

STEREOTYPES, PREJUDICES, SELF AND 'THE OTHER' IN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract

This article is a literature review of conceptions of stereotype, prejudice, underlying assumptions and images of self and other as relevant to history textbooks and related research. History textbooks are seen as representations of a nation's official history as they build identity and form conceptions of morality in their readers. I address questions like, what are the underlying assumptions of history texts that lead to picturing ourselves and others? Could an understanding of the other be seen as a liability, given the moral responsibility it introduces? In seeking answers, instead of a sociological approach analysing the social systems of power and oppression, the perpetuating of stereotypes is viewed from an individual, psychological perspective. Hence, I ask how the psychology of hatred could be understood and what this implies for viewing the self in relation to the other through history education. I conclude by stressing that moral responsibility starts with the self and not with the other; and that the bigger enemy of history teaching is not prejudice and stereotype contained in pedagogic texts, but indifference or bystander behaviour that such texts could encourage.

Keywords: Identity; Prejudice; History textbooks; Stereotype; Underlying assumptions; Moral responsibility; Psychology of hatred.

Introduction

This article is a literature review of the notions of stereotypes, prejudices, self and other as relevant in textbook research, with a special focus on history and social science textbooks. Such textbooks represent the state-sanctioned histories of the nation and they are also the only history books that most people will ever read (Francis, 1997, quoted in Montgomery, 2005:336). Hence, what they contain is an important indicator of a nation's civic pulse as well as its people's knowledge base of history. The wider implication is that how we view our social world and our moral obligations in it when relating

to others is crucial to examine as historical and identity-developing constructs both within and beyond textbooks.

In this review international as well as South African literature is considered. The aim is both to engage with the philosophy and meaning underlying the concepts, as well as to overview the landscape or foundations on which textbook and educational research more generally may be built. Pondering the meaning of stereotypes and prejudices and trying to decode how and why their constructions come about in textbooks as well as in other situations could lead to an increased awareness of history's ethical capabilities. Such capabilities imply that learning history has the capacity to impact students' (and teachers') ability to put themselves into someone else's shoes and thereby develop a sense of moral responsibility.

Mandler (2002:28) explains that one of the purposes of historical time travel is to transport our modern selves into alien situations which allow us to highlight our own values and assumptions, a process we nowadays call "the search for identity." It is within this context that he discusses the celebrated essay by Trevelyan, 'Clio: A Muse' (1913), who stressed the educational benefits of history for the whole population and not just the academic elite. Trevelyan insisted that beyond its intellectual functions, history also has great imaginative power through its exposing students to the full range of human possibilities unlimited by our own experiences. This imaginative capability of history is connected to its ethical capability:

If we see through the fancy language, we find that this 'identity' is not very different from what used to be called philosophy or morality; and the 'identity-building' function of history is not so very different from what the ancients called 'philosophy teaching by example' or what Trevelyan thought of as exercising the moral imagination (p. 28).

This moral imagination is strongly impacted by conceptions of stereotypes, prejudice, self and other as represented in pedagogic texts. I now turn to exploring these concepts in some detail.

Stereotypes and prejudice

How would you like to live with people who never wash themselves? How would you like to wear nothing more than a loin cloth? How would you like to spend your life in the desert and never go to school?[...] The Bushmen have strange ideas about religion. They have a number of gods, among them the moon, the rain and even the praying mantis [...] At one stage they were becoming so destructive that they

had to be chased out like vermin. (Ferro, 1984:10, quoting an example from an old South African textbook for children in the fourth form, today grade 9. No reference to the actual book is given.)

This is an example of overt stereotyping. Obviously today this is in no longer an acceptable discourse in South Africa and elsewhere, although there are some textbooks that have turned this around and have used a similar strategy to show what it is like to portray history from the perspective of the 'other'. An example of this (in the USA) is to change a sentence like "Alone in the wilderness, the frontier family had to protect itself from wild animals and unfriendly Indians" to "while the people were trying to live, farm, and hunt peacefully in their homelands, they had to constantly be on guard against marauding and invading whites" (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1978:125). What tends to happen in more modern textbooks books is that authors focus on describing events rather than personal characteristics (stereotypes). Here is an example of this: "For thousands of years the Aborigines lived undisturbed. All this changed when the Europeans came. They cleared the bush to farm; burrowed like rats for gold; built towns with banks and churches and opened up the country with roads" (Van Leeuwen & Selander, 1995:510, quoting from a 1984 Australian history textbook). This way readers are more free to make their own decisions.

