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Mario Carretero, Maria Rodriguez-Moneo, María Cantabrana, and Cristian Parellada

Abstract New developments in technology and digital communications emerging in recent years have brought about revolutionary changes in the teaching of history. In addition to this, the COVID-19 pandemic has abruptly forced schools, and the field of education in general, to engage in the development of new teaching strategies delivered via digital tools. It is against this backdrop that this book seeks to explore the current centrality of digital learning tools and environments in both formal and informal history learning, and the diverse forms they take, including films, video games and other digital tools. The key promise of digital technologies resides in their ability to communicate historical facts in an engaging manner alongside, in some cases, enabling students to take a virtual role as a protagonist in historical processes. The risk is, however, that it may prove insufficient to simply optimize the available resources within schools and incorporate digital tools into teaching practices. Teachers and educationalists need to develop strategic thinking, awareness of the potential associated with technology, and the ability to envision and reflect

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on alternative narratives of the past. The editors of this book believe strongly in the crucial importance of creating new teaching resources which can support students in developing critical historical thinking skills. To this end, we have invited researchers from a diverse range of fields, including education, memory studies, historiography, cognitive psychology and computer science, to contribute to this book.

The current world has become mainly digital. The radical changes fostered by the technological revolution in the early twenty-first century have drastically increased with the 2020 COVID pandemic. Now, more than ever, people navigate personal and social relations through a web of digital platforms that provide them with great learning and communicative benefits. Yet this comes along with important challenges in the way societies organize themselves, make sense of crucial social issues, and relate to their own past. With regard to the latter, new developments in technology and digital communications emerging in recent years have brought about revolutionary changes in both formal and informal education making it essential for present societies to engage in the development of new teaching strategies delivered via digital tools.

In this vein, the study of how the impact of digital media on the learning and teaching of history is taking place in today's societies cannot be separated from the intense discussions and problems that exist today around public uses of history. Thus, two processes are currently taking place simultaneously. On the one hand, the proliferation of fake news in digital media concerns not only the present but the past. In some cases, it not only manipulates specific historical events or characters but also presents false interpretations related to broad eras of the past. Perhaps the most important cases involve the systematic manipulation of history by the governments of Russia and China. But there are many other cases in different parts of the world.

Furthermore, great polarization with respect to antagonistic views of the past is occurring in many countries throughout the world. A very clear example is the current debates in many states in the USA, where there are even discussions in legislatures about whether a critical view of racism is allowed to be taught in schools. The debates created around the *1619 Project* of the Pulitzer Foundation and the New York Times are also an example of this polarization. As is well known, this project started from the historical fact that on that date the first ship with African slaves arrived on the shores of Virginia. Thus, the project is dedicated to showing the centrality of slavery, as a cultural, economic and political phenomenon, in the historical development of the USA. Therefore, the entire project involved a reconsideration of the founding narrative of this country, placing its starting point not in 1776 and the American Revolution but in 1619 and in slavery. On one hand, it is impossible to understand the great diffusion of this project and the impact it has had without taking into account the contribution of digital devices. On the other hand, the executive order of President Trump trying to prohibit the application of the project in schools, accounts for the intensity of the polarization mentioned before different ways of considering the past.

It is against this backdrop that this book seeks to explore the current centrality of the digital learning tools used for history education (Part 1 "*Present Challenges to Historical Thinking and Historical Consciousness*"). This is to say, new digital instructional units and projects (Part 2 "*Innovative Digital Tools for Historical Understanding*"), video games (Part 4 "*Videogames and History Education*") and films (Part 5 "*Films and Theatre as Tools of Historical Dialogue*"), digital maps (section "Uses of Digital Media in the Learning of History") and also the historical contents and debates offered by platforms as *TikTok* (Part 1 "*Present Challenges to Historical Thinking and Historical Consciousness*") and *Facebook* and *Youtube* (Part 3 "*Digital Scenarios for Colonial Tensions*"). In this way, we could contribute to gaining knowledge about how the digitalization process is contributing to new ways of making sense of the past. One of the main purposes of this book is to study what are the affordances and limitations that come with digital media in the field of both formal and informal history education. How far do digital formats contribute to or hinder the realization of crucial goals of history education, as a critical, reflective and complex view of the past (Dessingué, 2020). This is to say, understanding the difference between the past and history; understanding that all stories told about the past are selective, partial and narrated from a certain perspective; embracing multiple perspectives on the past; being able to navigate diverse versions of the past students encounter in increasingly heterogeneous societies.

