

## Europe and identity – Wall charts, history and European identity

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„Wenn das Material der Bildsprache, die Vielzahl der Anschauungsmittel nicht in einer höheren Einheit, nämlich im Ganzen einer Weltsicht Zusammenhang haben, bleiben sie, auf die Aufgaben der Pädagogik bezogen, ein bloßes Gestammel, das nicht ins Bild setzt, sondern verwirrt.“

Alfons Otto Schorb, 1968

This quote by Alfons Otto Schorb refers to a central aspect of pedagogical visual hermeneutics – pictures in pedagogy, above all visual media, are always also world concepts, visualized sensorial constructions.

Even in the textbook *Orbis sensualium pictus* by Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670), a comprehensive pedagogical program is hidden. “Pedagogy discovers the picture, that is the picture reveals the pedagogic intention”, this is Rudolf Keck’s summary of this phase in the history of the visual image (cf. Keck 2004, p. 17). Illustration is used to support imagination and memory; at the same time Comenius’ painted world refers to the reality of pictures to be the ideal reality. Pictures make it possible to get an insight into the divine order of entirety which is worth “being called holistic and harmonic [...]” (Pansophia, Caput 1, 4 in: Comenius-Pansophia, Prague 1966, p. 199). In other words: pictures move within the divine cosmos of a theocentric world view which, as a harmonious order, is brought into line with realistic pedagogy.

JOH. AMOS COMENII,  
**ORBIS SEN-**  
**SUALIUM PICTUS.**  
*Hoc est,*  
 Omnium fundamentalium in Mundo Re-  
 rum & in Vita Actionum  
 Pictura & Nomenclatura.  
**Die sichtbare Welt /**  
*Das ist /*  
 Aller vornehmsten Welt's Dinge und Le-  
 bens-Berichtungen  
**Vorbildung und Benennung.**



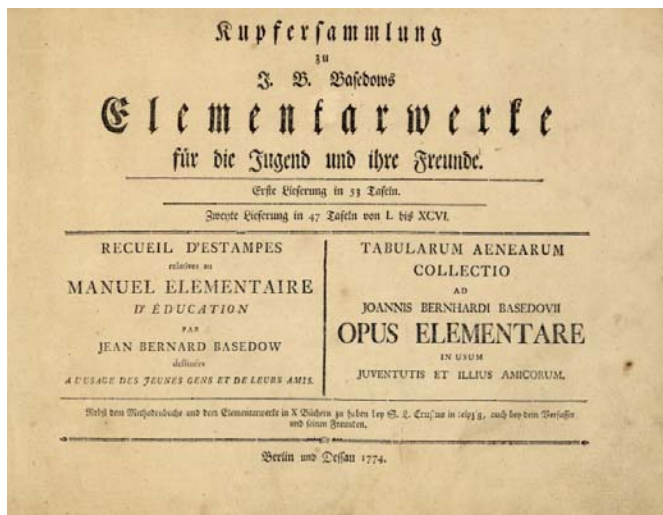
NORIBERGÆ,  
 Typis & Sumptibus MICHAELIS ENDTERI.  
 Anno Salutis 1708 LVIII.



<i>M.</i> Veni, Puer! disce Sapere.	<i>L.</i> Komm her / Knab! lerne Weisheit.
<i>P.</i> Quid hoc est, Sapere?	<i>S.</i> Was ist das/ Weisheit?
<i>M.</i> Omnia, quæ necessaria, rectè intelligere, rectè agere, rectè eloqui.	<i>L.</i> Alles / was nöthig ist / recht verstehen / recht thun / recht ausreden.
<i>P.</i> Quis me hoc docebit?	<i>S.</i> Wer wird mich das lehren?
<i>M.</i> Ego, cum DEO.	<i>L.</i> Ich / mit G.Dt.
<i>P.</i> Quomodo?	<i>S.</i> Welcher gestalt? <i>M.</i> Du-

Johann Amos Comenius: Orbis sensualium pictus, 1658

The didactic fund of pictures from the Age of Enlightenment refers to a secularized, however, certainly not less reasonably structured world view. Here, the pedagogic use of the picture is continued. As an example Basedow's Elementarwerk of 1774. The copperplate engravings are mainly "snap shots" or situation pictures. Fixated on instruction and the use of reason as well as incidents which are desired from a pedagogical point of view (cf. Keck 2004, p. 21), they express a bourgeois world view, with the intention to enlighten.



