TEACHING HISTORY IN EUROPE: A TRANSCULTURAL TASK

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Christoph Wulf is Professor of Anthropology and Education and a member of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Historical Anthropology, the Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) “Cultures of Performance,” the Cluster of Excellence “Languages of Emotion,” and the Graduate School “InterArts” at the Freie Universität Berlin. His books have been translated into 15 languages. For his research in anthropology and anthropology of education, he received the title “professor honoris causa” from the University of Bucharest. He is Vice President of the German Commission for UNESCO. Research stays and invited professorships have included the following locations, among others: Stanford, California; Tokyo, Japan; Kyoto, Japan; Beijing, China; Mysore, India; Paris, France; Modena, Italy; Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Stockholm, Sweden; London, England; and Saint Petersburg, Russia.

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Christoph Wulf is editor, co-editor and member of the editorial staff of several national and international journals.

Introductory Remarks
A comprehensive consideration of the images of the other in the teaching of history in the countries of Europe necessarily leads to a comprehensive reform of this teaching. It is not just Europeanization and globalization that change the frame of reference for the teaching of history. The normative approach to the teaching of history changes as well. New terms and teaching methods must be taken into account. Furthermore, a series of new perspectives on the teaching of history are to be suggested, with which the attempt is made to do justice to the present situation in Europe. These perspectives bring the following concepts into focus: globalization and cultural diversity; dual historicity and culturality; development of a historical consciousness; consideration of a historical-critical anthropology; alterity and heterogeneity; difference, transgression and hybridity; violence and peace; and education for sustainability. In addition, there are ensuing methodological innovations in the teaching of history. It is only if the new conceptual orientation is successfully combined with methodological innovations that reform can be made that meets the requirements of the times.

The following objectives to be subsequently developed allow for the designation of important reform perspectives: reinforcement of inquiry learning; development of an enhanced concept of learning; teaching and learning as a performative process; and the teaching of history in Europe as a transcultural task.

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

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

Culture does not designate a self-contained, uniquely definable ensemble of practices, values, symbolizations and imaginations. The borders between cultures are dynamic and change according to context. They are permeable. They allow themselves to be crossed by many cultural phenomena and prevent other phenomena from crossing. Cultural phenomena overlap, intermix and change within and between cultures. They flow back and forth between the cultures. An exchange occurs in which asymmetries determine the cultural flow. The processes of exchange are the result of many constructive and destructive energies. Mimetic assimilations and translations of the cultural phenomena into new contexts occur in many of these processes of exchange. Economic, political and social processes as well as electronic media play an important role. An overlapping of the global and the local occurs, leading to the creation of “glocal” phenomena whose origins are often difficult to trace. In these processes, new forms of the cultural and social imaginary are created (Huppauf/Wulf 2009).

One-World Mentality vs. Cultural Diversity

In spite of these important changes, there are still very few cases in which the teaching of history is oriented towards our present-day Europeanization and globalization. Today, the teaching of history must respond to new challenges associated with the process of globalization. Globalization is a complex phenomenon which has a profound influence on the lifestyles and self concepts of most Europeans. Globalization is now all-pervasive in almost all areas of life in Europe, with the result that the effects of crisis situations such as the current crisis of the financial markets and banks are exerted not only nationally, but worldwide. Among many other aspects, the following six dimensions are of constitutive importance for the process of globalization (Wulf/Merkel 2002):

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

To these characteristics we must also add the globalization of poverty, suffering, war, terror and the exploitation and destruction of nature, which are related to colonialism and capitalism and have long been ignored. These developments are leading to a separation of the political from the economic spheres, to a globalization of lifestyles and to a rise in the importance of new communication media. These are not linear processes. They are disrupted in many places and produce contradictory results. They have different objectives and decision-making structures and are organized in networks, like rhizomes. They do not run parallel in space or time and they are subject to a wide variety of different dynamic forces. They are multi-dimensional and multi-regional and deeply rooted in the centers of neoliberal capitalism. The dominance of a globalized economy over political life and the globalization of lifestyles by means of the increasing presentation of experience as images in the new media help to bring about changes in the way we work. All this has been accompanied by a decline in the influence of the individual nation states, while cultures have become increasingly permeable and homogeneous, resulting in the development of new ways and spheres of life.