While overt stereotyping now seems easy to recognise, this is not always the case as stereotypes are often based on partial truths (LaSpina, 1998:175). This becomes a real problem when covert stereotyping is used, which hides itself in the subtle yet powerful manipulation of language, as well as in adopting a selectively critical tone. Ravitch (2003:142) shows how American textbooks sugarcoat practices in non-Western cultures that they would condemn if done by Europeans or Americans. For example, ancient India respected "the creative power of women", although a wife was sometimes required to throw herself on her husband's funeral pyre.

When non-European civilizations conquer new territories, the textbooks abandon their critical voice. They express awe toward the ancient empires of China, India, Africa, and Persia but pay no attention to how they grew. Textbook after textbook tells the story of the 'spread' of Islam. Christian Europe invades; Islam spreads (p. 143).

Similarly, Oteiza & Pinto (2008:334) show how in Spanish and Chilean textbooks, in spite of an attempt to be 'objective', authors still employ several linguistic resources that allow them to insert a particular positional stance in ways that might not be obvious to the reader. These authors also note

that the textbooks translate a reconciliatory discourse of political and social harmony into a discourse in which no responsibility is explicitly attributed to the perpetration of negative or violent events, for example through the use of nominalisations and the passive voice through which agents are absent: “the violation of Human Rights continues to be a conflict that has not been resolved by Chilean society.”

Even less obviously, Van Leeuwen (1992:52), through his visual analysis of textbook images, adds to this by demonstrating how graphs, for example, show the “rise” of immigration or the “fall” in employment, and how these “event images” represent things not as actions for which people can ultimately be held responsible, but as things that “happen”, or “originate”, or “grow”, or “die”, all by themselves. When textbooks do assign responsibility, Oteíza & Pinto (2008:334) note that they do it to extremist groups that are socially stigmatised: “The tension increases in the month of January, after the occurrences of the death of various protestors who were demanding total amnesty and the assassination of five lawyers at the hands of a commando of the extreme right in Atocha Street in Madrid.” This way negative stereotypes are automatically associated with socially stigmatized groups but avoided with others. But is it possible and/or desirable to do away with stereotypes altogether?

Stereotypes have a place and a function. Children learn in school that life can be managed by ordering it into conceptual systems (Johnsen, 1997:35). It should therefore not come as a surprise that included in this system of ordering and categorising is not only scientific, natural phenomena, but those relating to the wider field of the humanities as well. Fritzsche (1997:109) supports this notion by asserting that group identification in itself is socially indispensable. Some argue that it is also desirable. Schissler (1989-90:85-86), for example, convincingly argues that stereotypes fit into this system of categorisation for very definite and good psycho-social reasons when “seeking to simplify the complex” (Marsden, 2001:133).

Stereotypes are patterns and images that reduce the complexities of a phenomenon to a few significant characteristics. They portray reality as narrow, incomplete, and rudimentary. We constantly use stereotypes. [...] we orient ourselves in the world, constitute its meaning through actions, and thus make the world somewhat more manageable. This means that stereotypes are necessary for us to come to terms with knowledge and the necessity to act. Stereotypes are therefore an important step in the early stages of understanding (Schissler, 1989-90:85-86).

Based on this reasoning, Schissler explains that, traditionally, textbook research was founded on the assumptions that by providing more accurate information about 'the other', and thus correcting 'wrong' stereotypes, children would move towards a more tolerant understanding of 'foreign' communities. See for example what Matsuura, who was Director-General of UNESCO (2003:1), has to say about the role of revision and review of textbooks and learning materials: "we must learn to know ourselves and the 'other' who is different from us. This requires that the curriculum and textbooks must be jointly revised so that they are free of hate messages, prejudices and distortions."

