; on the contrary, they put the blame of

their negative values on us. The point of this deeply rooted and widely realised strategy of togetherness and separation from others, or – in brief, of identity building – is the tensional impact in its relationship between the two fundamental realms of togetherness and difference, of selfness and otherness. The clash is logically in-built into this cultural strategy. The last word in the cultural relationship between different communities guided by ethnocentrism will be struggle, even war in the sense of Thomas Hobbes' description of the natural stage of social life (*bellum omnium contra omnes*).

The unambiguous ethnocentricity of an historical orientation is based upon three principles:

a) Firstly, the positive and normative evaluation of one's own history and the negative evaluation of the history of others (normative dualism or Manichaeism of values).

b) Secondly, an unbroken continuity of one's own development from early origins to relevant projections of the future (reprojective teleology).

c) Thirdly, a clear location of one's own positive development in the centre of history and the corresponding discriminating marginalisation of others (temporal and spatial centralism).

This general structure (understood as an ideal-type) of historical consciousness as a cultural medium of identity building can be identified in all cultures and all times. It has also determined historical consciousness in Europe up to our times.

Corresponding to these three principles of ethnocentrism there are three principles for overcoming ethnocentrism:

(a) In respect to the unequal evaluation, the identity forming value system must include *the principle of equality* going across the difference between self and others. The difference itself then loses its normatively dividing forces. But equality is an abstraction going beyond the essential issue of identity: differences of engraved historical experiences and obligatory value systems. If one applies the principle of equality to identity formation and, at the same time, keeps

up the necessity of making difference, the logical result will be *the principle of mutual recognition of differences*. Mutuality realises equality and, in this form, equality gets the form of a balanced inter-relationship. If we attribute to this interrelationship a normative quality (which is necessary since the issue of identity is a matter of constituting values) it becomes the principle of recognition.

In order to introduce this principle it is necessary to break the power of self-esteem and its shadow of devaluating the otherness of the other. This demands another strategy of historical thinking: the ne-cessity of *integrating negative historical experiences* into the master narrative of one's own group. Thus the self-image of a people be-comes ambivalent, and this enables a people to recognise otherness. A short look at the topical historical culture in Europe will provide many examples. The catastrophic events of the 20th century are a challenge to raise this ambivalence in the historical self-awareness of Europeans.

Such an integration of negative, even disastrous and deeply hurtful experiences into one's own identity causes a new awareness of the elements of loss and trauma in historical thinking (Friedländer, 1994; LaCapra, 1994, 2001; Roth, 1995; Giesen, 2000; Ankersmit, 2001; Rüsen, 2002). New modes of dealing with these experiences, of working them through, become necessary. Mourning and for-giving could be such cultural strategies in overcoming ethnocentrism (Winter, 1995; LaCapra, 1997; Ricoeur, 1998; Liebsch and Rüsen, 2001; Rüsen, 2003; Mozes Kor, 2004).

(b) In respect to the principles of teleological continuation, the alter-native is the idea of historical development, conceptualised as a re-construction of a temporal chain of conditions of possibility. This kind of historical thinking is a gain in historicity: one definitely looks *back* into the past, and not forward from an archaic origin to the present. Instead, current life-situations and their future perspec-tives are turned back to the past in order to get knowledge about the pre-conditions for the present-day situation and its change into the future. Such a way of historical thinking strengthens elements of contingency, rupture and discontinuity in historical experience. Thus

the ambivalence and ambiguity of the identity-forming value system in the realm of historical experience can be met.

Under the guidance of such a concept of history, the past loses its quality of inevitability. Things could have been different, and there has been no necessity in the actual development. If one employs this logic in analysing European historical identity, a remarkable change takes place: one has to give up the idea that present-day Europe and the current process of unification have been inevitable since the very beginnings of antiquity. Instead, Europe has not only changed its spatial dimensions, but its cultural definition as well. Its history be-comes more open to alternatives, and this kind of historical aware-ness opens a broader future perspective and gives space for a higher degree of freedom in the interrelationship between future and past, which is a part of the historical feature of identity.

(c) In respect to spatial monoperspectiveness, the non-ethnocentric alternative is multiperspectiveness and polycentrism.