The question arises as to what this scenario means for the teaching of history and to what extent it takes these developments suitably into account. Whatever the case may be, there is now a strong need for discussion in the teaching of history about the development of and changes associated with Europeanization and globalization. This discussion is leading to a partial re-organization of ways of teaching history, with an associated reduction in the reliance on national histories as explanatory basis.
The challenges of globalization have made it necessary to conduct a thorough investigation into the conditions of human life as they stand today. This is the task of a contemporary anthropology, which can no longer be reduced to ethnology, philosophical anthropology or anthropological issues in the historical sciences, but must be reformulated as historical and cultural anthropology. Thus defined, anthropology must set itself the task of elaborating a body of knowledge that makes a contribution to improving human beings’ understanding of themselves and the world and takes cultural diversity into account. This anthropological knowledge must include a reflection of its historicity and culturality, thus providing a frame of reference for teaching history in such a way that the anthropological perspective is included. If we are to grasp the situation of human beings adequately today, we also need, for example, to understand the historical and cultural coordinates of globalization.

A Dual Historicity and Culturality and Historical Consciousness

In my view, the main aim of teaching history is to develop a historical consciousness based on historical and contemporary structures and phenomena. This is more important than imparting a large number of historical facts, which are usually more or less unconnected and not sufficiently understood. Today, history needs to be taught in a way that helps to reduce the wealth of historical knowledge by focusing on a knowledge that relies on thoroughness, i.e., on gaining an understanding of selected examples. A historical consciousness is centered on an awareness that previous worlds such as those of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and our contemporary world are historically developed worlds and that they are thus modifiable, which makes them open-ended. A historical consciousness includes an awareness of the uniqueness and thus also the particularity and diversity of historical and cultural situations. This historical awareness is the central goal of a historical and cultural anthropology that aims to improve the self-understanding of human beings today and in which the phenomena of human beings are the subject matter of research and teaching (Wulf 2004, 2002a, 2002b). In our attempts to impart a historical consciousness, we need to grasp the dual nature of historicity and culturality, that is, the fact that both our own times and the era with which we want children to become familiar with have their own historical and cultural character.

The Multiplicity of Cultural Similarities and Differences

History is shaped by cultural diversity and cultural diversity is shaped by history. There is no single definition of history, but a diversity of definitions. Definitions of history and of cultural diversity are pluralistic and manifold and we must therefore consider different definitions, methods and paradigms of history. To what degree does teaching history mean teaching political, social and economic history? Inspired by the “Ecole des Annales” and the “Nouvelle Histoire” in France, historical anthropology has become an important paradigm for the teaching of history (Wulf 2002a, 2002b, 2004). In this paradigm, it is a matter of imparting the historicity of emotions, ways of life and mentalities. That is, helping children to understand the historicity of their families and of their feelings, for example, is an important part of the teaching of history.

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

As experiences with transcultural communication and transcultural learning have shown us, the meanings of the same cultural phenomena and situations can often differ, depending on who is responding to them. This is illustrated, for example, by the differences in meaning attached to words in European languages which originated from the Latin word natura. The associations and connotations of the German “Natur”, English “nature”, French “nature” or Spanish “naturaleza” differ widely, even though the cultures in which they developed share a long common history. If we compare them with the meanings of the Japanese word for nature, “shi zen”, we find even greater differences (Imai/Wulf 2007; Suzuki/Wulf 2007).

In the light of the one-world mentality which still dominates the discussion on globalization, it is imperative to highlight historical and cultural differences, even where appearances may be deceptively similar. It is this that makes it possible to communicate with the other. If human beings were aware of the otherness in themselves and their own cultures, this would open up new possibilities for understanding the otherness of other people and other cultures and of developing a way of thinking from the point of view of the other – a heterological way of thinking. With the increasing awareness of differences and alterity and the recognition of cultural diversity it is increasingly becoming possible to identify common aspects of different cultures and to break down barriers between them. The ability to perceive and accept differences is
essential and can even help to prevent violent conflict. However, even acceptance of cultural diversity has its limits; for many people it is related to issues of human rights and global ethics. It must be accepted that disagreements will arise with members of other cultures in this context. Wherever possible, such disputes must be conducted without recourse to the use of force.

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

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

The Teaching of History as Dealing with Alterity and Heterological Thinking

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

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

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

Societies and cultures are constituted by contact with alterity. To experience other people and cultures is central to the development of children and adolescents. People can only understand themselves as reflected by and through the reactions of other human beings and cultures. This implies that knowing ourselves means that we must be aware that there are limits to our understanding of alterity.