There is another perspective on this: according to Schissler, the assumption that a better knowledge of 'the other' will automatically lead to more peace and tolerance among pupils is unfounded: "Research shows that a clear correlation between direct experience in a foreign country, the acquisition of knowledge, and the dissolution of stereotypes and prejudices cannot be established" (Schissler, 1989-90:86). For this reason it is important to study how prejudices and stereotypes come about, how the knowledge about them gets transmitted (in the textbooks), and what one can assume children will learn from them. To put it another way: in studying textbooks it is not so much about the *what* of stereotypes (since an awareness of them does not necessarily help to overcome them) but rather *if* (and *how*) stereotypes are perpetuated, and what the implication is thereof. This approach is supported by Marsden (2001:133) who advocates that in order to promote education for international understanding, textbooks writers and teachers need to comprehend how children's attitudes to other nationalities are formed.

Prejudices, like stereotypes, play a role in this understanding. As a rule, prejudices prove extraordinarily resistant to attempts to change: by guarding against 'cognitive chaos' and self-criticism; by strengthening the feelings of self-esteem of individuals and groups; and by guaranteeing a socially acceptable form of releasing aggression, prejudices fulfill a purpose (Schissler, 1989-90:86). Although on the surface positive and negative images or stereotypes convey only 'information' about how one views one's neighbour, they in fact reveal more about one's own identity problems (Schissler, 1989:85). For these reasons, textbooks are especially suitable for finding out not just what a society thinks of others, but also what it thinks about itself, since 'to perceive oneself is always to become aware of oneself in the eyes of others' (Popitz, quoted in Schissler, 1989:85). Similarly, Marsden (2001:133) argues that "in everyone

there lurks a stereotype.” Taking this argument further, Fritzsche (1997:111) asserts that a sense of insecurity and vulnerability leads to distorted ideas and images of others.

The carrier of stereotypes is language and pictures in (history) textbooks. Language has the capacity to construct reality by directing and limiting our thoughts, observations and expressions (Vitra, 2007:17). The way historical events are absorbed into our consciousness is decisive as to their influence on present and even future actions (Fritzsche, 1997:110). This implies that it is important to analyse the text of history – both linguistic and visual/pictorial. The historical concepts that such texts signify carry heavy value-laden burdens, often ignored in textbooks, which instead reproduce the concepts as if they were neutral, unproblematic mirrors of the past (Vitra, 2007:17). An example of this is Montgomery’s (2005) weighty argument that by not problematising the concept of ‘race’ in any critical way, Canadian textbooks, although on the surface appearing to be ‘raceless’ through their attitude of tolerance and inclusion, in fact promote the dependency on race-thinking as a natural phenomenon.

Underlying assumptions leading to a picture of ourselves and others

Prejudices and stereotypes are built on certain perceptions that form an underlying assumption to how one sees (and writes about) the world. Examples of such assumptions include the notion that parliamentary democracy is something positive (Bourdillion, 1992:110), or that there is agreement (in the US) that capitalism is necessarily better than communism (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1978:127). Nash (2000:105) shows why the term ‘democracy’ should not automatically be associated with something positive (for example): “American children grew up with the understanding that in a democracy the portioning out of unequal opportunities and rewards according to race was perfectly natural because nature had endowed Americans of different skin hues unequally.” Today the term “democracy” is more associated with justice in that every citizen regardless of socio-economic and cultural background, in principle, shall have the same rights and that national states shall not humiliate its citizens (Margalit, in Selander, 2007:12). The point is that assumptions change over time and hence they need to be constantly identified and consciously upheld.

The phrase 'underlying assumptions' needs not automatically be equated with something negative or threatening; it only serves to show intellectual honesty and a kind of humility about the limitations of our own ability to know and interpret history. Here is a rare example of how such honesty and humility could be expressed in the introduction to history/geography textbooks. It comes from a preface of a Scandinavian social studies textbook for grade 5 pupils:

This textbook is not in itself history. Nor is it in itself geography. It is only one of millions of books written on these subjects. And the books are written by different people who in turn have read what others have read and written. Imagine a stage so deep that no one can see where it ends. That is history. And the stage is placed in a setting so vast that no one can see all of it. That is geography. In front of it all hangs a curtain that stretches all the way to heaven. No one can remove that curtain. But it is possible to pull it aside a wee bit and get a glimpse. This textbook is just such a glimpse (Johnsen, 1997:38; the reference given in the text is to a Norwegian book by the same author: Johnsen, Egil Børre: Verden. [The World] Oslo 1992).