Greater knowledge of the relatively under-researched processes involved in citizens' engagement with historical digital representations could provide explanations of how differences in culture and identity give rise to divergent, even opposing, representations of historical events and processes. One essential question to be answered by future research resides in this exploration of historical digital contents, casting light on an under-studied issue of substantial theoretical and social importance and leading the way in theoretical and empirical research into critical, dialogical processes as possible ways of effecting change in citizens' representations of historical events: identifying, in other words, how other voices could impact ours.

The Advancement of Digitalization

It is difficult to identify an area of life in which digitization processes are not present, facilitating communication, information management, research, and knowledge production and acquisition. However, at the same time, it is necessary to recognize that this rapid advancement is having effects with consequences that are not easy to anticipate. In fact, some research agencies (for example, the Chanse organization in the EU) have made specific calls for research that examines the cognitive, social and cultural impacts of digitization on the lives of people and societies in the twenty-first century. That is, although researchers have been users of digital devices for years, the explosion of digital applications in all areas of daily life has probably surpassed our understanding of it.

All of this is taking place in the context of an exponential increase in digital media. Wright-Maley et al. (2018) recently described the increase in a wide variety of digital resources about the past that provide new ways of accessing, thinking and investigating it. "Digital history" is one example of these approaches; it is the study of the past through historical sources, such as texts, images, materials, narratives, and historical explanations, that are the result of historical research and that have been digitized (Cohen & Rosenzweig, 2005; Seefeldt & Thomas, 2009; Wright-Maley et al., 2018). An initiative of this type is the *Venice Time Machine* project, which emerged in 2013 with the aim of digitizing and applying current technological advances to the creation of Big Data on Venice's past, incorporating information from archives, museums, heritage and other related sources. Through digitization, the project provides access to previously inaccessible information from the past and to new ways of representing existing information, new relationships with this information, and possible new categorizations that can lead to more complex and precise explanations of the different phenomena of the past (https://www.timemachine.eu/about-us/).

These digital resources not only allow new means of investigating the past but offer new ways of teaching and learning history. However, although they have been progressively incorporated into education in general and into historical education in particular, there is still much to be developed and investigated in this field (Adesote & Fatoki, 2013; Wright-Maley et al., 2018). The incorporation of digital resources into education should not only involve the use of applications, websites and digital platforms about the past; consequently, there is a need for designs and instructional models that can be used to optimize the possibilities of these resources (see Part 3 "*Digital Scenarios for Colonial Tensions*" of this book). Additionally, teachers and students must develop the digital skills to optimize this type of learning and to ensure that access to historical content can contribute to the generation of a more critical and reflective society.

Certainly, digital contexts present new problems (Wineburg, 2018), but we think that these issues could be better understood and addressed by making sense of them within the frameworks of reflection on concepts such as historical thinking (Wineburg, 2001), historical consciousness (Seixas, 2004), and historical culture (Carretero et al., 2017) that have been developed in recent decades. Let us consider some of these ideas.

Understanding the Past in a Critical and Reflective Way

As has been emphasized in the field of historical education, it is essential not only to know facts, dates, and places, but also why and how historical events occurred. For this purpose, it is essential to consider the ways in which historians carry out their work as well as the social and political uses that historical knowledge usually has. Thus, studies in this field have dealt with solutions to historical problems, historical literacy, and the production of empirical studies that address key aspects of the

understanding of history as a discipline. Research in recent decades has paid special attention to the study of how students and citizens, in general, understand the causal explanations, concepts, timelines, images, and narratives used in history (Carretero & Lee, 2014) and also of the ways people use methods that are characteristic of the work of historians. Above all, it has been studied the way in which historical sources are used to solve historical questions (Nokes, 2017; Wineburg et al., 2012). For this reason, the use of documentation is essential to understand the possible uses of historical thinking in digital contexts, since they are different from traditional ones.