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

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

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

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

**Differentiation, Transgression, Hybridity**

The teaching of history takes place in schools. Many of them, especially the inner city schools in big cities, can be perceived as zones of contact between children and adolescents from different cultures. Differentiation, transformation and hybrid formations are of central importance here. These terms are inter-related. Their interconnectedness is obvious (Audehm/Velten 2007). In the teaching of history from a transcultural point of view, it is important to make use of the following three concepts for the analysis of historical and cultural phenomena:

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

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

3) To develop a historical consciousness of our own time the analysis of new hybrid cultural forms by means of difference and transgression is a crucial issue. As communication and interaction between different countries become ever closer and faster, and economic, political, social and cultural exchange becomes more intensive, more and more hybrid cultural forms come into being. Homi Bhabha (2004) first used the term hybridisation to define cultural contacts in a non-dualist and non-essentialist way by describing them in terms of their function of creating identity by means of a “third space”. The third space is liminal; it is a space in-between which emphasizes its own in-between-ness. In this liminal space, borders are subject to subversion and restructuring and hierarchies and power relationships are changed. The crucial questions are to what extent these processes result from performative practices and how these new forms of hybridization are created. They are mixed forms in which elements belonging to different systems and contexts change their character in a mimetic process, leading to a new cultural identity. This identity is no longer constituted by distinguishing oneself from another, but in mimetically assimilating oneself to the other.

**The Contribution of the Teaching of History to Education for Peace**

Violence between people of different societies and cultures is unavoidable if images of the other, which help communicate perspectives of historical and cultural diversity as conditions of Europeanization and globalization, do not become an integral part of the teaching of history in European countries. This was shown in the violent history of Europe in the 20th century. The critical examination of the different forms of violence and the possibilities for peace are therefore a central task of the teaching of history and of the school. Due to the existence of modern weapons of mass destruction, human beings still face an unprecedented threat of war and violence. Peace has become the prime condition for human life. Its production and preservation is key not only to the survival of individuals, generations and nations, but also to the survival of humanity as a whole. In the context of the teaching of history, it is therefore imperative that curricula both cover the conditions that lead to war, violence and destruction and search for ways of rendering them less harmful or even overcoming them.

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

In the early 1970s peace research elaborated on the fact that peace could not be brought about by a change in
consciousness alone. The experiences of the peace movement have confirmed these analyses. The absence of peace and the presence of violence are too deeply rooted in social structures to be overcome by human striving for peace alone. Peace requires additional political action directed at reducing the violent structures inherent to the international system and to society at large.

The teaching of history concerning peace must draw on central guiding ideas such as "organized lack of peace", "structural violence" and "social justice". These ideas emphasize the social character of peace and guard us from fantasies of omnipotence and naïve problem reductions. According to Galtung's differentiation, which is still valid today, peace not only denotes the absence of war and direct violence (a negative definition of peace), but also needs to be understood as the reduction of structural violence and the production of social justice (a positive definition of peace). According to this understanding of peace, the teaching of history must not only tackle war and direct violence between nations and ethnic groups, but also address the violent conditions at the base of society (Galtung 1973; Wulf 1973, 1974; Senghaas 1995, 2000).

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

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

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

The Teaching of History as Education for Sustainable Development

The analysis of violence and organized lack of peace with the objective of developing a commitment to forms of conflict resolution that are free of violence must be directed not just at other people, societies and cultures. A task that is no less important for the survival of humankind consists of analyzing the violence exercised against nature and future generations through the consumption of non-renewable resources. Reducing this consumption through the development of education for sustainable development is the second part of this task. Hence, concern regarding sustainability is part of the development of a modern historical consciousness. The aim of sustainable development is to realize a continuous process of all-encompassing social change which is to sustain the quality of life of the current generation while securing the options of future generations to create their own lives. Sustainable development has become recognized as a way of improving individual life chances and of promoting social prosperity, economic growth and ecological safety.

