

**GLOBAL HISTORY, CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS AND
ENCOUNTERS AND THEORETICAL ROOTS OF THE STUDY OF
MENTAL IMAGES**

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Abstract

While the historical study of mental images is a significant aspect of the history of cross-cultural interactions and encounters, the latter forms one of the most critical areas of global history, which can in turn be regarded as one channel through which historical research can participate on a par with other academic fields in multidisciplinary projects designed to seek solutions to the many problems and dangers that threaten the world of the present day and future. Our modern world poses a challenge for global history, and global history poses a challenge for historical research and its capabilities for continual renewal.

Key words: Global history, cross-cultural interactions, encounters, mental images

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Cross-cultural interactions and encounters as a part of global history

Global history can be understood as meaning first of all continuously increasing interdependence between cultures and states, and secondly a course of historical development towards a more cohesive world order and associated “world culture”, characterized at its most ideal by lively interaction between strong local and national cultures, a continuous flow of cultural influences in all directions, widespread knowledge of alien cultures and a sympathetic understanding of their distinguishing features. Thirdly, it may be taken to imply the examination of local phenomena from a global point of view, assessing the general significance of local entities and events, identifying their common features and impacts, and distinguishing what is uniquely local in them.

Global history attempts to find signs of globalization both in recent times and far back into the past, and in this sense it cannot be regarded simply as a new field of history but rather as an approach to the past which is capable of opening up new visions in the face of the increasing global threats that hang over our future. In other words, global history represents a modern way of comprehending the dangers threatening the human race. One could very well say that it has arisen more out of the existence of certain problems than on account of any human success story.¹

One of the central objects of interest in global history is the study of cross-cultural interactions and encounters, since the history of these is very largely a matter of the processes that can gradually lead to the phenomenon of a world culture described above. It is in effect the process of emergence of a global cultural network. It is not important in this case to deliberate over whether this state will ever be achieved, nor is that the real question that global history sets out to answer.

If we wish to examine the process of emergence of a global cultural network, we must bear in mind that there are different levels at which cultures meet, and that these are apt to influence the form of the network and the directions of its cultural flows. I have taken as my starting point the proposal of Urs Bitterli for a division of relations between western and other cultures over the period 1500–1800 into four types: contacts, collisions, relationships and the closely associated notion of acculturation.²

¹ See also *Conceptualizing Global History*. Edited by Bruce Mazlish and Ralph Buultjens. Global History. Series Editors Bruce Mazlish, Carol Gluck, and Raymond Grew. Westview Press, Boulder 1993.

² Urs Bitterli, *Cultures in Conflict. Encounters Between European and Non-European Cultures, 1492–1800*. Translated by Ritchie Robertson. Polity Press, Oxford 1989, 20–51.

Bitterli means by cultural encounters the first of these, i.e. short-lived or sporadic contacts between a European and a non-European culture, some of the earliest instances of which were the 15th century Portuguese encounters with West Africans. The first, usually peaceful meeting was of short duration, and it was sometimes followed by a stage that could be defined as a relationship, but more commonly the outcome was some degree of collision. Such collisions normally took the form of wars and hostilities, but they could also amount in practice to the exposure of a population entirely devoid of any natural immunity to hitherto unknown diseases such as smallpox, tuberculosis or syphilis. Other threats to local cultures, which constituted forms of collision included slavery and forced labour.

A relationship between cultures was able to develop directly from the first contact, and usually came to be based on a political equilibrium or a stable situation dictated by external conditions. A good example of this was the situation in West Africa up to the 19th century, in which the Europeans controlled the seas and the local inhabitants the interior. Each needed the other in order to profit from commercial relations. The position of the Europeans was least satisfactory in India and the Far East, where they were obliged to operate very much on conditions dictated by the local cultures. Bitterli refers to this as a controlled relationship, in which the local culture determined the place where trading occurred, the number of traders and the nature and extent of the trade. Acculturation may be said briefly to refer to the fact that when a relationship has lasted sufficiently long both parties will have adapted in one way or another to the other's culture.