Additionally, an approach developed in Canada around the idea of historical thought and consciousness has also been an important development (Clark & Peck, 2018; Seixas, 2004, 2017). This programme (see https://historicalthinking.ca) has developed six historical "second-order" or meta-concepts:

1. *Establish the historical importance or historical significance of the past* as it is linked to events, trends or historically relevant problems.
2. *Use primary sources as evidence* and conduct a historiographical reading of them, indicating who produced them, contextualizing them and making inferences to understand what was happening at the time that they were created.
3. *Identify continuity and change in different moments of the past*, ensuring not to consider the past as a list of unrelated events and recognizing change where there is apparent continuity and continuity where there is apparent change.
4. *Be able to analyse the causes and consequences of the past*, for example, by knowing how to recognize multicausal explanations (the role of ideologies, institutions, politics, economics, social conditions, etc.) for historical phenomena.
5. *Take a historical perspective* and be able to see the great differences between the present and the past and understand the social, cultural, intellectual and emotional contexts in which life and events of the past unfolded.
6. *Have an ethical view of the past, in a double sense*: on the one hand, to determine our obligations to the moral and nonmoral actions of the past and on the other hand, to be able to make moral judgements about the past, understanding the differences between the ethical issues of the present and those of the past.

In an attempt to characterize the skills that are required to think historically, Carretero & Pérez-Manjarrez (2022) indicated the following: (a) being able to use evidence to confirm or reject assertions about the past; (b) understanding that past realities are complex and that it is possible to make counterarguments based on new theories; (c) understanding that historical narratives are not replications of the past but interpretations based on certain previous questions; (d) having the ability to define abstract concepts and verify how these concepts have changed over time; (e) imagining events that one cannot live and considering values and beliefs that one does not share and (f) being able to analyse continuity and change.

In this sense, in the field of history education, broadly speaking (Dessingué, 2020; Nordgren, 2017; Thorp & Persson, 2020) it can be said that there are two core

elements around which the components of historical thought revolve. On the one hand, we can point to what Wineburg (2001; see also Ginzburg, 2014; Lowenthal, 2015) has identified as the "fundamental historical understanding" that establishes that the past is qualitatively different from the present. From this idea arises the need for a specific methodological approach to history with which to access the past, analyse it and understand it. On the other hand, it is also necessary to take into account the necessary link between knowledge of the past, the object of study, and the present, from which the past is analysed and interpreted (van Alphen & Carretero, 2015). This link between the past and the present is reflected in the idea of "historical consciousness" (Clark & Peck, 2018; Grever & Adriaansen, 2019; Rüsen, 2004).

Certainly, historical consciousness, which is present in the practices of historians, should be more present in the teaching and learning of history. Students' ability to address the link between the past, the present, and the future more frequently and in greater depth could help them to be more reflective and democratic citizens (Barton & Levstik, 2004), and to find more meaning and utility in the study of history, a subject that they often consider to be useless, or at least less useful than other subjects (Van Straaten et al., 2015). In this sense, the digital development of programs such as *Facing History and Ourselves*, with a long tradition before the digital explosion, and the most recent *Choices* from Brown University are, in our opinion, two examples of very productive initiatives for the development of the historical consciousness of the students, who make use of the possibilities of digital media, with an emphasis on past-present relationships.

It is also important to note the approaches that consider that historical knowledge, like other academic and disciplinary knowledge, is not acquired in isolation but in contexts of dialogue. Thus, Van Boxtel and Van Drie (2017) have developed a fruitful initiative for instruction through a dialogic framework. Based on this approach, they present students in the classroom with a series of activities in which they must compare and evaluate different points of view on the same historical topic. More specifically, these activities propose asking historical questions; connecting events, developments and actions through contextualization; using historical concepts and supporting claims with arguments and evidence based on previously evaluated sources. These ideas are in line with research (Freedman, 2015) that calls for providing more opportunities for students to develop critical thinking. As previously mentioned, research is also pending on how digital media favour or impede the dialogic skills that are so necessary for learning history.

In the study of historical thought, it is also necessary to consider that history is usually presented in a narrative format. In this vein, digital media are particularly powerful providing compelling narratives which very often appear as self-evident. For this reason, the question of how historical narratives are constructed in present-day societies has occupied a central place in recent public and academic discussions (Hogan, 2009; László, 2008), especially since the appearance of Anderson's (1983/1991) seminal work on nations as "imagined communities". That is, the present-day world is organized into nations, and all nations require a myth of origin, a narrative that justifies their emergence at a particular historical moment. These myths of origin are usually expressed through master narratives. This type of narrative has

been developed as a unit of analysis in current scientific and historical social thought. Heller (2006) describes these narratives as patterns of general interpretation whose function is to give meaning to the past, present, and future of a cultural community. The importance of this concept is reflected in many current political debates characterized by an increase in "historicization" (Smeekes, 2014). Billig (1995) referred to the way that politicians use the events of their nation's history in their political agendas giving rise to the development of banal nationalism, which can become an extraordinarily dangerous instrument for democratic development, particularly when they are supported by digital media (Carretero, 2018).