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

Sustainability is a regulative idea. Like peace, it can never be fully realized. Sustainable education is an important prerequisite for the gradual realization of sustainability/sustainable development. As such, the teaching of history for education for sustainability is directed at the individuals whose sensitivity and responsibility it wants to promote. To this end it needs to start with existing structures and, always bearing in mind individual and social conditions, to develop the creative abilities of young people. By this I mean the ability to shape their own lives and their own life-worlds in accordance with the premises of sustainable development.
Teaching and Learning of History as a Performative Process

Teaching and learning of history is not merely a cognitive process; it is also a social process, in which the interactions between students play an important role. In the teaching of history, bodily processes play a larger role than is generally perceived. An analysis of gestures in the context of interaction during instruction makes clear the extent to which learning and education is managed through facial expressions, gestures and posture (Wulf et al. 2010). An analysis of the teaching of history shows how important processes of empowerment of the students are in class. To render historical knowledge embodied, the staging of the body plays an important role. Three aspects of performativity are central in three explicit ways. Firstly, teaching history is itself a historical and cultural performance. That means that depending on the historical and cultural context and the associated traditions of school culture, the teaching of history differs in the different societies and cultures of Europe. To a large degree, these traditions determine which performative options exist for the teaching of history.

Secondly, in the teaching of history, language is often performative and a mode of action. John Austin (1979) made this clear when he proved how important the performative character of speech is for communication and interaction. Hence, it is important to give attention to this dimension in the teaching of history. And thirdly, teaching history has a sensual or aesthetic dimension that needs to be considered in the process of teaching and learning (Wulf et. al. 2004; Wulf 2007; Suzuki/Wulf 2007; Wulf/Zirlas 2007). In the teaching of history, where predominantly non-sensual events are discussed and where it is a matter not of the present but of reconstruction of the past, the question of sensual communication plays a central role. If this is not successful, history remains abstract and foreign. Only through sensual communication can history be experienced as meaningful. Only when one learns the meaning of history for the understanding of one’s own time does an interest in the past arise: only then can a historical consciousness develop.

Inquiry Learning and a Comprehensive Concept of Learning

A modern understanding of the teaching of history does not only mean learning facts, but also learning how to learn, how to live together, how to act and how to be (Delors 1996). The teaching of history can make an important contribution to the implementation in the school of an interdisciplinary educational mission that does not just convey subject-specific interrelationships of knowledge. For example, social life and the associated extracurricular experiences play an important role in the education of young people. In these processes, young people can learn to be independent and operate in a self-reliant manner with others in the community. Using the rituals of cooperative learning, students learn to rely on themselves to manage their learning processes. Ritualistic arrangements help here in the acquisition of practical knowledge regarding how to learn independently.

Inquiry learning is of particular importance here. This form of learning strives during learning to learn how one learns. Inquiry learning requires time and a thorough examination of (source) material that needs to be found, structured and interpreted. As our Berlin Study on Rituals has shown, this means integrating mimetic, performative and poetic modes of learning in order to create intensive encounters with history (Wulf 2003; Wulf et al. 2004; Werler/Wulf 2006; Suzuki/Wulf 2007).
collective imaginary, that is, individual and collective historical consciousness, are created. Without mimetic representations, history remains inanimate and does not enrich children’s imaginaries (Wulf 2007; Gebauer/Wulf 1995, 2004, 2005). The students’ mimetic processes relate to the teacher, whose method for examining, analyzing and interpreting historical events is imitated by many students. In the process, these students do not copy the teacher’s interest and the way that the teacher deals with history. When they relate to the teacher mimetically, they develop their own approach to history with mimetical reference to the teacher and his or her embodiment of history, but the teacher’s instruction is of major significance for the initiation and facilitation of this approach.

**The Teaching of History in Europe as a Transcultural Process**

The teaching of history in Europe is a transcultural task which includes national, European and global perspectives (Wulf 1995, 2006): A teaching of history that is transculturally oriented is not determined by an individual cultural perspective. It is rather the case that it is assumed at the outset that reconstruction and interpretation of history differs. This applies particularly when historical interpretation is bound up with questions of cultural identity. According to the contemporary view, a single historical truth associated with a national identity does not exist. It is much more a matter of integrating the view and interpretation of a historical event through the other. Instead of clear answers, ambiguity is the objective for a teaching of history that is open to the perspectives of the other.

**Outlook**

After the end of the cold war, a reform of the teaching of history in Europe still remains necessary today, the result of which would be that the images of the other and their interpretation would find more recognition. For this to happen, the teaching of history must open itself to various assessments of the same historical events. It must also make it clear that the communication of images and interpretations of history can never be a process that is hermeneutically conclusive. In this process, what is important is comprehension of the ambiguity of historical events. If the perspective of the other is successfully integrated, what will emerge is a complex image of history and its contribution to the understanding of the present. This will allow a historical consciousness to form that is open to the ambiguity of historical and current events and that at the same time implies a consciousness of the possibilities of historical change in the future.
Literature


