THE TEACHING OF HISTORY AND RECONCILIATION

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Abstract

The question of history teaching and learning in Cyprus often comes to the forefront of public debate, mainly in the daily press, as a contest between those who wish to change the school history textbooks and those who want them to stay as they are. Although such discussions are useful, in this paper they are of secondary importance to the question of what the aims are, the methodological weaknesses and, more fundamentally, the epistemological assumptions of the current way history is being taught and learned in Greek-Cypriot schools of Cyprus. As this paper shows, one of the most important problems of teaching and learning history today in Cyprus is the understanding of history teaching by many educators as a mere transmission of beliefs and the presentation of the past as heritage. Not only this state of affairs does not promote historical understanding, but it hinders reconciliation cementing division. We conclude with a call for urgent educational reform in the epistemology, aims and methods of history teaching and learning in Cyprus.

Introduction

Discussions about the methodology of history teaching in the Cypriot classrooms and the nature of historical knowledge in relation to reconciliation are rarely, if ever, the topic of public debate. On the contrary, the mere thought of revising the school history textbooks sparks, almost always, heated debates on the content of history textbooks and the terminology used to describe sensitive periods of the history of Cyprus. One reason for this dispute over content might be the belief, which some historians hold, that 'it is easier to change curricula and textbooks than to change the way teachers teach' (Pawlovitch, 2004, p. 68). The change of content often becomes more difficult in the context of post-conflict societies characterised by mistrust for the 'other'. Educational policy officers sometimes see the change of history textbooks just as a tool in the politics of an ideological struggle, hence victimising the need for constant improvements in the teaching and learning of history – improvements that go well beyond the mere content of a textbook by addressing issues of epistemology, pedagogy and methodology.

It could be argued that the professional development of teachers and their training in making use of the most effective, up-to-date pedagogical methods should be the primary aim of educational policy makers irrespective of any attempts for reconciliation. In effect, any efforts to change educational guidelines and textbooks would be operating in a theoretical vacuum unless there is also a change in the epistemology and methodology of history teaching. Even the 'ideal' textbook, would not be of much use in the hands of a teacher that misapprehends the nature of historical knowledge thus failing to promote historical understanding. At the same time, the answers given to epistemological questions like 'what is history', 'what is historical knowledge and understanding' and 'how can history be taught', have important ramifications on how the 'other' is presented.

In this article, we argue that the professional development of teachers is a process that not only could promote the betterment of the learning and development of pupils, but could also contribute greatly to co-operation. More particularly, in this paper, we consider an epistemological turn towards a critical and reflective stance on history teaching, not only as a major contribution to the advancement of history teaching and learning, but also as a crucial ingredient in any effort to bring together all communities of Cyprus, across the existing divide. Such a paradigm shift, in education in general and history didactics in particular, would enable educators of Cyprus to critically examine the role of ideology in promoting what Kitromilides (1979) identified as the 'dialectic of intolerance'. In his penetrating historical analysis, Kitromilides tracks down the transmission of irredentist Greek nationalism in Cyprus and the emergence of the corresponding Turkish-Cypriot nationalism, which developed belatedly, 'as a by-product of three interlocking pressures: British manipulation, reactions to the Enosis movement and mainland Turkish influence' (ibid., 1979, p. 165). The conflict of these two nationalisms, despite their appearance at different points in time, eventually led to the separation of the island (ibid., 1979). The role of education was instrumental in nurturing the widening of this gap.

We conclude this paper with a call for educational reform and resolution of the paradoxes and tensions identified in the present aims of history education; an appeal for critical and rational educational praxis informed by research and based on progressive pedagogy, all-inclusive content and constructivist epistemology.

Heritage and History

Lowenthal (1998) distinguishes between heritage and history. When school 'history' is understood and taught as heritage it deliberately omits certain aspects of the past and thrives on ignorance and error; its nurturing virtue is bias and its essential purpose prejudiced pride. Heritage transmits exclusive myths of origin and continuity endowing a select group with prestige and common purpose, is held as

'a dogma of roots and origins and must be accepted on faith' while the past is used as a weapon. History, in contrast is disinterested and universal, in the sense that no group has exclusive claim to particular stories or to truth. Bias is a vice that history struggles to eliminate (even if it cannot claim to communicate absolute truth). History conforms to accepted tenets of evidence and is subject to debate; it is always altered by time and hindsight. One consideration in assessing history is learning how to question a historical account, to become aware of the evidentiary base upon which it rests, and to assess it in relation to contrasting accounts.

The two opposing terms of reference have been put forward in the past by a variety of researchers under different names. For example, Wertsch (1997, 2002) instead of talking about heritage and history, refers to collective memory and history, and Seixas (2000) distinguishes between collective memory and disciplinary approach to teaching history. In the field of social psychology, Moscovici (1984, 1998) speaks of shared forms of knowing making a similar distinction between social representations based on belief and social representations based on knowledge (cf Jovchelovitch, 2006). The distinction is premised on the idea that characteristics of beliefs are homogeneous, affective, and impermeable to experience or contradiction that leave little scope for individual variation, and are similar to the 'dogma' characteristics that Lowenthal attributes to heritage. By contrast, social representations founded on knowledge are similar to Lowenthal's history since they are more fluid, pragmatic and amenable to the proof of success or failure and leave certain latitude to language, experience and even to the critical features of individuals.

Heritage and Nationalism

Heritage and nationalism are both premised on the same epistemological foundations that support the promotion of prejudiced pride for one's own group, the suppression of the other's point of view and the promotion of exclusive forms of identification and purity. Nationalism can only be described as being served by heritage and not history, and as promoting social representations based on belief, not knowledge. However, teaching history as dogma (in other words, teaching history as heritage, based on representations of belief) poses serious problems for learning:

> If historians, curriculum experts, textbook writers and school authorities make all the decisions about the right version of the past, then the students' only job is to absorb it. What started out as contentious, debate-ridden investigation about truth, right and meaning in the past and present ends up before the students as a catechism to be memorised (Seixas, 2000, p. 23).