An analysis of the content of school history classes from both the perspective of historiography (Berger, 2012) and the point of view of the teaching of history (Foster, 2012) reveals its close relationship with master narratives that have the objective of historically legitimizing the nation's present and future political agenda (Wertsch, 2018). In this way, it is important to bear in mind that students tend to reproduce a rather essentialist vision of these master national narratives. In fact, the work of our research team has shown that students' representations of national history have six narrative dimensions that structure their vision of the past (Carretero, 2011; Carretero & Bermúdez, 2012; López et al., 2014). That is to say, (a) a historical subject of a national, essentialist and homogeneous character that basically represents an "us", which excludes, for example, slaves, as has been commented previously in relation to the *Project 1619*, (b) a strong identification with this historical national subject; (c) a very simple plot that defends the need to seek independence and freedom, which justifies a larger territory (of course, it is not taken into account that this territory may contain other social groups that already inhabit it, as is the case of the natives, (d) a moral justification for that plot; (e) the presence of heroic figures, without their historiographical context; and (f) an essentialist concept of the nation and its territory.

Now, it is important to bear in mind that the presence of this type of schematic template in the minds of students is not immovable. In fact, research has shown that a moderate change occurs between the ages of 13 and 16, approximately (Carretero & van Alphen, 2014), towards a more complex understanding. These results would indicate that if the possibilities offered by digital media in teaching history are used effectively, we could expect a better understanding of the master narratives of nations. However, it is also necessary to take into account that for this improvement to take place, the contents of the teaching must also change. This is to say, these contents often ignore the existence of social groups that have suffered processes of domination and exclusion throughout history. Also, history textbooks and curriculum units in numerous countries offer the students contents which glorify these master narratives instead of opening them to discussion. In this vein, digital media could be an effective tool to show that nations are not ontological entities but political entities which have had development and changes across time. For example, in relation to the changes in their territories (see the chapter of Parellada and Carretero in Part 3 "*Digital Scenarios for Colonial Tensions*").

Finally, it should not be forgotten that the teaching of history is usually determined by the objectives to be pursued. That is, as we explained in other works

(Carretero, 2011) in this teaching, two types of objectives usually coexist. On the one hand, the romantic ones, whose aim is to promote national identity from (a) a positive but exclusive assessment of the past, present and future of the national group; (b) a nationalist and hardly critical assessment of the political development of the country and (c) identification with the features, events and characters of the past and the denial of other possible protagonists. On the other, one can also speak of the enlightened objectives, based on the critical rationality provided by historical disciplinary thinking based on: (a) the understanding of the complexity of the past; (b) the representation of its temporal dimension; (c) the understanding of historical causality; (d) the active approach to the methodology used by historians and (e) the relationship of the past with the present and the future, which includes criticism of the national past itself.

Although these two types of objectives traditionally coexist in the teaching of the history of the school and outside of it, it is very frequent that the romantic objectives prevail over the enlightened ones. What's more, in many countries, as noted above, romantic goals, which were the founding goals of history teaching in the late nineteenth century, are actually the only ones that exist. This is very important to take this into account because very often digital devices are used nowadays, and could be used even more in the future, in this direction. Therefore there is a real danger that all the resources and effectiveness of digitization will enhance an exclusively romantic and essentialist vision of the past.

Also, in relation to how to present societies tend to consume historical issues it is also necessary to include collective memory and heritage, which are fully related to affective issues via cultural and national identities. The opposition between these two types of aims, romantic and enlightened, is a real conundrum with an evident relationship to the dichotomy of emotional immersion versus critical self-reflection in relation to representations of the past in visual cultures (Kansteiner, 2017). We believe that the insights into digital historical resources and representations which these considerations will permit us to access are equally applicable, to a highly substantial extent, to non-digital approaches (Carretero, 2011).

In sum, what history should be transmitted in schools and through conventional and digital media (Seixas, 2017) is the focus of the discussion nowadays. In this vein, the following are some central conclusions in the field of historical education that must be taken into account in the context of new digital tools: (1) The need to produce an integrated model of historical thinking that could take into account not only how to teach but what to teach (Carretero et al., 2018), including new thematic developments that avoid the silencing and concealment of processes of domination; (2) The importance of going beyond national histories in historical education, incorporating socially relevant issues such as, for example, gender history, migration and problematic aspects of the recent past; and (3) The relevance of critical tools for students and citizens to establish meaningful relationships between past and present and to overcome essentialist points of view of the past.