Image research as a means of studying cross-cultural interactions and encounters

The history of cross-cultural interactions and encounters is such a complex research topic that it would be quite impossible to treat it exhaustively in the present context. Thus I will confine myself here to one theoretical and methodological perspective, which seems to me to be highly appropriate, namely the historical study of mental images. In the light of a long research tradition and of my own excursions into this field, I am convinced that this approach offers one crucial key to the whole complex problem of interactions and encounters between cultures, for in all such cases, good or bad, the image which one party has of the other can be decisive. Our minds are full of all kinds of images, which help us to make our way forward in the world, and they can influence all the decisions we take, whether political, economic or cultural.³

Images are studied in many disciplines. This has resulted in an abundance of theoretical articles that also examine the principles of images from the viewpoint

³ Olavi K. Fält, *The Historical Study of Mental Images as a Form of Research into Cultural Confrontation*. *Comparative Civilizations Review* No. 32 Spring 1995, 99.

of the discipline in question. In my article I consider the principles of the study of historical images and the relationship of those principles to the general theoretical field.

Today the study of images can be considered to be quite a broad field, based on even cursory familiarisation with theoretical and practical studies published during the past decade, for example. In Finland, Erkki Karvonen has introduced various theorists by analysing the study of images particularly from the viewpoint of journalism in his book, *Imagologia*, published by the University of Tampere in 1997.⁴ A compilation published by the University of Oulu in 2002 examines the study of images from the viewpoint of history.⁵ The German world includes names like Hans Henning Hahn and the book he edited on the study of stereotypes⁶, and Michael Kunczik and his works on the study of images⁷. An example of studies published in English is Hugo Dyserinck's and Joep Leerssen's multivolume series, *Studia Imagologica*.⁸ A database maintained by Joep Leerssen offers a broader overview of the literature available in this field.⁹

The history of the study of historical images often begins with American researcher Walter Lippmann and his book, *Public Opinion*, published in 1922. From the standpoint of the study of images, the first chapter of the book, "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads", is the most important. In other words, Lippmann speaks of our mental images. According to him, these images have essential significance in people's lives, as people act according to their imagined world, but their actions have consequences in the real world. Lippmann's observations that people's existing images, preconceptions and biases influence their actions, views and interpretations, and that individuals' interests coincide with their mental images, are important from the standpoint of the later theoretical development of the study of images. In this conjunction Lippmann speaks of cultural generalisations, simplifications and expectations, which he calls

⁴ Erkki Karvonen, *Imagologia. Imagon teorioiden esittelyä, analyysiä, kritiikkiä*. Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 544. University of Tampere, Tampere 1997.

⁵ *Looking at the Other. Historical study of images in theory and practice*. Edited by Kari Alenius, Olavi K. Fält & Seija Jalagin. Acta Universitatis Ouluensis. Humaniora. B 42. Oulu University Press, Oulu 2002.

⁶ *Historische Stereotypenforschung. Methodische Überlegungen und empirische Befunde*. Herausgegeben von Hans Henning Hahn. Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg 1995.

⁷ E.g. Michael Kunczik, "Globalisation. News media, images of nations and the flow of international capital with special reference to the role of rating agencies". *The Journal of International Communication*. Vol. 8, No. 1, 2002, 39–79.

⁸ E.g. *National Stereotypes in Perspective. Americans in France, Frenchmen in America*. Edited by William L. Chew, III. *Studia Imagologica*. Amsterdam Studies on Cultural Identity 9. Series editors Hugo Dyserinck, Joep Leerssen. Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA 2001.

⁹ Interactive Bibliographical Database of studies on national imagery. <http://cf.uva.nl/images/>.

stereotypes. They appear to pass from one generation to the next as if they were biological facts.¹⁰

The next pioneer of the concept of the public image was Kenneth E. Boulding and his book, *The Image. Knowledge in Life and Society*, which appeared in 1956. In his book he emphasises how individuals' images are built on their prior experiences and how images in the minds of the public are knowledge structures comprised of certain matters. According to him, images are resistant to change.¹¹

Lippmann's and Boulding's conceptions appear to have definite connections to current conceptions of cognitive psychology. Indeed, several studies have indicated that the study of images is based on cognitive psychology or at least closely resembles it.¹² The origin of the study of cognitive learning and thinking is usually placed in the 1950s. Particular emphasis is placed on the significance of Jeremy Bruner's book, *A Study of Thinking*, published in 1956.¹³