This textbook thus makes no pretentious claim that by reading it the world can be changed for the better. The underlying assumption is that the book is limited and that if a reader wishes to see more depth of the stage or to pull the curtains wider, he or she would have to exert some personal effort that goes beyond this particular textbook. What is important to establish is whether underlying assumptions are based on ignorance or whether they are in fact qualified (Fritzsche, 1997:111). This is important since it is very possible to replace one set of values based on ignorance or insecurity with another. Thus the question is whether textbooks themselves – consciously or not – do not present and promote prejudices and stereotypes and the answer to this will depend largely on the categories of analysis and the criteria on which the evaluations are based (Fritzsche, 1997:107-8). Hence the method of text analysis and the theory that informs it must be a crucial part of such research.

For forming themes in textbook research, Fritzsche (1997:112) recommends that such research should know whether a gap exists in the underlying assumptions of those 'producing' and those 'consuming' the texts. For example, Kitson (2001:42) found, based on her classroom experience of teaching the Holocaust, that children have certain serious misconceptions and stereotypes about the topic; such as that all Germans were Nazis, that only Germans were anti-Semitic, and that the Nazis invented anti-Semitism. This problem is exacerbated in South Africa, where the world of schooling is characterised by a mismatch between the world of young peoples' identities and values,

and those of their teachers' (Fataar, cited in Weldon, 2005:6). Teachers and other educators who write textbooks are part of the apartheid generation and grew up with racism and abuse of human rights as fundamental organising principles of every aspect of their lives, whereas young peoples' identities are shaped by consumption (choices about music, clothes and sexual activities). This consumption culture is more powerful than race in influencing choice so that race as a crude form is not as visible or dominant as it used to be (Weldon, 2005:6) although race continues to be an underlying influence in school culture. Thus the gap between those who consume and produce textbook knowledge is wide and such underlying assumptions must be acknowledged, without which a kind of inevitable indoctrination occurs (Van Leeuwen & Selander, 1995:502).

Whatever the case, knowledge production and representation in the form of textbooks should try to avoid substituting one set of simple solutions, one polemic, one propaganda, for another (Gwiazda, in Stern-Strom, 1994:xxv). Pratt (1984:154) argues that this kind of substituting is characteristic of educational research and although gross stereotyping in textbooks is not so much apparent anymore, the problems of balance and fairness have not disappeared; they have merely changed form. Moreover, perceptions of 'the other' and the relationship between 'the other' and 'the self' is at the heart of multi-perspectivity (Stradling, 2001:142), which the South African curriculum aspires to in the teaching of history. Thus textbook research in history should pay attention to this problem by asking what the possibilities are of replacing one set of problems with another by examining how the relationship between 'us' and 'them' is portrayed.

The uneasiness in the relationship between ourselves and others, in as much as it is coloured by prejudice and stereotype, stems from a simple principle and appears to have a simple cure:

In proportion as we love truth more and victory less, we shall become anxious to know what it is which leads our opponents to think as they do. We shall begin to suspect that the pertinacity of belief exhibited by them must result from a perception of something which we have not perceived. And we shall aim to supplement the portion of truth we have found with the portion found by them. (Herbert Spencer, First Principles, 1864, quoted in Dance, 1960:22)

The underlying assumption here is that we in fact want to perceive that which we have not perceived before, concerning the other. In the next section I want to focus on this uneasy transition.

Understanding "the other" as a liability?

Stereotype and classifications based on differences can be understood as a necessary tool for making sense and being in control of the world, but they can also be understood as a rationale for building unjust societies. Most often 'unjust' from a sociological perspective is linked to anything external and collective like capitalism, socialism, Christianity, or colonialism¹, as opposed to something intra-psychological, like individual selves. For example, Godrej (1994) asserts that our societies are built around competition rather than cooperation, which, accordingly, necessitates a continual reinvention of racism. This is an example of how 'injustice' is often linked to a Marxist-type foundational principle that people's material (or external) conditions determine their consciousness, and not, as Eberhardt (2006) found in scientific research, that it is people's thoughts about themselves that determine their behaviour (and thus their reality).

While not denying the power of societal structures, I argue that understanding and identifying the perspective of another can only be achieved by having a critical look at one's own moral conceptions or positioning. Vygotsky (1997:105) noted that "the means of acting on oneself is initially a means of acting on others or a means of action of others on the individual." How we "act on others" is thus a determining feature of how we see and act on ourselves. Therefore, by critically looking at oneself, one can narrow the conceptual gap between 'us' and 'them', but this is uncomfortable since it can show up characteristics in the self that are often rather not noted. Yet it is an essential feature of history's alleged ability to "change the world for the better." (See Department of Education, DoE, 2003:9).