Uses of Digital Media in the Learning of History

Regarding the challenge posed by digital uses, it should be noted that in today's globalized world, students are exposed to a great variety of narratives and historical, political and social discourses that go beyond national borders. This is possible mainly because of the tremendous impact of digital media. In this sense, given that history is also learned informally and is used in an instrumental way, a better understanding of digital learning is necessary. In the context of formal and informal history education, current societies need to use digital media not just more broadly, but better. Thus, in recent years, the use of cultural and historical information in digital contexts has been widely discussed (Haydn, 2017 and in this volume).

One position in this regard points out the enormous potential of digital formats and their probable positive effect on the representations of citizens. Digital tools are much more powerful than traditional paper books since they are multimedia, combining audio-visual and written formats, and they allow the user to easily perform cognitive operations for organization and information retrieval. Additionally, they allow the easy use of large amounts of data. All of these characteristics favour the use and analysis of primary sources to compare different points of view on the same topic and to present dynamic representations of historical events and other issues of this nature, including spatial and temporal representation (Ikejiri et al., 2018).

On the other hand, the opposite position is also maintained, highlighting the rather negative effects due, among other things, to the difficulty that users have in discriminating the veracity, accuracy and complexity of information available in digital contexts. Recent studies such as that of Wineburg (https://sheg.stanford.edu/civiconlinereasoning) indicate that young people often do not apply adequate digital literacy and, therefore, give credibility to social and civic information that is scarcely true, even if it is not clearly false (Carretero, 2019). In the same vein, Haydn's (2017) review of the field is expanded in his chapter of this book.

In this way, according to Luckin et al. (2012), the proliferation of information on the internet and social networks makes the role of teachers more important than ever, providing tools to improve the digital literacy of students. Students should be able to challenge the "manipulative or reductionist readings of the past when they mobilize to support current political objectives" (Clark, 2014, Europa First World War), question simplistic analogies (Rollett, 2010), and understand erroneous reasoning, such as confirmation bias and other fallacies (Kahneman, 2011). They should also be able to detect generalizations for which there is no adequate evidence and to challenge unilateral histories, even false ones, that are in the public domain (Macmillan, 2011). The relationship between these cognitive abilities and the teaching of history is a key issue in the study of historical thought and its role in historical education.

An important issue in this regard is the interaction between students' prior knowledge and the digital information to which they have access. That is, if the information that students find in digital media generates distorted views of the past, it is possible that one reason for this is the knowledge, explicit or implicit, that they already have. That is, digital media can promote or prevent a process of conceptual change. In this

sense, our team (Carretero et al., 2013; Carretero & Lee, 2014; Limón & Carretero, 2000; Rodríguez-Moneo & López, 2017) has examined the importance of the study of conceptual change in historical thinking. Several decades of constructivist and cognitive studies on the acquisition of knowledge and learning have demonstrated the importance of students' prior representations (Carretero & Lee, 2014; Rodríguez-Moneo & López, 2017). The minds of students and citizens, in general, are not *tabulae rasae* when they encounter historical problems in formal or informal contexts, such as digital contexts. In contrast, students' minds are greatly influenced by their pre-existing conceptions, which will be changed successfully, or not, depending on the quality of the teaching they receive.

In other words, prior knowledge, which often approaches prejudice and stereotypes, plays an essential role in the learning process, and it is crucial to fully understand how historical concepts can be transformed into more complex and disciplined representations of the past. On the other hand, many of the historical concepts held by students and citizens are based on national master narratives, which consist of idealized and essentialist representations and are therefore very simplified. It is important to take into account that at least half of the historical content of any curriculum is focused on national history. Therefore, a model of historical thinking must include ways to facilitate the complex learning of master narratives and their associated concepts. In addition, our team studied the importance of historical images and maps (Carretero, 2018; Carretero et al., 2002) and demonstrated that students tend to have a realistic and naive representation of them (Parellada et al., 2021). In other words, it is difficult for students and citizens, in general, to understand that historical images and maps are not a copy of past actions but a historiographic product in themselves (Burke, 2017). They are not just historical evidence; they are also cultural products that must be interpreted in relation to the period in which they were produced. It is essential to develop more research along these lines (Carretero et al., 2018). Above all, although today students and citizens have an enormous number of types of images at their disposal through digital media, there is no guarantee that they will interpret them according to their historiographical meaning.