We argue that both nationalism and teaching history as heritage suppress and lead to atrophy the pupils' critical faculties. Moreover, in order to promote the nationalist ideology through the teaching of history as heritage, the quality of social relations between educators and pupils is reduced to a particular form of transmission that hinders the examination of the other's point of view and stifles unconstrained dialogue.

Two distinct moral stances are thus implied between interacting subjects (i.e. educators, pupils) when constructing the past as history or when transmitting the past as heritage. As Piaget ([1932] 1965) convincingly argued in his classic work on the moral judgment of the child, there are two basic orientations in social interaction: social relations of constraint and social relations of co-operation. Where there is constraint because one participant holds more power than the other, the relationship is asymmetrical, and, importantly, the knowledge which can be acquired by the dominated participant takes on a fixed and inflexible form. Piaget refers to this process as one of social transmission; such as for example the way in which elders initiate younger members into the patterns of beliefs and practices of the group.

By contrast, in relations of co-operation, power is more evenly distributed between participants and a more symmetrical relationship emerges. Under these conditions, authentic forms of intellectual exchange become possible, since each partner feels free to express his or her own thoughts, consider the positions of others, and defend his or her own point of view. Under these circumstances, where thinking is not limited by a dominant influence, the conditions exist for the emergence of constructive solutions to problems, or what Piaget refers to as the reconstruction of knowledge rather than social transmission of superficial beliefs. The reconstruction of knowledge supports the emergence of a norm of reciprocity between the interacting partners and the advancement of the autonomy, reflection and novelty in the reasoning of pupils. Here the knowledge that emerges is open, flexible and regulated by the logic of argument rather than being determined by an external authority. In short, relations of co-operation provide the arena for the advancement of reasoning and the moral development of the child, which for Piaget requires the absence of any constraining influence either based on the imposition of authority or coercion (for more recent empirical evidence of this see Psaltis and Duveen, 2006, 2007; Duveen, 2001, 2002a, 2002b; Psaltis, 2005a, 2005b; Duveen and Psaltis, in press; Zittoun et al., 2003).

Here we have the important theoretical link between the two forms of knowing with the two types of social relations. History teaching and learning that take the form of social relations of constraint can be described as social representations based on belief (what Lowenthal termed heritage). On the contrary, history teaching

and learning based on social relations of co-operation can promote social representations based on knowledge (what Lowenthal termed history).
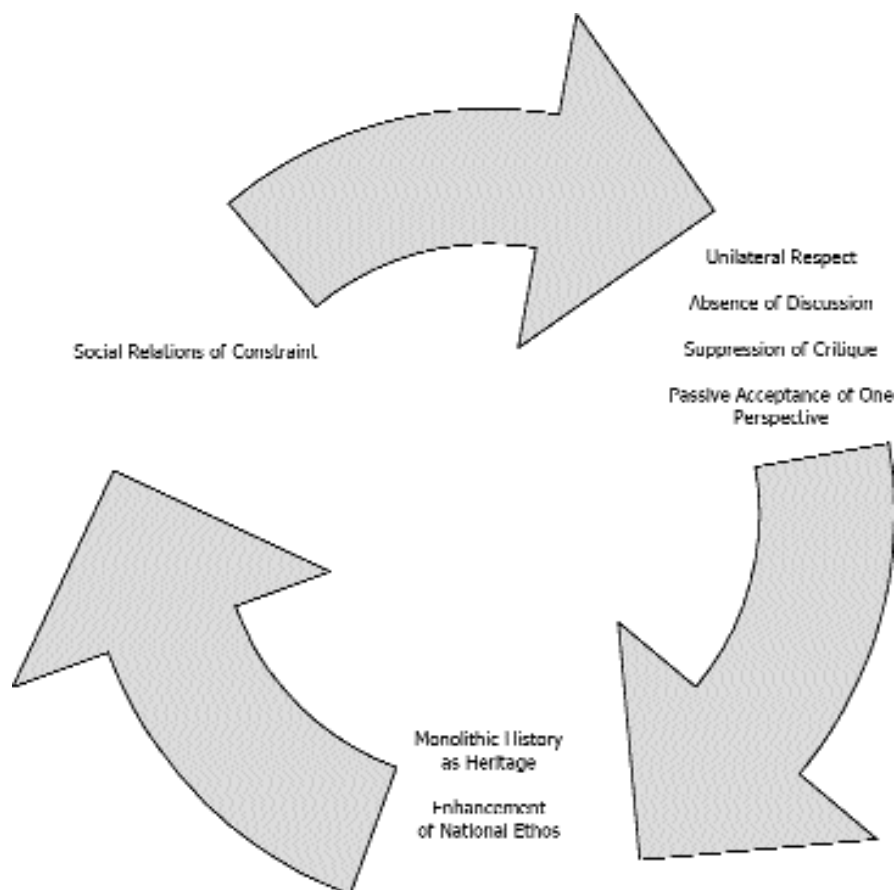
We could thus argue that the epistemology, morality and praxis of history teaching are different from the epistemology, morality and praxis of heritage teaching. History assumes a social constructivist epistemology or a stance of reflective reasoning. This is the third way between the two epistemological radical positions of naïve realism and naïve relativism. Naïve realist pupils assume that all the documentary sources are essentially authorless and describe reality in an unmediated, accurate manner. Naïve relativist pupils think that because accounts conflict in their testimony, understanding an incident is all about whose opinion you believe and one opinion is as good as another. One problem with these radical epistemological positions is that they furnish the core of the nationalist ideology since pupils that understand the past as heritage, will tend to restrict the opportunities for reflection and critic and exhibit what Schatz, Staub and Lavine (1999) call blind patriotism.

Pupils that exhibit blind patriotism show an inflexible attachment to their nation, unquestioning positive evaluation, staunch allegiance, and intolerance of criticism because they believe that any criticism towards their own group will undermine the national cause and consider traitors those who do so. The teaching of heritage promotes blind patriotism in that it aims to enhance feelings of attachment to one's country or nation, at the cost of excluding all others who do not fall within the boundaries of the own-group. Thus the 'other's' point of view is not encouraged to be heard and if by any chance it does come to the arena of discussion it is then suppressed because it undermines the objectivity of the accepted official historical narrative that is taken as the absolute truth. Blind patriotism is similarly linked with the promotion of conspiracy theories (see Moscovici, 1987) and propaganda.

