

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

Marcus Otto

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

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

Susanne Grindel

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

“We Need to Get away from a Culture of Denial”? The German-Herero War in Politics and Textbooks

Lars Müller

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

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

Luigi Cajani

This article reconstructs the evolution of the representation of Italian colonialism in history textbooks for upper secondary schools from the Fascist era to the present day. The textbook analysis is conducted here in parallel with the development of Italian historiography, with

special attention being paid to the myth of the “good Italian,” incapable of war crimes and violence against civilians, which has been cherished by Italian public opinion for a long time. Italian historians have thoroughly reconstructed the crimes perpetrated by the Italian army both in the colonies and in Yugoslavia and Greece during the Second World War , and this issue has slowly entered history textbooks.

Constructing Aboriginal Australians, 1930-1960: Projecting False Memories

Keith Crawford

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

The Ottoman Age in Southern Central Europe as Represented in Secondary School History Textbooks in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia

Gabriel Pirický

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

Forum

(De)Colonizing Pictures? German Television and Colonialism

Wolfgang Struck

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