Thus, it is quite appropriate that the recommendations of the Council of Europe on the teaching of history in twenty-first century Europe establish that digital resources have become an essential part of historical education. When used effectively, such resources invite questions about the authority and reliability of information and significantly increase access to historical information and multiple interpretations of the past. They can also contribute to the development of students' critical faculties, intellectual autonomy and resistance to manipulation (Council of Europe, 2001). In fact, these conclusions have led educational administrations in various EU countries to establish the need for students to develop digital skills as part of the fundamental objectives of education. In addition, in schools, formal educational materials, that is, those directly related to the curriculum, are increasingly digital. At present, textbook publishers provide teachers, students and institutions in general not only textbooks, whether in paper or digital format, but digital materials of very diverse nature and

even digital educational projects that are designed for use by the teacher in the classroom. Thus, teachers often propose that students use digital content that is also in wide use among the population.

Digital Scenarios for Colonial Tensions

The school is one of the devices that has contributed the most to the consolidation and circulation of certain representations typical of modernity that intervene in how subjects see and understand the social world. Thus, historical school contents are often closer to nineteenth-century historiography than to the present. This way of conceiving history and teaching it in school contexts gave rise to the development of master narratives (Hammack, 2010) in which a single voice is prioritized and homogeneous and stereotyped images of the homeland are used. These stories and images, elaborated by the groups that usually dominate political power, silence and make other representations—those of the dominated groups—invisible, thus legitimizing a unique way of understanding the world (Psaltis et al., 2017). For example, as Miles (2019) points out, the traditional historical narratives that have been present for years and often continue to be presented in classrooms in the United States tend to highlight the advantages of colonialism and white supremacy.

In such traditional historical narratives, to justify the so-called *mission civilizatrice,* the effects of colonization in terms of freedom, development, modernization and scientific advancement are emphasized, but oppression, murder, slavery and looting, among other consequences, are omitted (Dozono, 2020). Similarly, in traditional school stories, there is a universal view of history associated with an idea of progress and it assumes the superiority of the conquerors' society over that of the conquered. In such accounts, concepts and categories of analysis of historical processes are uncritically understood as universal and very often they become ahistorical categories that define the mode of organization of any society (Vickery & Salinas, 2019). Finally, the superiority of one group over another is often manifested in narratives of domination through a moral imperative that structures them. Usually, this superiority is criticized in the counter-hegemonic stories (Fivush, 2010).

However, the characteristics described above seem not to be exclusive to stories of European colonialism; newly independent nation-states that emerged have also developed similar narratives. For example, in most countries of North and South America, school history was built on a teleological evolution in which nations developed through progressive stages until they achieved the conquest of the civilizing ideal. This civilizing ideal is present in the official accounts elaborated by the governments of the independent countries and legitimized the conquests of the territories of indigenous communities. In many Latin American countries (e.g. Argentina), the official history taught in schools tends to reproduce the notions of domination, exploitation and marginalization as fundamental pillars for how the past is thought about, designed, taught and transmitted. For example, at the end of the nineteenth century, the Mapuche people in Argentina and Chile suffered the consequences of the

expansionist policies carried out by both states (Barreiro et al., 2017). These states carried out policies and actions as ruthless as those that they attributed in their official histories to their colonial predecessors. The same could be said for the expansion of the United States. In this regard, historical school narratives often justify the domination and violence exercised by the nation; among their main arguments is the idea that violence was inevitable and necessary and its use was fully justified (Bermúdez, 2019).

At present, history and school content are in dispute in many parts of the world. Obviously, this dispute has a clear presence on digital media (see for example the *Zinn History Project*). Racial segregation, social inequality, territorial claims made by indigenous peoples and the silencing of subordinate groups, among other responses, cause tension and disputes over the meanings of history and spaces for commemoration. To this point, Chakrabarty (1998) highlights the importance of history to prevent the silencing of "subaltern pasts". However, for this to happen, it is necessary to consider the past from another view and the perspective of the dominated groups and to question the knowledge that is taught, its perspectives, and what is omitted, as we have mentioned above in relation to the present challenges of historical thinking.