The suppression of the other's point of view can only be based on an asymmetric social relation of constraint where the authority imposes restrictions on what can be communicated and in what way. What takes place is not construction of new knowledge; novelty can not emerge out of such forms of communication. What takes place is the social transmission of beliefs through conformity to and imitation of the views of authority. Such monological views suppress the cognitive and moral development of the child since they nourish its egocentric, or ethnocentric; what Piaget ([1932] 1995, [1933] 1995, [1945] 1995) called a sociocentric way of thinking where one's perspective is taken as the absolute truth. In this way the promotion of an active and critical citizenship is hindered. The agency and autonomy of the pupil in a relation of constraint by nationalism is diminished since the group imposes a single dominant view on the members of the group. Belief is monoperspectival because it aims at the enhancement of national

identity through the transmission of a single monolithic historical narrative. The other's voice, perspective and agency needs to be suppressed because it is conceptualised as a threat that can compromise the ethnic identity or the fighting morale of pupils. The form of social identity promoted for a pupil that takes part in this communication is one of exclusive belongingness to the only group that has rightful historical ownership on a country. In this way a circular connection is put in place between relations of constraint and monolithic history, which in turn puts into place a circle of intractability where separation between the two groups is gradually cemented (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Vicious Circle of Intractable Conflict

Unilateral Respect

Absence of Discussion

Suppression of Critique

Passive Acceptance of One Perspective

Social Relations of Constraint

Monolithic History as Heritage

Enhancement of National Ethos

Recent approaches to the pedagogy of history teaching are premised on an epistemological orientation of a 'balancing' act between the naïve realist and the

naïve relativist position (see Lee, Dickinson and Ashby, 1998; Boxtel & Drie, 2004). Pupils and teachers who occupy the middle ground between these two extremes, are able to reason for their historical interpretation, and offer to their audience a justification for their point of view, which is based on the premise that the 'other' is a rational being that can understand their reasoning. In this way forms of social recognition are communicated, where the 'other' is recognised as a thinking subject and not a means to one's ends. Pupils, and teachers, listen to the opposing points of view of physically or symbolically present conversation partners, and take each of them into account. The point of view is not taken as a distraction from objectivity but as an additional source of information; as an aid for arriving at a more objective and decentred standpoint.

In decentring from their point of view pupils begin to conceive their own perspective as only one perspective among many others. In this way, the pupils' perspective no longer represents the absolute truth. It is therefore possible – through the co-ordination of two different, even opposing perspectives – for a new, more rationally advanced form of knowledge to emerge. This is the enactment of Piagetian social relations of co-operation described both as an ideal and a method that promotes the cognitive and moral development of the child. At this point, it should be noted that the two distinctions between 'heritage and history' and 'constraint and co-operation' should be read as the two opposite ends of a continuum and as such they only describe orientations and not 'black or white' dichotomies. These distinctions are so powerful and clearly embedded in the enlightenment project that the social theory of Habermas ([1981] 1987, [1983] 1990) draws explicitly on them.

The orientation to co-operation as decentration is a value worth striving for since it comprises the alternative to both the instrumental rationality of modernity and the traditional forms of authoritarian coercion and legitimisation. Despite its ideal form, the orientation to unconstrained dialogue is a useful compass for critical action and the overcoming of democratic deficits. More particularly, in the Cypriot context such an orientation can provide the philosophical and moral basis for what could be described as the dialectics of co-operation. The application of these views to the way that teachers can approach the curriculum is instructive. The recognisable personal agency behind curricular power can rest on non-governmental organisations or organised schools. In the first instance, civil society is an open space for the communication and sharing of narratives. In the second context, a school that is an open space for different narratives can become socially inclusive, engulfing embracing forms of identity. In this way, through the forms that communication takes, the values of deliberative democracy are promoted in our everyday educational praxis. In both contexts, the nurturing virtue is a real and unconstrained by coercive forces dialogue, based on mutual respect.

The Cypriot Context

Reflecting on the situation of history teaching in Cyprus from the perspective furnished in the previous sections of this paper can be instructive. Broome (1998) argues that in the case of Cyprus 'the past has been distorted beyond recognition by the educational systems and political propaganda of both sides'. And it is 'such one-sided interpretations of historical events' that 'push the two communities further apart and allow little room for healing processes'. Indeed, it is expected that half a century of separation between the two major communities of Cyprus would have already created symbolic resources (see Zittoun et al., 2003) and ways of communication that tend to preserve the system of separation. In places with a history of conflict it has been observed that a vicious circle of intractable conflict is put into place that makes moving forward difficult, if not impossible (Coleman, 2004). In the present context we suggest that particular official historical narratives act to legitimise the conflict and reinforce the status quo in Cyprus through support to a dialectic of intolerance (Kitromilides, 1979). The roots of this dialectic of intolerance are historically intertwined with the ideological orientations of the educational system.

Ideological Orientations in the Greek-Cypriot Schools in the Last Century
A brief analysis of the evolution of the dominant ideological orientation of the Greek-Cypriot educational system brings to light the authoritarian and asymmetric source of legitimisation of a particular version of history that makes unwarranted claims of objectivity. A critique of nationalist ideology also makes visible the nature of ideological constraints that, amongst many other factors, contributed to the psychological alienation of the two communities and led to conflict. Also, they functioned as contributing factors to the coup in Cyprus by the Greek junta, and then to the invasion by Turkish troops in 1974 that imposed by force the geographically demarcated ethnic separation of the island – a geographic segregation that had already started in 1964 with the withdrawal of Turkish Cypriots in enclaves and the division, initially of Nicosia, with the drawing of the 'green line'.

