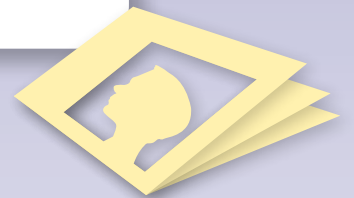




# Images of Others

An Autobiography  
of Intercultural Encounters  
through Visual Media



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Education Department - Language Policy Unit



The **Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters** and **Images of Others – an Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media** are a concrete response to the recommendations of the Council of Europe’s White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living together as equals in dignity” (<http://www.coe.int/dialogue>), Section 5.3 “Learning and teaching intercultural competences”, paragraph 152:

“Complementary tools should be developed to encourage students to exercise independent critical faculties including to reflect critically on their own responses and attitudes to experiences of other cultures.”

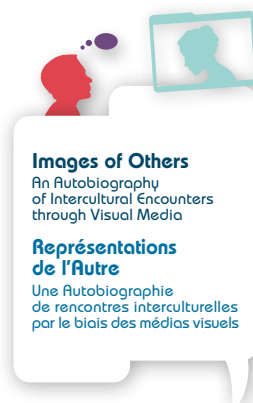
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[www.coe.int/lang-autobiography](http://www.coe.int/lang-autobiography)



# What is the 'Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters through Visual Media'?

This Autobiography has been designed to help you analyse a specific image which you have encountered in the media (for example, on television, in a book, on the Internet, etc.) which shows someone (or several people) from another culture. You do this by answering a sequence of questions about various aspects of that image.

Choose an image which has made a positive or negative impact on you – it made you think, it surprised you, you enjoyed it, you found it difficult to believe, etc.

The image should have at least one person in it. If that person is an actor, focus on the character the actor is playing. The person or people shown in the image could be from a different country, or they could be from another cultural background in your own country. For example, they might be from another region in your country, from a different religion, from a different language group, or from a different ethnic group.

The focus is on **ONE** image which you have encountered in the media which shows someone from a different cultural background from yourself.

You may of course use the Autobiography to repeat the exercise (with other images) as often as you like.

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Name .....  
Image title and/or number .....  
Today's date .....

Name .....

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...

Here are some examples which other people have chosen:

- A news broadcast showing strikers marching through the streets of a city in another country carrying placards.
- A photograph on a charity website about a homeless person in your city or region.
- A music video showing a hip-hop artist.
- A drawing showing an individual from another religious group praying.
- A feature film about an Asian doctor working in a European hospital.
- A photograph in a foreign language textbook showing someone from the country where that language is spoken.
- A video on YouTube showing young people from another region of the same country performing a folk dance.
- A poster of an athlete in the Paralympics.
- A holiday brochure showing local people welcoming tourists.

This Autobiography helps you to think about the image by asking you questions about it. You may find that some questions do not apply to the image you have chosen and you do not have to answer these. You will benefit most by working your way through to the end.



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# The image

Give the image a name which says something about it.

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**What sort of image have you chosen? For example, is it a photograph or poster, or in a music video, a television programme or a film that you have watched, or is it in a history, geography, religious studies or language textbook that you use at school?**

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**Why have you chosen this image?**

**Is it because...** (please tick one or more of the following reasons, or add your own reason if it is different from the ones listed below):

- It made me think about something I had not thought about before
- It was the first time I had seen this kind of image
- It was the most recent image of this kind that I have seen

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Add any other reactions in your own words and say what you think caused your reaction:

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## The contents of the image

**Who was shown in the image?**

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**What was the first thing you noticed about them?**

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**Are they male/female, or older/younger than you, or do they belong to a different country, language group, religion or region from yourself? Is there any other thing which you think is important about them?**

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## What else?

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## Your feelings

***How did you feel when you first saw the image?***

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***What do you think caused these feelings?***

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***If you were the person in this image, would you like people to feel this way about you? Please give your reasons.***

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***Would you like to have an image made of you which looked like this? Please give your reasons.***

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.....

***Would you like to meet the person/people shown in the image in real life? Please give your reasons.***

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.....  
.....