## How to conceptualise intercultural comparison

An intercultural comparison pre-supposes cultures as the subject matter of its work. How these units of comparison should be looked at is an open question. Are there pre-given entities, temporally and spatially well distinguished? If an intercultural comparison uses a theoretical framework, one must be very careful not to start from pre-suppositions which are problematic. This can be easily demon-strated in respect of the sense-criteria which constitute historical thinking in general. These sense-criteria are an essential part of a cultural code which defines the units of comparison. Consequently, cultures can be compared along the line of their fundamental con-cepts, which define the forms and realms of reality and human self-understanding. So a typology of a conceptualisation is a very useful theoretical basis for a comparative approach.

Yet the danger of such a theory of cultural differences lies in its tendency to substantiate or even reify the individual cultures con-cerned. Their internal historicity, their manifold interferences and mutual conditioning are lost from sight. A comparison is only a

statement of dichotomy, of clear alternatives: historical thinking follows either this code or another. The related forms of cultural identities appear to be special realms with clear borderlines; nothing seems to exist beyond or across the single codes. But the typology itself transgresses this borderline in a decisive step and indicates a mode of thinking which does not necessarily follow one cultural code, different from the others. A typology of cultural differences is methodically necessary as a hypothetical construct, but it has to avoid the constraints and misleading views of a concept of cultures as pre-given units and entities.

This idea of cultures as being units or entities is committed to the cultural logic which constitutes identity as the fundamental difference between inside and outside. Such a logic conceptualises identity as a mental territory with clear borderlines and a corresponding relationship between self and otherness as strictly divided and only externally interrelated. This logic is essentially ethnocentric, and ethnocentrism is inscribed into a typology of cultural differences which treats cultures as coherent units which can clearly be separated from each other.

I would like to suggest a method of using theoretical conceptualisation which avoids this ethnocentrism. *Ethnocentrism is theoretically dissolved if the specifics of a culture are understood as a combination of elements that are shared by all cultures.* Thus the specifics of a culture are brought about by different constellations of the same elements. The theoretical approach to cultural differences which is guided by the idea of cultural specifics does not fall into the trap of ethnocentrism. On the contrary:

■ it presents the otherness of different cultures as a mirror, allowing better self-understanding

■ it does not exclude otherness when one culture constitutes its own peculiarity, but it keeps it included; and

■ it brings about a balanced interrelationship of cultures: the people who have to deal with their differences from others become empowered through recognition and acknowledgement

## Communicating differences

Intercultural communication in the field of historical culture presupposes comparison, but goes a step further: it brings the units compared into the movement of a discourse. This discourse is difficult, because it has no established rules. And, since it touches the issue of cultural identity, it is loaded with all the problems of ethnocentrism and the urge to overcome this.

Even when the interpretative achievements of historical consciousness are being brought about in the academic form of historical studies, the formative power of the normative factors of historical identity remain prevalent. Even a historiography based on methodologically-controlled research is determined by the political and social life of the time, and by the expectations and dispositions of the audiences. Academic historiography is ascribed to an historical culture, in which the self and the other are treated differently, and evaluated as normative points of view. Thus, in this context, the questions remain: if and how the difference between and the differentiation of forms of belonging, which generally determine and socially organise human life, can be approached; and how the conflicting dimension of ethnocentric sense-making can be tamed and overcome.

The answers to these questions may be diverse: academically, historical studies are obliged to enforce an intersubjective validity of their interpretative transformation of the past into a historical construction of belonging and difference. Intersubjective validity also here includes the principle that others can agree as much as the members of one's own group. However, such an agreement would not abolish the difference between the respective forms of belonging, nor the particular identity of those affected by the respective histories. Differences and identities are articulated and coined by this appeal to the past. So the academic truth-claims ultimately depend upon the very ways in which the procedures of creating sense in the framework of methodologically-controlled research are regulated.

Today, the quest for such a regulation is becoming increasingly important. Not only mere historical differences within a common cul-

ture are at stake, as was the case in a historiography committed to the national perspective and orientation of European standards of historical professionalism. Processes of migration and globalisation have produced new constellations of intercultural communication. European countries, nations, societies and states find themselves questioned and challenged in a new way by non-European nations and cultures. They criticise the cultural hegemony of the West and forcefully intend to liberate themselves from the historical interpretations that we have imputed to them. Western historical thinking has to reflect the critique of ideology which holds that, behind the universalistic claims of validity and behind the standards of reason, there are claims for power and domination which endanger, if not destroy, the sovereignty of other cultures.