Education in the period of British Colonial Rule (1878-1960) has been widely researched (see Persianis, 1996, 2003; Yiangou, 2004; Koutselini-Ioannidou, 1997; Panayiotou, 2005). According to Persianis (2003) the first fifty years of colonialism (1878-1931) saw a more liberal and laissez faire policy regarding the nationalist orientations of the education provided for Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. Given (1998) characterises the years 1900-1930 as the 'philhellenic' period of British colonialism in Cyprus.[1] In contrast, after 1931 there was a more direct effort to promote instead a sense of local identity, that of 'Cypriot patriotism' (ibid.). Schooling, thus, became a principal means deployed by authorities for colonial

ideological control. For Greek Cypriots the essential features of 'Hellenism' within the curriculum were the Greek language, history and geography. In regards to history, whereas in most British colonies compulsory teaching of British history antagonised nationalist teachings of local history, in Cyprus rulers encouraged Cypriot history to counter Greek-Cypriot nationalists who defined themselves as Hellenes and sought to preserve and promote Hellenism (Yiangou, 2004). In this distinctive context, Greek Cypriots voiced grave discontent at educational impositions aimed at fostering a Cypriot identity. The elimination of Greek history teaching in the elementary schools also provoked strong protest from Church leaders (Myrianthopoulos, 1946). In this climate of ideological struggle between Greek-Cypriot nationalism and colonialism, any possibilities for a liberal political culture were eradicated by the polarisation of the groups in conflict. This, polarisation gave birth to a 'dialectic of intolerance' (Kitromilides, 1979), which materialised, penetrating all expressions of political life, as an intolerant attitude of the nationalist ideological orthodoxy towards any critical, dissident or opposing views. Whereas the link between history teaching and nationalism can be easily shown through a historical analysis, it is a much more demanding task to demonstrate how teaching history from a nationalist perspective first suppressed the advancement of the pedagogy of history education in Cyprus and then promoted an intolerant attitude towards 'the other', that still contributes to the current stalemate.

Dogma as Intolerance

The term 'orthodoxy' to describe nationalism in the previous paragraph is of course not just a play on words. The Church of Cyprus, as the main source of propagation of the nationalist ideals, along with the Greek-Cypriot elite educated in Greece, resisted all attempts of the British to 'de-hellenise'[2] the island. According to Spyridakis,[3] (1962) survival of the Greek population despite long occupation of the island by several conquerors was due to the preservation and consciousness of national identity and Christian orthodoxy. The Helleno-Christian orthodox ideology known as ellinohristianismos reached its peak during the 1955-1959 EOKA[4] armed struggle for enosis (Panayiotou, 2005, p. 3). The early take over of the nationalist project by the Church, as was also the case in Greece, partly gave Greek-Cypriot nationalism its conservative and authoritarian form (Kitromilides, 1979). This intolerance towards the others' voices was fuelled by an uncompromising, fighting spirit of resistance against a perceived identity threat. It was the same sense of fear of losing a 'super-stable' and essentialist identity that contributed to an escalating psychological distance between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, who were becoming more and more nationalised as 'Greeks' and 'Turks' of Cyprus.

Independence in 1960 marked the birth of Cyprus as a bi-communal Republic intended to bring together people of different ethnic identities and different national

orientations. However, as Panayiotou (2005) argues, the concepts and contents of national narratives and frameworks imported from Greece and Turkey, and vernacularised mainly through the educational system, instead of supporting the newly founded bi-communal Cypriot nation-state, suggested the existence of two rival ethnic communities claiming to be part of the nations of the neighbouring states. By the 1960s, the discourse of Cypriot identity was almost eclipsed – Cyprus officially, even in its constitution, was inhabited by 'Greeks' and 'Turks' and three small religious groups. As Karageorgis (1986) observes

> the Independence period resulted in the educational system, which should have promoted co-operation and trust, remaining beyond the responsibility and control of Central Government. The two communal chambers, Greek and Turkish, under which the education system of the newly born republic functioned, looked towards their respective mother countries for educational policies, objectives, and orientations. It would not perhaps be an exaggeration if one maintained that education not only did not support, but undermined the very existence of the State which it was meant to serve (Karagiorges, 1986, p. 152).

Helleno-Christian orthodox ideology was personified by Spyridakis, as President of the Greek Communal Chamber who stated in 1962 that educational policy 'had to avoid any action that contributed to the formation of Cypriot identity' (Koutselini-Ioannidou, 1997, p. 400). The Zurich-London agreements by the later Minister of Education were glossed as 'a temporary solution in the absence of any other alternative' and the education of Greek Cypriots was seen as

> the most precious possession, with one hope only: that the right of self-determination will not be long in being applied to them. The Greek people of Cyprus have never ceased to think and to feel like the rest of the Greek people in the Greek mainland. A Cypriot state might have come into being but not a Cypriot nation (Spyridakis, 1962, p. 23).

After the 1963-1964 climax of intercommunal strife, the unilateral establishment of a Ministry of Education that catered for the ideological needs of Greek Cypriots as Hellenes who happened to live in Cyprus was another manifestation of an ideology that excluded Turkish Cypriots from participation in the decision-making processes of the Republic of Cyprus. The assumption, which largely remained unchallenged, was that since Cyprus was historically a Greek place, Turkish Cypriots should have only been granted minority rights. Such an attitude conflicted head on with the separatist policies of Turkey and TMT[5] and their own manipulation of education to serve the nationalistic end of taksim (An, 2005).

The 1974 coup staged by the colonels in Greece and their EOKA B collaborators in Cyprus was followed by the invasion of Turkey, which brought loss

of human lives, the missing people and many displaced. These radical changes raised many unanswered questions about fundamental values, human rights, citizenship and the national identity of Greek Cypriots. In addition, the role of the Church and the ideal of enosis were questioned (Karagiorges, 1986). Disorder and uncertainty brought the Greek-Cypriot educational system to a crisis of ideological orientation. A general ideological reaction to the 1974 events came from Neo-Cyprians and the left-wing party AKEL who favoured a new Cypriot identity that would embrace all ethnic communities on the island, advocating reinforcement of the Republic of Cyprus as an independent state, and prospects of rapprochement with Turkish Cypriots (Karagiorges, 1986; Mavratsas, 1997, 1999). By contrast, the official Greek-Cypriot reaction urged for in-group unity, highlighting the important role of education in the preservation of the Greek national ethos. The then Minister of Education, Dr A. Mikellides, on 3 June 1975 in a meeting organised by the cultural section of the Greek-Cypriot Primary Teachers' Organisation (POED), Nicosia, declared that 'unite and, acting like brothers, try to fulfil our holy mission. Save our education, because by saving it you save this outpost of Hellenism' (cited in Karagiorges, 1986, p. 152).