Similar to Lippman's pictures in our heads, in cognitive psychology it is said, to quote Lehtinen and Kuusinen, that "the shaping of people's goals and their choice of a way of acting are defined by individuals' knowledge and skills based on prior experiences, i.e. their so-called knowledge schemas or internal models and their perceptions of the world around them made with the help of these".¹⁴ Thus, "pivotal in forming a perception are the observer's schemas, which as if predict what we are able to perceive. A person can only perceive what he is able to search for on the basis of prior knowledge schemas."¹⁵ The effects of the environment, which create and modify these schemas, are conveyed "at each moment through the knowledge structures formed during an individual's development and the goals of action at that moment"¹⁶. According to Lehtinen and Kuusinen, we therefore perceive the world as it is possible to perceive with the help of our schemas.¹⁷

¹⁰ Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*. With a New Introduction by Michael Curtis. Second printing. Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick 1998 (1922), 3–32, 79–94. See also Karvonen 1997, 55–65.

¹¹ Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Image. Knowledge in Life and Society*. Ninth printing. The University of Michigan Press (1956) 1973, 5–18. See also Karvonen 1997, 152–154.

¹² Anu Jussila, *Populaarimusiikin ja kulttuurin kuva klassisen musiikin erikoislehti Rondossa 1995–2005*. Oulun yliopisto, Kasvatustieteellinen tiedekunta, Musiikkikasvatus KASOPE pro gradu 2005, 19–26; Karvonen 1997, 74; Juho Mikkonen. *Hyvät, pahat ja albaanit. The Timesin ja Helsingin Sanomien kuva Kosovon sodan osapuolista Naton pommitusten aikana keväällä 1999*. Oulun yliopisto, Historian laitos, Yleinen historia pro gradu 2005, 14–16; Timo Ranta, Jan-Åke Törnroos, *Foundations of Image Research*. Working Papers W-42. Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration. Helsinki 1993, 1–21.

¹³ Ermo Lehtinen, Jorma Kuusinen, *Kasvatuspsykologia*. WS Bookwell Oy, Juva 2001, 92–94.

¹⁴ Lehtinen, Kuusinen 2001, 85.

¹⁵ Lehtinen, Kuusinen 2001, 87.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Lehtinen, Kuusinen 2001, 103.

Schemas are generalised knowledge structures, models of thinking or rules. The term schema is brought forth the first time already by Immanuel Kant. It is mentioned in actual psychology of thinking the first time in 1922, but it did not develop into its current form until the end of the 1900s.¹⁸ The ideas presented by Ulric Neisser in the early 1980s have been very significant from the standpoint of the development of the concept of a schema. According to him, a person is what he is as a result of what he has perceived in the past. Every person's possibilities to perceive and act are completely unique, since no one else has exactly his position in the world or precisely his life history.¹⁹ A schema accepts information when it is available through the system's sensing surfaces, and it changes as a result of the impact of this information; it controls movements and investigative functions, whereby more information is obtained, which again causes it to change.²⁰ Further, schemas that exist at a certain given moment are products of a specific history and a cycle (of perceptions) functioning at that moment.²¹

Thus, schemas are theories created in cognitive psychology that are used in different sciences to study images. Concerning people's dealings with each other, in social psychology it is stated that schemas determine what we hold true in the social world. A schema organises our understanding of the world in such a way that it supports or reinforces itself. In other words, it is typical for a person to search for and accept information that supports what he already believes. This also means that when a schema has developed and become stronger, it is often difficult to reject, even though it proves to be false. In other words, it is difficult for people to not take into consideration information that supports their schemas. If there are several schemas of the same person or state, for example, events in the surroundings are in a decisive position. They determine which schemas come forth and which ones remain in the background. Thus, so-called silent schemas may rise to the surface when events in the surroundings support them. This also explains why positive and negative schemas related to the same matter may alternate at different times.²²

From the standpoint of the study of images, another very important concept of cognitive psychology, besides schemas, is the mental model. It is the general term for "representations, that don't just refer to a mental structure connected to a specific perception or function, but to broader entities of schemas

¹⁸ Lehtinen, Kuusinen 2001, 100–102.

¹⁹ Ulric Neisser, *Kognitio ja todellisuus*. Englanninkielisestä alkuteoksesta *Cognition and Reality*. Principles and Implications of Cognitive Psychology suomentanut Helena Jahnukainen. Weilin+Göös, Espoo 1982, 49–50.

²⁰ Neisser 1982, 50.