This points to a seemingly obvious fact that the gap between 'us' and 'them' is small since "the capacity for good and evil is distributed across human societies, among all racial and ethnic groups and across gender as well" (Ravitch, 2003:155). Hence any externalisation of negative moral behaviour, such as infringing on human rights or treating people with hatred, to "society" or "the Americans" or "whites", or "the Colonialists" (see Morgan, 2010a:82) and so forth excludes the self from any moral responsibility.

A study of teacher professional development programme by Weldon (2010) confirms that especially in South Africa, understanding the other as based on racial terms precludes any introspective processes that acknowledge personal

¹ For a discussion on Zimbabwe's curriculum transition experience, see Jansen (1991:87), who explores Christianity, Marxism and socialism's relevance to racism and other societal divisions.

responsibility for holding onto prejudices. For example, she quotes a (black²) teacher saying that “I was not always aware of my own prejudices prior to my participation in this project. I always saw myself as a victim of other people’s prejudices and generalisations such as ‘whites are racists’ never bothered me. But when Denis Goldberg [a white antiracist activist imprisoned with Mandela] told us of his involvement in the struggle against Apartheid I decided to re-look at how I view others” (Quoted in Weldon, 2010:359-360)”. Weldon (2010) also notes how a white participant in the programme had to search “[his] own heart” and be “confronted with [his] own inadequacies” in order to move to reconciliation. This points to the need to face the troubling question of “is hate innately a part of human behaviour and experience? If so, how can we change that within ourselves?” (Tibbitt, 2006:11).

Understanding the self must thus be foundational for understanding the other and it need not be a liability, as Sullivan, (2011:7) notes. He argues that there is fine line that can tilt the balance whereby being informed can become a liability rather than an asset. It assumes a kind of responsibility that comes with knowledge and awareness as we are forced to make choices that our state of ignorance did not have to confront. It means that we must face hatred head-on and this can best be done from a psychological perspective. I now turn to exploring this in some detail.

Perpetuating stereotypes: understanding the psychology of hatred

An example of how the “spreading of hatred” from individuals to nations and continents can be understood is offered here through a psychological framework: “hatred begins in the heart and not in the head. In so many instances we do not hate people because of a particular deed, but rather do we find that deed ugly because we hate them” (Historian George Mosse, quoted in Stern-Strom, 1994:112). Such an understanding immediately shifts the focus from the other to the self. For example, on the relationship between hatred and difference, Eve Shalen, a pupil from an American high school, remembers her school days and her need to belong: “Differences between us did not cause hatred; hatred caused differences between us” (in Stern-Strom, 1994:29). This is insightful for a grade 8 pupil, because, in her own words, “usually people are made outcasts because they are in some way different from

2 I use “black” and “white” as racial categories here not because I endorse race-thinking, but because I am a product of a society that knows no other way to categorise its people. In the past this was simply racist legislation (apartheid) and now it is a tool for redressing the injustices caused by that system.

the larger group” (in Stern-Strom, 1994:29). Eve comprehended something that most other pupils did not. To illustrate this in more depth, the resource (text) book of the educational programme, *Facing History and Ourselves, Holocaust and Human Behaviour*, narrates a story of how concentration camp inmates at Majdanek were treated and how the psychology behind it can be understood:

Beating and being beaten was taken for granted at Majdanek, and was an integral part of the system. Everyone could beat an inmate and the more experienced inmates never questioned why. They knew that they were beaten merely because they happened to run into someone who wanted to beat them. In most cases, the beating did not even involve personal anger or hatred; the authorities hated their victims as a group because when you wrong people for no reason, sooner or later you must come to hate them. It is difficult for man to endure the idea he is a beast and maltreats another human being, without cause; therefore, he eventually discovers justification for his behavior and imputes the fault to his victim. (Alexander Donat, a prisoner at Majdanek, quoted in Stern-Strom, 1994:350).