The identification of Cyprus as the outpost of Hellenism clearly suggests that the 1974 rupture in terms of educational policy was closed by a policy that was determined by an essentialist discourse of Cyprus as Greek and resistance to the Turkish occupation. In 1976, attempts to promote educational reforms based on the principle of democratisation with a more Cypriot-centred focus were heavily criticised by right-wing, conservative parties and the Church, who opposed anything but total identification with the Greek educational system and pressed for cancellation of the reforms.[6] A change of government in Greece in 1980,[7] bringing the socialist party to power, created a new dynamic on the political scene as identification of the Greek-Cypriot state school curriculum with that of Greece seemed to compromise views from all parties – the right-wing that advocated identification of the Cypriot with the Greek educational system as the educational ideology and policy, and the left-wing parties who favoured changes introduced by the Greek socialist government.

In 1990 the Republic of Cyprus submitted an application to join the European Union. The process of harmonisation naturally brought pressures for all-inclusive forms of educational policy and multiculturalism. However, the years 1993 and 1998 saw the Republic of Cyprus with a right-wing government, elected for two consecutive administrations and promoting 'Greece-Cyprus Unified Education'. The actual term used to characterise the philosophy and priorities of education offered in Greek-Cypriot state schools at that time was 'hellenocentric education' (Papanastasiou and Koutselini-Ioannidou, 1999, p. 169). This policy met with both strong support and opposition (ibid).[8] A survey in 2000 showed that the large

majority of Greek-Cypriot teachers and parents approved the education policy of 'Greece-Cyprus Unified Education' (Koutselini and Michaelidou, 2004). The overall aim of education reveals that the rights promoted are those of the Greek speaking, Christian Orthodox citizens, and confirms that state values and goals focus exclusively on securing the civil liberties of the largest Christian religious and ethnic group on the island:

> The general aim of the Greek Cypriot Education is the creation of free, democratic and autonomous citizens with a well-rounded, developed personality, intellectually cultivated, virtuous, healthy, active and creative, who would contribute with the work and mindful actions in social, scientific, economic and cultural progress of our homeland and in the promotion of collaboration, understanding and love between human beings and peoples, aiming at a predominance of freedom, justice and peace and with explicit orientation to the idea of free homeland, our Greek identity and our Orthodox Christian tradition (Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus, 1996, p. 17).

In a seemingly unproblematic way, the traditional nationalistic representations of Cyprus as Greek are made to cohabitate with concepts like the promotion of autonomy, social scientific and cultural progress and collaboration. The latter concepts, however, are incompatible with the enactment of ellinohristianismos, which dominated for years, premised on the dialectic of intolerance, the political and educational sphere, albeit in various forms and shades.[9]

When it comes to the aims of history teaching the mono-perspective view of history teaching as heritage and promotion of the national ethos starts to reveal itself. The history curriculum for primary education reads:

> The aim of the subject of history is to help pupils to become familiar, appreciate the historical life and cultural heritage of Cyprus and Greece, and construct a national consciousness as members of the Greek nation and as citizens of a semi-occupied Cyprus (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1996, p. 133).

Primary school history aims are broken down to objectives that are more specific; for example 'to understand the tragedy of our homeland, as a result of the coup d'etat and of the [T]urkish invasion and occupation and to strengthen their fighting morale for national justice' (ibid., p. 134). Here the promotion of an uncompromising fighting spirit comes in contrast with objectives such as 'to understand the human relations that are necessary for the harmonious living together of people' and to 'appreciate the productive role of international organisations and the importance of peaceful procedures in solving the differences between states' (ibid., p. 133).

The aim of the history curriculum for secondary education seems to support a humanist approach to the teaching of history and the development of historical understanding and this orientation is presented as being in absolute harmony with the wider aim of Cypriot education.

> The subject of history is mainly a humanitarian subject and its general aim, that is, the construction of a historical consciousness and the development of historical thinking is in absolute harmony with the wider aim of Cypriot education that refers to the preparation of fulfilled (whole) and active citizens (Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus, in press).

Importantly, the aim of 'explicit orientation to the idea of our Greek identity and our Orthodox Christian tradition' that is present in the general aim of the Greek-Cypriot educational system is not explicitly stated in the aim of history teaching in secondary education. It could be argued that this omission in fact reveals an underlying tension between the explicit aim of the development of historical thinking and the implicit aim of orientation to Greek identity and Orthodox Christian tradition. Taking into account the fact that the spiral distribution of the content matter of history teaching across the elementary and the high-school and that the ethnocentric and monoperspectival ideology that supports this teaching is the same both in elementary and high-school it could reasonably be asserted that the actual practice of history teaching undermines the aim of preparing fulfilled and active citizens and the aim of the development of historical thinking. Christou (2004) shows that recent history and especially the internal conflict that preceded 1974 is rarely if ever included in history lessons. Pupils, in her research, argued that they had almost finished high school without being exposed to any explanation about the events that have taken place in their country in the last fifty years.

Bringing the perspective of the 'other' into the purview of school history as taught across the divide of Cyprus is of course only the minimum requirement for the beginning of a more decentred historical narrative. History teaching should encompass much more than the 'shock effect' of finding out that members of 'our' community were also the perpetrators and not always the victims. If history teaching is exhausted in such discussions, then the approach is superficial and runs the danger of falling into the naïve relativist position, described earlier. A more comprehensive approach to history teaching should aim to enhance multiperspectivity both as a teaching approach and an epistemological standpoint.

Multiperspectivity adds an extra dimension to historical narrative by supplementing the linear process with a sequence of 'meanwhiles' which convey the reactions and subsequent actions of 'significant others' (Stradling, 2003, p 19). Multiperspectivity, applied in the Cyprus context highlights the mutual influences

between different groups within Cyprus, neighbouring countries, alliances, rivalries, the colonisers and the colonised or the occupiers and the occupied. Moreover, it sheds more light on conflict situations on the divided island of Cyprus by helping us to understand that they often arise, persist and are shaped by conflicts of interpretation where each party to the dispute assigns motives and intentions to each other's actions which are not founded on any specific evidence, but reflect long-established assumptions, preconceptions, prejudices and stereotypes. Finally, it can demonstrate that in some situations in the histories of Cyprus, the perspectives are related in a symbiotic way, with emphasis placed on historical relationships between more and less powerful groups, between different minority groups, between powerful countries and their less powerful neighbours, allies and satellites.