²¹ Neisser 1982, 56.

²² Kenneth J. Gergen and Mary M. Gergen, *Social Psychology*. Second Edition. Springler Verlag, New York 1986, 46–51.

and beliefs”.²³ Characteristic traits of the mental model include imperfectness and instability.²⁴

In the theory of the study of historical images built on Lippmann’s and Boulding’s ideas²⁵ it seems possible to use the concept of a schema in place of the concept of an image and the concept of a mental model in place of images²⁶. In the following I indicate in more detail how well these concepts coincide with each other. The starting point is still the definition of the concept of a schema presented above, which is applied to the theory of the historical image.

We can call an image and also a schema a map inside our heads that depicts reality, but is not itself reality.²⁷ Images and schemas are characterised by simplification of reality, longevity and consistence. Further, the image of outsiders or strangers is mostly negative.²⁸ This negativeness is emphasised because,

²³ Lehtinen, Kuusinen 2001, 106.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Olavi K. Fält, “Introduction”. *Looking at the Other. Historical study of images in theory and practice*. Edited by Kari Alenius, Olavi K. Fält & Seija Jalagin. Acta Universitatis Ouluensis. Humaniora. B 42. Oulu University Press, Oulu 2002, 7–12.

²⁶ See also Karvonen 1997, 163–164.

²⁷ William Buchanan and Hadley Cantril, *How Nations See Each Other. A Study in Public Opinion*. With the Assistance of Virginia Van S. Zerega, Henry Durant, James R. White. University of Illinois Press, Urbana 1953, 1–3.

²⁸ Melvin Small, “Historians Look at Public Opinion”. *Public Opinion and Historians. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Edited by Melvin Small. Detroit 1970, 22. See also Luigi de Anna, “Vieraiden kansojen kirjallisesta kuvasta”. *Historiallinen arkisto* 96. Jyväskylä 1991, 22–24; Boulding, 1973, 8, 111; Karl W. Deutsch and Richard L. Merritt, “Effects of Events on National and International Images”. *A Social-Psychological Analysis*. Edited by Herbert C. Kelman. Published for the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. Printed in U.S.A. 1965, 183; Olavi K. Fält, *Eksotismista realismiin. Perinteinen Japanin-kuva Suomessa 1930-luvun murroksessa*. With an English Summary: From Exoticism to Realism. The Traditional Image of Japan in Finland in the Transition Years of the 1930’s. *Studia Historica Septentrionalia* 5. Oulu 1982, 9–14; Nathan Glazer, “From Ruth Benedict to Herman Kahn: The Postwar Japanese Image in the American Mind”. *Mutual Images. Essays in American-Japanese Relations*. Edited by Akira Iriye. Harvard Studies in American-East Asian Relations 7. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1975, 164; G. Kleining, “Zum gegenwärtigen Stand der Imageforschung”. *Psychologie und Praxis* 3, 1959, 206; Sang-Chul Lee, *The Japanese Image Projected in Four U.S. Dailies over a Sixty-seven-year Period (1905–1972)*. University of Minnesota, Ph.D. 1979, 2, 167; David Ratz, “The Study of Historical Images”. *Faravid* 31/2007. Pohjois-Suomen Historiallisen Yhdistyksen vuosikirja XXXI, 189–220; William A. Scott, “Psychological and Social Correlates of International Images.” *International Behavior. A Social Psychological Analysis*. Edited by Herbert C. Kelman. Published for the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. Printed in U.S.A. 1965, 80; Melvin Small, *The American Image of Germany 1906–1914*. The University of Michigan, Ph.D. 1965, 298; Jouni Suistola, “From Savagery to Nobleness - How the Turks Entered Mozart’s Compositions”. *Faravid* 11/1987. Pohjois-Suomen Historiallisen Yhdistyksen vuosikirja XI, 131–137; Endymion Wilkinson, *Misunderstanding. Europe versus Japan*. Tokyo 1981, 13.

according to the schema, people tend to accept messages that support the images they have created earlier.²⁹

An image changes the same way as a schema. It is possible as a result of either events that cause very dramatic, strong surges of emotion or cumulative, recurring, similar events that pile up and eventually break the dam, i.e. the previous image.³⁰ Images may also change when changing conditions or situations alter authority relationships in such a way that they lead to a change in images. In that case it is a question of how the world should be defined and who defines it. Thus, a change in an image is also affected by the relative position of matters and their interpreters in the world.³¹