It is through this process of having to find justification for maltreating others, be it psychological or physical, that negative stereotypes are perpetuated. And this also explains why getting to know more about other cultures will not necessarily lead to a lessening of prejudiced thinking. It could also explain why the UNESCO (2003) strategy regarding textbooks and curricula mentioned earlier, that learning to know ourselves and others who are different from us requires that the curriculum and textbooks are free of hate messages, prejudices and distortions, may not fulfill its desired outcome. Most hate messages, distortions and prejudices are not inserted into textbooks consciously or deliberately. They simply reflect the underlying assumptions of a given historical period. The point is not to simply get rid of them, for by doing so, other similar messages are often reproduced, putting different groups in the roles of victims or perpetrators of evil. A more morally sound strategy would be to ask learners to identify the biases and prejudices inherent in any history text, while at the same time becoming aware of one's own 'beast'; the one that will hate others if it wrongs them continually for no reason.

Conclusion

There are history teaching programmes that do focus on individual consciousness and conscience, or “ourselves”, as they try to connect political history and historical judgements with the moral choices students confront in their own lives (Schultz, Barr & Selman, 2001:6). For textbook writers,

editors and publishers, it could be beneficial to consider such programmes and texts. This was clearly confirmed by Weldon's (2010) study that examined how South African teachers had to face their own pasts before being competent to teach history that calls on examining prejudices, stereotypes and treatment of 'the other' and how this facing self process really helped them. Moral responsibility thus starts with the self and not with the other.

In discussing stereotypes, prejudices, and underlying assumption leading to the formation of images of 'the other', I showed that the concept of stereotypes must be understood as serving psycho-social functions of simplifying the complex, and that it is an important step in the early stages of understanding. The assumption that getting to know the 'other' better necessarily leads to a reduction in stereotyped thinking is unfounded and the best way to reduce the destructive dynamics of prejudice is to understand the conditions in which they originate. Examining the underlying assumptions when writing historical texts is important for avoiding the replacement of one set of values based on ignorance or insecurity with another. Since stereotypes are simultaneously "indubitably fictitious" and "undeniably real", a way to navigate this complex relationship is to focus on the mechanisms by which they get made and remade (Montgomery, 2005:319). This would necessitate that "the specific types of method historians use for the collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of their data should be the same (or at least sufficiently similar to be discernible) as those used in the construction of the contents of textbooks themselves" (Morgan, 2010b:759).

Another way to navigate this complex and controversial landscape, and in line with a psycho-social approach, would be to consider whether we treat others badly for no reason, and if so, may this lead us to perpetuate stereotypes because of the hatred it breeds. This question is one that history textbook writers and evaluators should ask constantly when examining underlying assumptions. Since history textbooks are "the only history books that most people will ever read" (Francis, 1997 quoted in Montgomery, 2005:336), it matters deeply what happens to the intellectual project of history education because of the many opportunities it offers, especially those speaking to an adolescent audience. If it fails, the implications are severe. More than stereotypes, prejudices and hatred, what is at stake is indifference or bystander behaviour (see Short, 1999). Elie Wiesel has some words of wisdom regarding this problem:

I have devoted much time to exploring indifference. And, again, I came to a conclusion that the peril threatening humankind today is indifference, even more than hatred. There are more people who are indifferent than there are people who hate. Hate is an action. Hate takes time. Hate takes energy and even it demands sacrifices. Indifference is nothing, but indifference to hatred is encouraging hatred and is justifying hatred. So, what we must do-I mean your peers and mine-is fight indifference” (Wiesel, 1993).

Hence more effort should be expanded to make history textbooks less boring and less predictable than to eradicating bias, stereotype and prejudice from them, which I argue is just about impossible anyway. History textbooks should spend every effort to guard against their readers becoming indifferent to what is contained within them. Such indifference could be encouraged through texts that ignore personal moral responsibility by constantly externalizing hatred in historical events. One way of countering this would be to make concrete the connection between the prejudices of the past and the prejudices of the present (Petersen, 2010), always keeping in mind that a victim can become a perpetrator and vice versa. By “simplifying and essentialising” the all too human behavior of perpetrators (Schweber, 2008:2103), a sense of ignorance of one’s own possibility for offending tendencies is ignored in history texts. If through reading history texts it is all too easy to identify and label historical actors as perpetrators, indifference is sown since it does not concern the self, seeing that readers “can point fingers and count themselves fortunate not to be part of such a history (anymore)” (Morgan, 2010a:86). We do not want our children to become bystanders to historical dramas, paradoxes, tragedies and comedies because of quality of the texts they encounter at school.

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