Unfortunately the ethnocentric grand narratives offered in the Greek-Cypriot history textbooks do not even fulfil the minimum requirements of decentration. A convincing analysis of these ideological orientations may be identified in all textbooks produced in Cyprus, where the history of the island is presented as part of Greek national history and terms such as 'Greek' and 'Cypriot' are used interchangeably or synonymously (Hadjipavlou, 2002; Kizilyürek, 2002; Koullapis, 2002; Lewis and Hodge, 1978). An unbroken, Hellenic continuity is constructed from the twelfth century BCE until the present day with the multiethnic structure of the population being systematically ignored (Kizilyürek, 2002). Nevertheless, as we argued from the beginning of this article, the development of attitudes and stereotypes against the other is the product of a variety of constraints at different levels of analysis (cf Trimikliniotis, 2004). Consequently, analysis of the content of textbooks[10], though a useful research tool and process for the unravelling of dominant discourses, should not be equated with investigation of mechanisms that create and produce hostile attitudes towards the other. Such (re)-production is an ongoing procedure that constitutes a complex process, where communication in the everyday educational praxis provides a much more proximal context for the workings of ideology. The study of education as a process of communication and influence between various agents, most importantly educators, parents and children can unravel the way that epistemologies based on intolerance are enacted in the everyday educational praxis.

The brief overview of the dominant ideological orientations in the last century should have made clear that history teaching in Cyprus, across the existing divide, has a long history of being in the service of promoting the nationalist ideology (Canefe, 2002; Koulouri, 2001; Koullapis, 1999, 2002; Philippou, 2004; Kizilyürek 2001, 2002; Makriyianni, 2006; Özgür, 1994; Papadakis, 1998, 2002, 2003; Spyrou, 2000, 2001, 2005) and can more comfortably be described as heritage rather than history. The distinction made by Lowenthal (1998) can furnish as a lense through

which some paradoxes in relation to the aims of history teaching in the Greek-Cypriot system can be made visible.

Paradoxes of Teaching History in Greek-Cypriot Schools

Greek-Cypriot history curricula, in both primary and secondary education, advocate the promotion of critical thinking, autonomy, the development of the child's cognitive and moral development and humanistic values of respect for the other human being. Our argument so far should have made clear that the promotion of these aims is incompatible with the promotion of a monolithic and monoperspectival nationalist ideology.

The promotion, moreover, of progressive epistemologies, aims and advanced teaching methodologies in Cyprus is seriously undermined by authoritarian forms of asymmetric communicative forms in the educational praxis. For example, in a long-term project which compared primary school pupil-teachers' theories on teaching with their actual practice, Koutselini and Persianis (2000) found that although pupil-teachers' educational standpoints changed in their final year of study towards a child-centred and constructivist view, this was not implemented in their actual teaching. Koutselini and Persianis (p. 516) argue that these misconceptions were 'likely the result of deeply embedded cultural values through which pupil-teachers' understanding of the new pedagogical approaches is mediated'. These authors maintain that misconceptions about the teacher as the only source of knowledge and sole possessor of formal truth can be seen to relate back to the archetype of the priest-teacher, a practice of the past. In addition, the conception of error as a kind of sin can be seen to emerge from the Orthodox Church's epistemology about absolute truth, which the priest teacher must transmit to pupils, and which pupils must learn as the only means to secular salvation just as Orthodox religious knowledge is necessary for spiritual salvation. Koutselini and Persianis (2000) identify the negative role that the epistemology of knowledge as dogma and orthodoxy plays in structuring the actual educational praxis, and suppressing critical thinking – what Piaget ([1977] 1995) would term 'social relations of constraint'. However, they fall short of extending their analysis, with the same consistency, to the nationalist ideology as a dogma that suppresses critical thinking.

The Way Forward

In discussing the way forward and how to resolve these paradoxes, we would like to concentrate on three recent developments in the field of history education in Cyprus that can contribute towards reconciliation: the new Turkish-Cypriot history textbooks, the proposal of the Educational Reform Committee and the work of the multi-communal Association for Historical Dialogue and Research.

In 2004 new history textbooks were produced for the Turkish-Cypriot community. The rewriting of history textbooks was saluted by academics and non-governmental organisations in Cyprus and abroad, as a manifestation of a more critical stance against the workings of the nationalist ideology that guided the old textbooks, and as a positive step towards reconciliation (see POST, 2007).

In 2004 the Educational Reform Committee, comprising a group of academics constituted by and working at the request of the Republic of Cyprus produced a manifesto-report for 'educational transformative reform'. In this manifesto, the Committee argued, among other, for ideological re-orientation and restructuring of the educational system since 'the general orientation and ideology' in Cypriot education remain largely based on 'Greek values' and 'knowledge' (Educational Reform Committee, 2004, p. 4). In this report the term Greek-Cypriot-centric is coined for the first time. The Committee calls for a transformation based on the principles of participatory democracy, 'humanist' and 'neo-humanist ideology' and argues for 'objectives such as the intercultural and multicultural ideology that connect Cypriot traditions with knowledge of the culture and civilisation of others' (Educational Reform Committee, 2004). As regards history teaching, it proposes greater emphasis on the teaching of history through educational programmes and textbooks that correspond to European standards (peaceful coexistence, multiculturalism, respect for difference, and the elimination of chauvinism, nationalism and intercommunal hatred). In addition, the proposal highlights the development of pupils' 'addiction'[11] and adherence to multiple narratives for Peace Education and Pedagogy of Rapprochement. It promotes joint educational programmes and teacher training seminars in co-operation with Turkish-Cypriot schools, teachers and pupils to develop a European dimension and rapprochement among all communities towards a peaceful and viable solution of the Cyprus problem.