It can be said that the birth process of both a schema and an image is shaped by the information that we have received from various sources³² since our childhood³³. This can also be expressed by saying that an image is a mixture of memories, hopes, myths, love and hate.³⁴

Using the above-mentioned definitions, a schema, or more broadly the concept of a mental model, can also be connected to the concept of a world view, as people's perceptions of other people and cultures are said to depend on their world view. That again is seen to be influenced by a person's entire past, i.e. the time, place, meeting circumstances, personal background, upbringing, personality, political circumstances and authority relationships that prevailed when he developed certain opinions.³⁵ Images, which therefore reflect a world view, are an individual's subjective views of the world. They include, as I have stated above, all his beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and preferences.³⁶

As noted in conjunction with schemas, likewise the most decisive in historical images is what the subject being examined, such as a foreign culture, means from the standpoint of the examiner's own hopes and fears³⁷.

²⁹ Buchanan and Cantril 1953, 96. See also Bård Bredrup Knudsen, *Elite Images and Perceptual Predispositions: A Study of Some National and International Images in Western Europe. Affinity, the Rank of Nations, and Images of Norway and Norwegian Foreign Policy*. The Institute of Political Science, University of Oslo 1979, 29.

³⁰ Boulding 1973, 8–10; Deutsch and Merritt 1965, 135–139.

³¹ Karvonen 1997, 289–292.

³² Buchanan and Cantril 1953, 1–3.

³³ Boulding 1973, 56.

³⁴ Merrill D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*. New York 1960, VII.

³⁵ Harold R. Isaacs, "Sources for Images of Foreign Countries". *Public Opinion and Historians. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Edited by Melvin Small. Detroit 1970, 95.

³⁶ Small 1970, 22.

³⁷ Durand Echeverria, *Mirage in the West. A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815*. Princeton, New Jersey 1957, 281–282. See also Leo P. Crespi, "Some Observations on the Concept of Image". *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Vol. XXV. Princeton 1961, 119.

Circumstances give a different weight and significance to the content of an image, i.e. circumstances affect which feature of an image is most visible at any given moment. On other words, the same individual's, nation's or culture's image of a phenomenon may be positive or negative depending on the relationship between the subject of the image and the examiner's hopes, interests or fears and what the environmental circumstances, such as the political and economic factors, are at each given time.³⁸

The most important matter in the study of images is the creator and owner of the image, the individual or broader group, or the one with a specific image or schema of a phenomenon. It is expressly characteristic of the study of historical images that in attempting to determine what the images were like, why they were what they were, what purpose they served and what changes happened in them, something is learned about the creator and examiner of the image.³⁹

From the standpoint of the study of historical images, a foreign culture is a very revealing and good subject because long geographical distances and cultural differences form a fruitful substrate for images outlined in a few strokes with allegorical content.⁴⁰ In other words, when we are dealing with a foreign culture, the features typical of an image are most clearly visible in exactly that conjunction. It as if best of all reveals us and tells of our worldview. This same phenomenon is visible when examining man's persona, where people's attitude towards more distant and strange matters may be more revealing than their attitude towards things in their near surroundings.⁴¹

One special feature of the references used in the study of historical images, when studying the more general image of a culture or country, for example, is that the great masses did not have spokesmen who would have expressed their views.⁴² Ruth Miller Elson has noted that nearly no traces have been left of the thoughts that

³⁸ Glazer 1975, 168; Harold R. Isaacs, "Some Concluding Remarks: The Turning Mirrors". *Mutual Images. Essays in American-Japanese relations*. Edited by Akira Iriye. Harvard Studies in American -East Asian Relations 7. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1975, 259. See also Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa. British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850*. Madison 1964, 480; Raymond Dawson, *The Chinese Chameleon. An Analysis of European Conceptions of Chinese Civilization*. London 1967, 2, 7-8, 174-175; Allen J. Greenberger, *The British Image of India. A Study in the Literature of Imperialism 1880-1960*. London 1969, 6-7, 203.