Daniel Chodowiecki »Kupferammlung zu J.B. Basedows Elementarwerk«, 1774

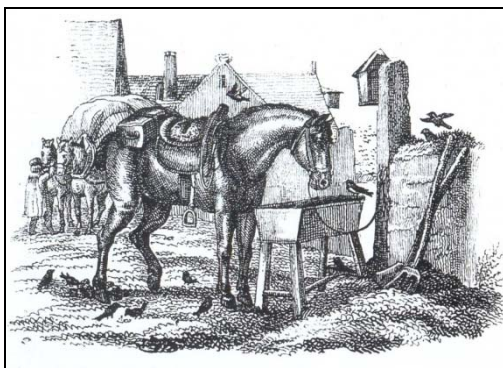
It would be possible to continue with such examples, think of Johann Sigmund Stoy's *Bilderakademie für die Jugend*, published at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1780-1784) or Friedrich Justin Bertuch's *Bilderbuch für Kinder* of 1790. And school wall charts, which, for a period of more than a hundred years, characterized the shaping of imagination and sense-making as the central way of illustration, also refer to the fact that, from a historic-systematic view, the discovery of the picture through pedagogy follows educational and didactical-methodical aspects. As their historical precursors they fulfill another function in addition to the illustration of contents: "at the same time they are illustrations of a concept" (cf. Breidbach 2000, p. 122). They use their own particular logic to provide information on a specific world and knowledge concept.

Historical wall charts are thus not only a teaching material and a learning aid, but also a testimony to historical-pedagogical figures of thought, reflections of cultural influences, clear examples of a history of creating and handing down political attitudes and stereotypes, visual examples of pedagogical fictions – they are the process and expression of a “pedagogical design” (Peters 1942/43, p. 25).

As a result, the research on wall charts becomes a process of archaeological excavation of hidden forms of sense-making (cf. Catteeuw 2005b) and the analysis of the inherent message is closely linked to the didactic ambition which distinguishes between school wall charts and other pedagogical types of pictures (cf. Pöggeler 1992), as paintings, for example.

Before I explain why the world and knowledge concept included in school wall charts is especially important for the pictures in history classes, I would like to take a closer look at the history of the school wall charts:

In its infancy, the history of the wall charts has its roots in text book illustrations.



Book illustration: Fünfzig Fabeln für Kinder, Otto Speckter, F. C. Gotha 1833



Wall chart: Pferd und Sperling, F. A. Perthes, Gotha 1881

With the help of the printing press, the wall chart is used pedagogically-didactically as an element of illustration. Thus, wall charts historically developed from book illustrations. That is: book illustrations on an enlarged scale ranked among the first wall charts (Ringhausen 1976, Stach 1984). Above all, Basedow's Elementarwerk becomes an important landmark in this respect because individual enlarged copperplates of this work were used as wall charts in 1776 during the public examination at the Philantropin in Dessau. The triumphant progress of wall charts, however, is less dependent on pedagogical ambitions than on the achievements of printing technology. The invention of lithography by Alois Senefelder in 1796 and typographical advancements in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century represent decisive conditions for the gradual introduction of wall charts to schools. It is only as a result of these innovations that it has become possible and economically acceptable to produce a multitude of wall charts for schools. Due to technical progress the wall charts not only become cheaper but also colored and, finally, larger.



Gehen, Reimer und Wilkes  
Bildertafeln für den  
Anschauungsunterricht, 1837



Einkaufen  
Reimer und Wilkes Bildertafeln für  
den Anschauungsunterricht, 1863



Kornscheuer (Scheune)  
Wilkes Bildertafeln für den Anschauungsunterricht, 1875

Based on didactic theories, school wall charts gain a didactic-methodical status of their own in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century beside the textbook. A host of school wall charts and wall picture series have appeared internationally since the 1870s, above all for the first visual instructions and speech lessons, for religious education, geography, history lessons and nature study. For decades, these pictures have sustained in the market for teaching materials and the number of copies has changed only very slightly in some cases. During the golden age in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, school wall charts were produced for almost every single teaching subject. In teaching, wall charts are the medium to illustrate.

Despite the slump in production during WW I and WW II, school wall charts remained of paramount importance for teaching and learning in school for a long time. Especially since the beginning of the 1960s the central importance of the school wall charts in teaching has waned, due to the spread of technical visual media, as for example slides and overhead transparencies.

Generally speaking, the function of wall charts is to introduce the lifeworld and tradition to the classrooms in a didactically prepared form. They should be designed

in such a way that they appeal to emotions and the artistic sense, improve the use of language, support the generation of permanent ideas of the contents to be taught and stimulate the forming of clear concepts (cf. Apel 1997, p. 219).