The Educational Reform Committee also identifies mechanistic history teaching as a problem, drawing on secondary teachers' accounts to note that lessons are knowledge-centred and based on rote-learning in order to meet the requirements of the exam-centred system. 'Very little effort is thus put on achieving critical thinking and the development of political, civic and moral virtues and competencies' (Educational Reform Committee, 2004 p. 86). The proposal further suggests the establishment of an impartial, joint committee of academics, consisting of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, for the revision of history textbooks. The established practice of importing history textbooks from Greece is criticised, and local production of textbooks on the history of Cyprus is advocated in accordance with the UNESCO guidelines on history teaching. Any change, however, as the committee points out, presupposes parallel adjustments in training and education, and in-service training of teachers.

The public reaction to the reform proposal was varied. Three main lines of argument characterised the reaction to the manifesto. One school of thought supported its proposals and the need for debate removed from bias and party-politics. A second line of response avoided discussion on ideological issues so as not to sidetrack the realisation of the reform, but instead, offered refined critique and review of particular aspects (cf Psaltis, 2006). A third line of argument heavily criticised the ideological and theoretical standpoints of the manifesto for attacking Greek/Hellenic-Orthodox ideals. In the words of a Greek-Cypriot philologist: 'a national heritage of three thousand years is questioned by pseudo-arguments for intercultural and multicultural ideology' (Hadjikonstantas, 2005). The Holy Synod of the Autocephalous Greek-Orthodox Church of Cyprus regretted that it had not been consulted in spite of the Church's historic role (Perikleous, 2005), and the members of the Open University of Cyprus dismissed the proposal as an a-theoretical piece of work riddled with contradictions aimed to de-Hellenise Cyprus (Razis, Filokuprou, Orphanides, Giallourides, Tsakmakis, Gravanis, and Pilavakis, 2005). For many of those who opposed the manifesto's ideological orientation, no educational reform should be proposed especially regarding history teaching, without taking into consideration the current stalemate of division, and not before a rightful solution for all Cypriots is found, one that would guarantee restoration of human rights, safety issues, withdrawal of Turkish troops and settlers. The arguments developed in this paper suggest that the aforementioned reactions concerning the proposed ideological reorientation are, to a large extent, unfounded. Education has an important role to play in preparing critical, active, tolerant and democratic citizens. The educational reform committee has made vital suggestions as to how this preparation should, as soon as possible, go ahead in order to contribute towards breaking the cycle of intractability.

The second major recent development that has been contributing to the promotion of the disciplinary approach in history teaching for the last three years is the work of the multi-communal Association for Historical Dialogue and Research.[12] In April 2003, the multicommunal, non-governmental association was founded in Cyprus with a mission to promote productive dialogue and research on issues of history and history teaching to strengthen peace, stability, democracy and critical thinking.[13] The Association, whose Board and members comprise researchers, historians and educators from primary, secondary and higher education, across the existing divide, recognises the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the covenants of Human Rights issued by the United Nations, and the UNESCO recommendations relevant to history teaching. In particular, the Association aims to: enhance quality in learning and teaching of history, emphasising the advancement of historical thinking; encourage communication and co-operation between individuals and organisations interested in history, history teaching and learning locally and internationally; ensure access

and equal learning opportunities to individuals of every ability, ethnic and cultural background; provide a forum for the discussion of matters of common interest for individuals concerned with history and history teaching and learning; and promote understanding, respect and co-operation amongst the ethnic groups of Cyprus.

The Association has set as one of its priorities the teacher training on the epistemology and methodology of history teaching. Many multicommunal educational discussions have been organised in collaboration with civil society and teacher trade unions across the divide in Cyprus, and organisations and institutions abroad. A series of collaborative multicommunal seminars and workshops with the Council of Europe – the first one held in June 2004 entitled 'The Council of Europe and History Education' – on the social and cultural history of Cyprus with trainers from various countries of Europe and across the divide in Cyprus – have set the pace for further cooperation at a local, European and international level (cf Philippou and Makriyianni, 2004; Loizos, 2003; Council of Europe, 2004, Council of Europe and Makriyianni, 2005).

Concluding Remarks

In this article, we showed that, in the Greek-Cypriot educational system, the helleno-christian ideal has been the dominant ideology for many years. At the core of this ideology there was, and still is, a dialectic of intolerance that ignores the point of view of other ethnic or religious groups and promotes a form of blind patriotism that interprets any criticism of the own-group as a form of betrayal. Moreover, a majoritarianism, premised on the same dialectic of intolerance, dictates that Greek Cypriots should have the first and last word on the governance of Cyprus. Following Lowenthal's (1998) distinction between heritage and history, school history as taught today in Greek-Cypriot schools acts as a weapon in the hands of nationalist ideology – historical sources that contradict the official Greek-Cypriot narrative are suppressed and the Cyprus problem is presented only as a matter of invasion and occupation by Turkey ignoring the history of inter-communal strife and the current lack of trust between the two larger communities of Cyprus (see research of UNFICYP, 2007). Such a practice bears stark similarities with history being taught as heritage. As such the teaching of history promotes a monological approach to history teaching that is sustained by asymmetric forms of communication where beliefs are transmitted from the more powerful to the less powerful, from the group to the individual. Pupils conform to and reproduce the narrative of the collective memory of Greek Cypriots. This attachment to one's nation and absence of references to the ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversity of populations, accompanied by a silence concerning social stratification, has a negative impact on the cultivation of democratic citizens. In the name of patriotism, national unity and conformity, debate, critique and plurality of

perspectives are perceived as threats and are pushed aside. Emotionally charged narratives filled with dates and 'facts' of heroic moments presented as the outcome of uncompromising valour in resisting any reconciliation with 'the enemies' further undermine the desire for peace. Members of the 'national' group are encouraged to be firmly loyal, intolerant of in-group criticism, and to praise unquestioningly the in-group's decisions and actions.