³⁹ Daniel J. Boorstin, *America and the Image of Europe. Reflections on American Thought*. New York 1960, 37-39; John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism. The View from America*. Princeton, New Jersey 1972, XVII; Harold R. Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds. American Images of China and India*. New York 1958, 381; Herbert C. Kelman, "Social-Psychological Approaches to the Study of International Relations. Definition of Scope. International Behavior". *A Social-Psychological Analysis*. Edited by Herbert C. Kelman. Published for the Society for Psychological Study of Social Issues. Printed in U.S.A. 1965, 26; Roy Neil Schantz, *The Image of China in the Age of Discovery*. New York University Ph.D. 1962, VI; Cushing Strout, *The American Image of the Old World*. New York 1963, X.

⁴⁰ Eugene Ansel, "Introduction". *The American Image of Russia 1775-1917*. Edited with an Introduction and Comments by Eugene Ansel. New York 1974, 12.

⁴¹ Isaacs 1958, 399.

⁴² Ansel 1974, 11.

were accepted by ordinary people. What they thought about a matter is most likely lost forever from historical research. We can only study thoughts presented in books that they read.⁴³ Melvin Small has said concerning the same matter that the researcher can do nothing more than to try to assess the different material that most likely influenced people's image of a matter. An honest researcher can do no more.⁴⁴

To particularise, may it be said that the study of historical images does not examine opinions it examines images. In general, in the case of large groups, opinions of the past cannot even be studied before the period of Gallup polls, so in such a case already in principle the subject of research must be the broader concept of image.⁴⁵

I do not see the difference between images and opinions as lying exclusively in the fact that the latter cannot be studied in past time, however, for they are really two quite separate things. Since we are obliged to study images rather than mass opinion in the distant past, even though both are accessible in the more immediate past, we may refer to images as an intellectual heritage handed down to us, which we carry with us whether we like it or not. This heritage contains within it various latent images which remain basically the same regardless of how many new features we may add to them in the course of time.⁴⁶

An example from interactions and encounters between the Western and Japanese cultures

To return for a moment to the basic categories of cross-cultural interactions and encounters as set out by Bitterli, contact, collision, relationship and acculturation, we may now integrate these into the above theory of research into mental images. The result is that these categories are seen to provide a useful tool for achieving greater depth in our analysis than we could if we were content to speak about cross-cultural interactions and encounters in general without defining them more exactly.

I will take an example from the field with which I am most familiar, the problem of interactions and encounters between the Japanese and Western cultures. The earliest known contact was in 1543, when the first Europeans are thought to have set foot on Japanese soil. The image of Japan that they had in their minds was

⁴³ Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition. American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century*. Lincoln 1964, VII.

⁴⁴ Small 1970, 24.

⁴⁵ Small 1970, 22. See also Anshel 1974, 11; Peterson 1960, VII.

⁴⁶ Cfr. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*. Rontledge & Kegan Paul, London 1978, 206 ("latent Orientalism" and "manifest Orientalism").

derived from the favorable accounts of Chinese and Mongol origin that Marco Polo brought back to Europe in the 13th century. This first contact developed into a controlled relationship, which lasted until the 1630's, to be followed, as a consequence of a collision at that point, by an even more tightly controlled relationship continuing into the 1850's. A collision episode towards the middle of that decade then heralded a period of more open relations, which finished in the collision marked by the catastrophic events of the Second World War. The subsequent occupation constituted a new controlled relationship, but this time the control was exercised by the American occupation forces and not by the Japanese. This was followed by the present open relationship. Some acculturation, i.e. adaptation to new cultural forms, took place on both sides throughout the long periods of relationship, and these periods, at the same time as being connected with the history of Japanese relations with the West, may also be regarded as steps in the emergence of a global cultural network.

Considering the process by which this cultural network has grown up, the image, which each party has had of the other at the various stages of cross-cultural interaction or encounter will have affected the decisions taken in all spheres of life, including politics and economics, and this image will have reflected the interests, fears and aspirations of that party. The image of Japan prevailing in the West in the mid-19th century, for example, when relations were more open, was a highly exotic one.⁴⁷ Japan was admired in artistic circles and elsewhere as a land of exquisite beauty as far as both its natural scenery and the man-made landscape were concerned. One unusual feature at that period was a strong feminine element in the image, largely attributable to the admiration in which Western men held the Japanese women and the relationships that existed between the Western men and the Japanese women. This is reflected both in literature and in music, where perhaps the best-known example is the opera *Madame Butterfly*. It went so far, in fact, that Russia was inclined to underestimate the Japanese on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War on account of the extreme femininity of the nation's image. The spirit of the age is captured very well by the fact that the hit tune in Russia at the time when the war broke out was called *Geisha*.