In relation to all these issues, digital media could be of great help through the development of proposals for teaching history that promote the critical analysis of the master narratives. Questioning the master narratives and their predominance in the conception of history that is understood from the perspective of the colonizing groups, could enable conditions for giving voice and visibility to colonized groups. At this point, merely naming or incorporating the voice of the conquered into the official narrative is probably not enough. Instead, we consider the need to actively deconstruct the narratives of dominant cultures in the classroom. All these issues have been developed in the two papers of part 3 "*Digital Scenarios for Colonial Tensions*" on Digital media and colonial tensions.

Video Games and History Education

Among all the new digital devices and formats, probably video games are one of the most used ones, particularly by young people. Interestingly enough video games having historical content are very popular. As some recent reviews on the topic have indicated (Wright-Maley et al., 2018) both serious and non-serious historical video games have increased in the last years, as did their use by young people, but there is still a lack of development of theoretical foundations on this matter (Chapman, 2016; Metzger & Paxton, 2016). For this reason, one important challenge for future research will be carry out an attempt to establish a meaningful relation, based also on empirical interdisciplinary grounds, between some of the main theoretical issues on history consumption (De Groot, 2011), in and out of the school, and its context of digital production.

The key promise of digital technologies resides in their ability to communicate historical facts in an engaging manner alongside, in some cases, enabling students

to take a virtual role as a protagonist in historical processes, where players have to take decisions based on anticipating their consequences in a certain historical life world. Some studies (Wainwright, 2019) argue that historical video games encourage historical thinking and give voice to multiple perspectives. Among possible potential advantages, these could be mentioned: (a) immersion into the past, (b) raising empathy and (c) fostering a sense of historical agency.

The risks are also very numerous and very much related to the possibility of contributing to a very biased and superficial view of the study of the past (Metzger & Paxton, 2016; Wright-Maley et al., 2018). And even more importantly, possible and intended omissions of collective memory processes could be frequently in relation to minorities and specific groups (Kingsepp, 2006). For example, slavery and gender discrimination are omitted in a number of historical video games. In order to study these issues, it is important to compare formal and informal contents and practices of history education.

Also, it is important to take into account that a medium always consists of the technological format *and* the protocol according to which it is used. What kind of impact certain technologies have thus always depends on the context and constellations of the use made of them. We could thus have three levels of analysis: (i) the medium and its format and content; (ii) the context of production: i. e what were the aims of the producers/authors, and (iii) The context of appropriation: observation of and interviews with users (Wertsch, 2002). In relation to this, it is necessary to state that appropriation is never passive and processes of resistance and negotiation are always paying an influential role.

Studies on formal history education generally engage with institutionalized practices in schools, largely based on national curricula, and in institutions of higher education. Work on informal history education, by contrast, explores engagement generated via out-of-school settings, such as video games, short videos, and related digital materials. History as a school subject has traditionally been associated with a lack of student interest ('boring'). On the contrary, informal historical activities, mostly in digital format, have exercised great and broad appeal in recent years, to both students and adult citizens. This may be due to the engagement generated by the practice of revisiting or re-staging the past in the form of narratives that bring history to life, creating phenomenological experiences which likely exert a significant influence on people's ideas of the past (De Groot, 2011) generating a singular sense of reality and unfolding, by the medium of the "affective turn" (Agnew, 2007 and in press), a significant and durable impact on citizens' representations of historical events.

Films as Tools for Historical Dialogue

Against the catalogue of novelties to which we are exposed in the digital world, film, television, and documentaries feel like old friends. However, increasing digitization constantly poses new scenarios that renewed interest in these older formats. If, since

the 1980s, technology has facilitated the use of audio-visual productions in the classroom, the most recent explosion of "on-demand" consumption modalities assumes an ease of access that would have seemed like science fiction until just a few years ago. The conjunction between the widespread expansion of personal electronic devices and the omnipresence of content platforms puts an entire audio-visual universe of the most varied nature right into our pocket. Furthermore, at present, these platforms are important creators of content, among which productions—of various genres—related to history play an important role. These changes have affected the industry itself, even generating new business models and therefore new models of use. At present, users view audio-visual productions on screens of all sizes, including some that are very small.