This confrontation has already caused a habit of self-criticism within western interpretations of historical thinking. But this does not mean that the established institutions and methods of historical culture have already found new ways of relating themselves to the other, or of coming to terms about their cultural differences with the other. A similar problem develops within western societies themselves in the treatment of minorities, where their cultures may be perceived as being not only different, but also as uncommon and strange. How can this otherness find a place in the way of life of the majority?

The post-modern critique of the categorical application and ideological use of a variety of modernisation models has undermined the hermeneutic tone of total conviction shown when humanities researchers declare their patterns of interpretation to be intersubjectively valid – that is, applicable across all cultural differences. However, this critique threw out the baby of cognitive validity in historical reasoning with the bathwater of eurocentrism. The result is an epistemological and political culturalism which confines its insights into the specific character of cultures, temporally and regionally, to the innate scope of different cultures, so that it has become dependent on the horizon of those cultures' own self-understanding.

As well as the immense epistemological and hermeneutical problems of such an interpretation, there is the irritation, for those who

follow it when freeing the value and self-esteem of the other, of eurocentric models of otherness. They find themselves handicapped in relating the liberated other self to its own culture, so that it may indeed recognise the other. This kind of culturalism transforms cultural difference into a hermeneutic monadology that prevents intercultural communication, enabling it only at the expense of any generally accepted rules.

We therefore have to understand: how can the production of cultural and historical knowledge, which is always also the production of cultural competence, be aligned to the goal of providing future generations with the means of intercultural communication?

This question can only be answered by the practice of direct communication. The objective task of cultural orientation can only be regarded as subjectively achieved and solved when the others and we agree when we historically relate ourselves to them, and *vice versa*. At that point, the mutual consensus of selfness and otherness has been achieved in historical self-realisation. (Of course, this is not conceivable as a task to be accomplished once and for all, but only as an open and ongoing process. The ever-recurring time-experiences from everyday life, from struggles for power, from collisions of interest and from the unintended side effects of our own actions and the reactions of others, call for a continuous effort to historically position oneself and to understand the self-understanding of others.)

The many voices contributing to this debate may easily be combined into a general agreement on furthering progress in conceptualising historical thinking as a medium of identity building, determining the otherness of others and relating this otherness to the self: *the decomposition of western historical thought* already in progress, its deconstruction into elements and factors to be further differentiated diachronically, needs to be continued. The pregnancy of cultural difference is decreasing with the deconstruction of the western special character of historical thinking into a complex constellation of factors, each of which is not at all culturally specific. But this does not mean it is dissolving into a *pot-pourri* of historical sense-

creations, lacking the contours of an identity building self-esteem. On the contrary: the self-esteem achieves greater clarity within the complexity of the constellation in which it appears. At the same time, the mutual perception focuses on the fact that what is different about the other is composed of elements that also belong to oneself.

Together with the decomposition of western peculiarity, the special characteristics of non-Western forms of historical thinking and historical culture must be outlined; they should be made visible as peculiar constellations of general factors in the creation of historical sense. Without the perception of the other, the narrow-mindedness of historical attitudes is strengthened.

However this necessary research is carried out, its results would be weakened without a critical rethinking of the decisive questions and interpretations that make other traditions and interpretations comparable. At the very point where they could objectify and intellectually support intercultural communication, without theoretical reconsiderations they would hamper it.

Considering the urgent problems of cultural conflict in an age of globalisation and increased migration, such a use of theoretical reflections and empirical data, should take place in direct discussion of our own as well as of other traditions and contemporary forms of historical thinking. The current features and forms of academic discourse do not yet correspond to these imperatives: too often the respective experts still talk without giving them a voice in this discourse. But that can be changed.

# 3

# Changing citizenship, changing educational goals, changing school subjects? An analysis of history and geography teaching in France

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It is currently asserted as common knowledge that teaching history in schools contributes to the development of identity and citizenship. Similar outcomes are asserted or assumed for other subjects such as geography, literature, the social sciences and economics. Such claims usually link school subjects with identity and citizenship through the subjects' curricula and the ethnocentric attitudes, political values and nationalism that these bear. This chapter suggests that it would be more fruitful to examine not just the topics that are studied but also school practices and the consistencies between curriculum content, classroom practice and the expressed aims of the subject. In adopting this approach, I draw on the conception of the *paradigme pédagogique*, borrowed from studies in the history of education. This concept is used to analyse the school subjects of history and geography teaching in France. This case study is specifically heuristic, because there are parallel changes taking place in the definition of citizenship, in subject content and in school practice.