The focus of our project “Europe and identity” now lies on school wall charts for history classes.

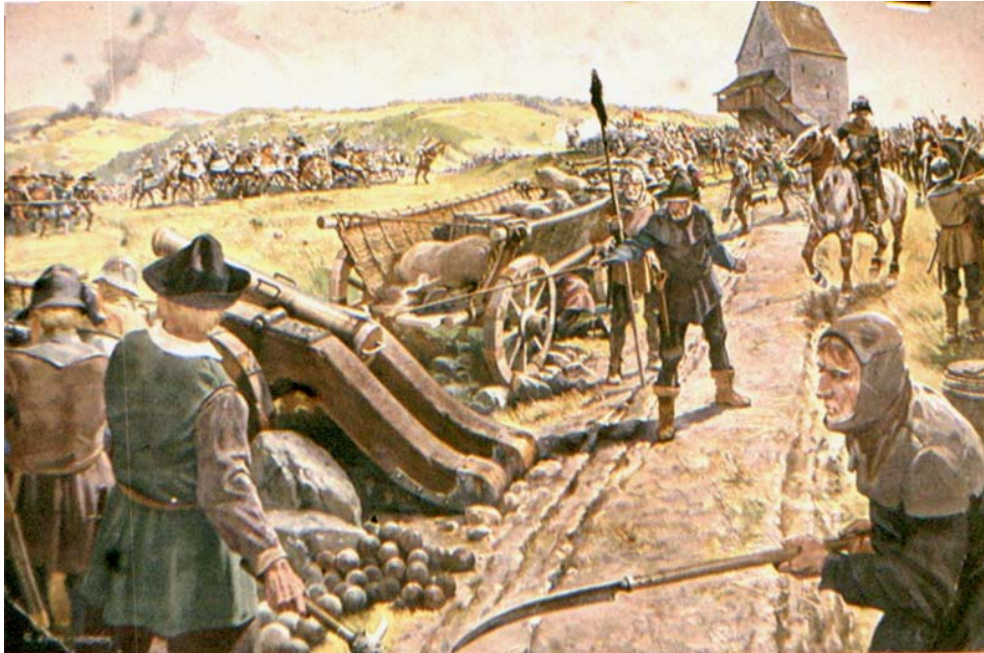
When analyzing the pictures for history classes not only the question arises as to which historic events were presented in Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands and in which way, or not only the question is important in which historic context characters of history were illustrated and what changes took place against the background of different production eras (production during the German Empire and during National Socialism). It is also interesting how the pedagogical-didactic objective, the idea of one’s own nation, the idea of Europe has found expression in the pictures.

In a multitude of school wall charts for history classes, the heuristic distinction between describing, explaining and evaluating elements falls apart. By means of simplification, structuring, emphasis and choosing subject matters according to values which give content, bodies of knowledge of history are educationally “reviewed”. However, this process in the contemporary discussion on school wall charts surely isn’t problematized but legitimized. With an explicit reference to pictures for history classes, Kögler, for example, declares “that when the aim is to achieve religious, moral and/or aesthetic objectives, a certain idealization [...] must be allowed also for the picture” (Kögler 1876, p. 129). Pictures, which uplift the child’s soul, are valued more highly than the historical cognitive process.

The sense-making in pictures for history classes supports a historical reality and it is only possible to shape this reality because of these pictures. This aspect becomes important when it comes to ask about common elements of a world concept.

On school wall charts, history is often presented as an event history. For this purpose, historical events are structured and an “explanation” is added. Out of the apparently well-arranged strand of a story, the wall chart depicts “one moment, most of the time the climax or the particularly interesting moment” (Jansch 1920, p. 3). This

excerpt should impress on pupils mind, in order to support the popularization of the historical event. Often events are personalized and dramatized. In the end, national patterns are laid over the picture like a second layer and especially the visual presentation suggests its historical truthfulness.



History wall chart: Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg vom Jahre 1524/25

This is the reason why interpretationism – not realism – is the guiding principle. As a hermetic extract, the school wall charts reflects individual views of the world. Consequently, a reality of its own takes shape in the process, which is particularly important for the research on the picture of Europe, for example.

In other words: asking about “Europe and identity” becomes a question about the world and knowledge concepts which have had an effect on the production of school wall chart and which generate a picture of Europe, which is by far more than a conglomeration of events in a shared history. These are the areas that the research for this project needs to focus on!



## Bibliography