The image of Japan in the Western world nevertheless began to alter as the country gradually emerged as a serious contender, and especially when it began to defy established Western interests in the Far East. The change is illustrated very well by the painting designed by Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and sent by him to his cousin Tsar Nikolai II of Russia in 1895, which was entitled "The Yellow Peril" and depicted a Buddha, symbolizing Japan, rising as a threat on the European horizon. This painting aroused a great deal of attention all over Europe.

⁴⁷ See John Ashmead, *The Idea of Japan 1853-1895: Japan as Described by American and Other Travellers from the West*, Ph.D. 1951; L. Moffit Cecil Jr., *Our Japanese Romance: The Myth of Japan in America, 1853-1905*, Ann Arbor 1982; Jean-Pierre Lehmann, *The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power 1850-1905*, London 1978.

The notion of the supremacy of European culture over all others was by no means endangered at that stage. On the contrary, when Westerners living there saw the efforts that the Japanese were making to modernize their country, they expressed serious reservations and advised the Japanese against undue haste. It was not thought possible for a non-European culture to incorporate the fruits of Western culture in such a manner.⁴⁸

Reservations were also expressed over Japan's future. In particular, the opinion was that the country's chief source of livelihood should be agriculture, and the rise of any extensive industry was considered impossible on account of the scarcity of natural resources. Approval was shown for reforms that were in accordance with Western interests and caution was advocated in the case of those liable to endanger such interests. In the end, the chief motives behind Western attitudes and the image of Japan entertained in the West were Western economic interests, in just the same way as the political front was dominated by political and military considerations.

Encounters between the Japanese and Western cultures began to run into more and more problems by the early decades of the present century, and again it was a matter of a conflict of interests, with each seeking to gain new advantages. Given a relationship of equality, Japan aspired to the same imperialist status in the world as was enjoyed by the leading Western powers, while the latter naturally feared that this would pose a threat to their interests. Thus efforts were made to engage Japan in a system of agreements, which would have guaranteed the Western powers the position that they had already attained and prevented the Japanese from assuming a corresponding position. It was the Japanese goal of creating a self-sufficient empire for them by subjugating other Asian peoples, together with the anxiety of the Western powers over their interests that led to the situation in which the only solution for the Japanese was to go to war. This, of course, ended in Japanese surrender in August 1945.

As Narrelle Morris has pointed the Western interest in Japan began to increase by the late 1970s as Japan's economy continued to rise and Western economies by contrast began to falter. Commentators in many Western countries identified a new Japan problem by the mid-1980s. The image of Japan changed from the poor defeated country to the threat of the Western culture. The period of 'Japan bashing' had begun, which lasted until the mid of 1990s. The relative decline of 'Japan bashing' from the late 1990 onwards was partly because Japan's own economic misfortunes, which had lessened Western fears of Japan, and also

⁴⁸ See Olavi K. Fält, *The Clash of Interests. The transformation of Japan in 1861–1881 in the eyes of the local Anglo-Saxon Press*. Studia Historica Septentrionalia XVIII. Jyväskylä 1990.

response to a emergence of competing issues of concern for the West, such as military and economic power of China and the growth of militant Islam.⁴⁹

I would like finally to note that while the historical study of images is a significant aspect of the history of cross-cultural interactions, the latter forms one of the most critical areas of global history, which can in turn be regarded as one channel through which historical research can participate on a par with other academic fields in multidisciplinary projects designed to seek solutions to the many problems and dangers that threaten the world of the present day and the future. Our modern world poses a challenge for global history, and global history poses a challenge for historical research and its capabilities for continual renewal.

⁴⁹ Narrelle Morris, *Destructive Discourse: 'Japan-bashing' in the United States, Australia and Japan in the 1980s and 1990s*. PhD Doctorate. Murdoch University, Australia, 2006.
<http://www.lib.murdoch.edu.au/adt/browse/view/adt-MU20061116.153222>(18.6.2008);
<http://www.lib.murdoch.edu.au/adt/pubfiles/adt-MU20061116.153222/02Introduction.pdf>, 1–4, 34–35
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