Most school experience is permeated and constrained by a static, 'traditional' epistemology of history teaching that is based on Piagetian ([1932] 1965) social relations of constraint. In some cases such an epistemology is actively promoted and even celebrated through all narratives explored at school, which commemorate the continuity, homogeneity, antiquity and heroic nature of Cypriot Hellenism. In other cases, the same beliefs are transmitted to children through visits to museums (Makriyianni, 2006) where the emphasis is placed on how children can best 'master' 'their heritage'. The teaching of history as heritage is a paradox indeed in a country that claims it wants to find a mutually agreed solution, based on the UN resolutions through dialogue and peaceful means. How could reconciliation, rapprochement and co-operation flourish between the two larger communities in Cyprus when the teaching of history undermines this effort? How can educators help cultivate active and critical citizens, develop their agency and autonomy, their intelligence and morality when they suppress through social relations of constraint true dialogue on sensitive issues in history teaching?

Education needs to urgently become a space of free dialogue, contact and co-operation between members of various ethnic groups across the divide. The emergence of this dialectic of co-operation implies mutual respect, a norm of reciprocity and decentration from our sociocentrism that will help in overcoming the constraints and democratic deficits and also promote the strengthening of civil society. The educational praxis is a sphere where communication between pupils and their teachers and peers takes place. Policy makers and educators alike need to promote communicative rationality as free, unconstrained from coercive forces, symmetric dialogue (Habermas, [1983] 1990) in the classrooms so as to avoid the colonisation of history teaching by the ethnocentric and 'traditional' framework of 'orthodoxy' that penetrates the Greek-Cypriot educational system. A necessary prerequisite would be to make available both the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot perspectives in the classrooms, either physically through contact with Turkish Cypriots or symbolically through prepared lessons that aim at decentring children from their own ethnocentrism. More importantly, teachers should aim to further the advancement of historical understanding of their pupils, like examination and evaluation of primary and secondary sources, contextualisation and multiperspectivity.

When teaching history children should be urged to seek and identify the 'absences and silences' of 'others', put themselves in the shoes of 'others' during their history lessons, and try to imagine what it would have been like to be them. They would be challenged to question accounts and interrogate evidence, not to take things at face value, but always to research and to construct their own interpretations through disciplined argument and debate. Pupils can, in this way, become aware that the stereotypes and prejudices that have governed their judgments about 'the other' are both counterproductive and dangerous, and may recognise the need for productive alternatives. To nurture and sustain these attitudes, such activities should be part of a broader drive towards critical history, historiography and history teaching.

This conceptualisation is in accordance with UNESCO's insistence that education, in particular history teaching, can be an excellent vehicle of mutualunderstanding, especially between neighbouring countries. For UNESCO new approaches to history teaching as well as comparative reviews of curricula and textbooks are important resources for the development of civil society, good neighbourliness and the construction of a culture of peace. Along these lines, Council of Europe Recommendation 15 (2001), points out that history teaching in a democratic Europe should be 'a decisive factor in reconciliation, recognition, understanding and mutual trust' and 'play a vital role in the promotion of fundamental values, such as tolerance, mutual understanding, human rights and democracy'. History teaching should also aim to develop in pupils 'the intellectual ability to analyse and interpret information critically and responsibly, through dialogue' and 'through open debate based on multiperspectivity, especially on controversial and sensitive issues' (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 2). Moreover, 'history teaching must not be an instrument of ideological manipulation, or propaganda'.

There is the need today to initiate a debate on 'ongoing issues concerning the legacy of the past' and the role of nationalisms in Cyprus and a meta-interpretive approach to exploring, touching upon and commenting on ambiguity and myth, revealing discrepancies and biases. Such a task could be taken upon by civil society and/or an independent reconciliation commission. Moreover, great emphasis should be placed on cooperative work in the educational system (see Psaltis and Duveen, 2006, 2007) and policies of inter-group contact in integrated schools based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954). These approaches can promote a paradigm shift from a dialectic of intolerance to a dialectic of co-operation.

Notes

1. Given divides the period from the British occupation of Cyprus in 1878 to Independence in 1960 into three phases: Orientalist (1878-c.1900), Philhellenic (c.1900-c.1930), and 'Authentic Cypriot' (c.1930-1960).

2. In Greek: *να αφελληνιστεί.*

3. Prominent nationalist educator and headmaster of the Pancyprian Gymnasium for many years, who following the Independence of Cyprus was elected President of the Greek Communal Chamber in Cyprus, a body which dealt with matters of religion, education and culture. On 1 April 1965, after the inter-communal strife and the withdrawal of Turkish Cypriots from all governmental posts, Spyridakis was appointed by Greek Cypriots as the first Minister of Education of the Republic of Cyprus, a position he held until 1970.

4. EOKA (In Greek: Εθνική Οργάνωση Κυπρίων Αγωνιστών, in English: National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters).

5. TMT (In Turkish: Türk Mukavemet Teşkilati, in English: Turkish Resistance Organisation).

6. The educational reform of 1976 was initiated by the then Minister of Education, Dr C. Sofianos, a young professional educationist.

7. The new Minister of Education, N. Konomis, was a classicist philologist who had held a position at the University of Thessalonica, Greece.

8. According to Papanastasiou and Koutselini (1999) some have described it as nationalistic and contrary to the efforts of Cyprus to adjust to the principles and the policies of the European Union, to which the Republic of Cyprus had applied for full EU membership in 1990. AKEL, described this policy as chauvinistic and one that created difficulties in the attempt to solve the Cyprus problem within the framework of the United Nations' resolutions. On the other hand, many scholars in the field of education claimed that the pursuit of national objectives on the part of the educational system is not opposed to the European Union Treaty (Maastricht) and that this pursuit is a common phenomenon in many countries that belong to the European Union.

9. Its main form since 1974 has been to defend the political independence of Cyprus, whilst advocating close cultural links with Greece.

10. For an analysis of the new history textbooks produced in and for the Turkish-Cypriot community, see POST (2007)

11. 'Addiction' is the translation of the word 'εθισμός', used by authors.

12. For information on the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research see: website of the AHDR [http://www.hisdialresearch.org/].

13. The birth of the Association, on 21 April 2003, almost coincided with a historic change that took place on the island when on 23 April 2003, travel restrictions between the two sides of the Green Line in Cyprus were unexpectedly eased and several thousand Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots had their first chance since 1974 to cross the divide.

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