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### The feelings of other people

***Do you think the person/people shown in the image would be pleased with this image of themselves? Please give your reasons.***

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***Do you think they would have preferred to be shown differently? Please explain your answer.***

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***How do you think other people from the same group or culture as them would feel about the image?***

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### What else?

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## Thinking about communication

***In the image, do the person/people shown use language or gestures to communicate with people in the image or with viewers? If so, what language or gestures do they use?***

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***If you were to actually meet the person/people shown in the image, what would you do or say?***

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***Do you have any knowledge of their language and/or culture which could help you to understand and communicate with them? If so, what sort of things do you know?***

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***What do you think you could do to make it easier for you to understand each other?***

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Name .....

Image title and/or number .....



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## Same and different

**Thinking about the person/people in the image and yourself, what do you think are the main similarities between them and yourself?**

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**What do you think are the main differences between them and yourself?**

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**Are they like anyone that you know in your own life? If so, in what ways do they resemble them?**

For example, in the way they look, the way they behave, the way they think...?

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**When looking at an image, people often compare things in other groups or cultures with similar things in their own groups or cultures. Did you do this?**

Similarities I noticed...

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.....

Differences I noticed...

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.....

**Now you have answered the questions in this section, you could go back to the answers which you gave in the 'Who I am' section of this Autobiography and see if you want to make any changes.**

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## Thinking further about the image

***Is there anything about the person/people shown in the image that is exaggerated or emphasised? If so, what?***

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***Is there anything about the person/people that could have been shown that is missing from the image? If so, what were they?***

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***Does the image present the person/people in a positive, negative or neutral way? Give reasons for your answer.***

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Thinking further about the image

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*Do you think that the image is a stereotype of the person/people shown in the image? If so, why do you think it is a stereotype?*

Dotted lines for writing the answer to the first question.

*Do you think this image is fair or unfair as a way of showing this person's/ these people's group or culture? Give reasons for your answer.*

Dotted lines for writing the answer to the second question.

What else?

Dotted lines for writing additional thoughts.

Name ..... Today's date .....  
Image title and/or number .....

Name .....

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## Thinking about the person or people who made the image

**Who do you think made the image?**

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**What do you think was their reason for making it?**

For example, to inform, to entertain, to advertise...

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**If they used stereotypes, do you think they used them deliberately or not? Give reasons for your answer.**

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**Who do you think was the main audience the image was intended for?**

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**Why do you think this audience watches or looks at this kind of image?**

For example, for entertainment, for factual information, to learn how to do something...

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Thinking about the person or people who made the image

8

**What attitude do you think this audience usually adopts towards this kind of image?**

For example, do you think that they always believe in this kind of image/are sceptical about it/enjoy it/learn from it/allow their behaviour to be affected by it, etc.?

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**Do you think this image will make viewers think differently about the people from the group or culture shown? Give reasons for your answer.**

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What else?

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Name .....

Today's date .....

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Name .....

Today's date .....

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## Thinking back and looking forward

**Having answered the previous questions and thought about the image:**

There were some things which **I approve of** and these are my reasons...

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There were some things which **I disapprove of** and these are my reasons...

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*Try to imagine that you are telling someone you know well about the image. Do you think they would have the same opinions as you? Would they approve and disapprove of the same things for the same reasons?*

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*Why might people you know well and who belong to the same group/culture as you have the same reactions as you?*

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*Has seeing the image changed your thinking in any way? How?*

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**Did you or will you do something as a result of seeing this image? If so, what?**

For example:

Talk about the effects of images in the media with someone.

Talk to people like those in the image about how they feel when they see such images.

Contact the people who made the image to tell them about your own thoughts and feelings about the image.

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**Has doing this Autobiography changed you in any way? How?**

For example:

Do you think differently about images you see all around you in daily life?

Do/will you behave differently towards people like those in the image?

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**Will you do something as a result of completing this Autobiography? If so, what will you do?**

For example:

Show this image and others like it to someone.

Write to complain about the image OR write to congratulate the people responsible for the image.

Produce other images on the same theme.

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Name .....  
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Today's date .....