As mentioned above, narratives about the past are a fundamental format for historical thought (Carretero & Bermudez, 2012), and they provide action frameworks that also mark the relationship between the present and the future (Paul, 2015). Audio-visual productions are a very influential type of historical narration (Wineburg et al., 2001). The fact that the relationship with the past is a central aspect of our lives seems evident to Netflix; in the historical documentaries section of their website, we can read that "history is the mother of all stories" and "history is the best storyteller". The relationship between history and films has tended to be problematic from the viewpoint of historiography (Kansteiner, 2017), which has generally maintained a sceptical position regarding the possibilities of reconstructing history using methods beyond the written word (Rosenstone, 1995). In contrast, in other fields, such as memory studies, the relationship between narration and audio-visual production is recognized as evident. Thus, the mediation of filmic language is key in the creation of collective imaginaries of the past (Erll, 2008).

The field of historical education faces these dilemmas in terms of the challenge of navigating the relationship between the teaching of history and filmic production in a concrete way, with the introduction of characters to the classroom. Since their early days, the potential usefulness of films for teaching history has been scrutinized (Peters, 2020). In addition, in convergence with studies on cultural memory, research in history education agrees that films are the main source of nourishment for representations of the past (Paxton & Marcus, 2018). The work of Seixas (1993) constitutes a turning point of reflection when considering films within the frameworks of historical thought. Considering films within the broader framework of historical consciousness it addresses the tension between their potential benefits and their possible incompatibilities in the promotion of skills based on professional historiography. Also it highlights the possibilities that audio-visual productions provide for "giving life to the past" and fostering empathy with reservations, however, about the possible problems that students may encounter with maintaining the necessary distance to treat films as historical documents (Paxton & Marcus, 2018).

Based on these considerations, work with films has a relevant place in the study of history education using new approaches (Paxton & Marcus, 2018). Among research on the use of films in contexts of historical education, we find reflections on some of the central concerns of the discipline. In his literature review, Peters (2020) establishes a clear relationship between these works and the paradigms in the field of

history education. Following the classification of Epstein (2010), he distinguishes three perspectives that have guided research on the use of films in the teaching of history: the disciplinary, the democratic-participatory, and the critical perspectives. The disciplinary perspective, which is the most widely used, is concerned with the promotion of historical thought, the acquisition of concepts of historical discipline, and the danger of presenteeism; studies that take this perspective fundamentally emphasize the promotion of film literacy, which helps students question the legitimacy and veracity of a film. This is especially important in the case of documentary films, which are particularly difficult to understand as cultural products that do not necessarily represent objective historical conclusions (Repoussi, this volume; Marcus & Stoddard, 2009). Regarding the democratic-participatory perspective, in the interest of promoting active social citizenship, special attention is paid to the use of films as a means of providing multiple perspectives and including invisible groups. Dialogicity and multiperspectivity are particularly relevant to this perspective. Finally, in the case of the critical perspective, which is concerned with both the questioning of power relations linked to different oppressions, such as those of race and gender and the search for a more just society, studies on the relationship between films and history education, although less numerous, focus on an approach to films that encourages debate in the classroom to promote a critical view of societies and their past.

Empathy deserves special mention, as it has a strong presence in productions across all of the perspectives mentioned above. It is often noted that experiences based solely on affective commitment carry the risk of neglecting the historical context of the events represented, which prevents the exercise of historical thinking (Retz, 2019). However, without denying this risk, authors such as Marcus et al. (2018) highlight the unique affective potential of cinema to both promote empathy and reactivate interest in history, as well as to enable the treatment of controversial topics in the classroom.

Kansteiner (2017, p. 177) describes the use of cinema in the classroom as a "crossfire" between popular culture and academia and deepens reflection on this tension through the concept of *immersion*. Audio-visual productions related to historical issues, unlike historiography, play a key role in the construction of collective memory to the extent that it prompts the emotional commitment of the viewer. Professional historians achieve this state of immersion during the research process; intense contact with documents of the past can prompt an affective approach to the research topic. However, the resulting product—a historiographical work—rarely has the same effect on the public when it is received: "Film moves from intellectual reflection to immersion; academia from immersion to intellectual reflection" (Kansteiner, 2017, p. 177). The paradox that Kansteiner describes is an eloquent way of thinking about the dilemma that historical education often faces. There is a delicate balance between promoting a disciplinary learning of history and not neglecting students' interest in experiencing the past or underestimating the role of informal contexts and collective memory in the construction of historical knowledge (Dessingué, 2020). In this sense, it has been said that models of historical thought tend to fail to take into account the social and cultural context in which the learning of history occurs and

its influence on the understanding of the past (Thorp & Persson, 2020). The teaching of history should not pretend that students just reason "like historians" but rather it should aspire to understand the complex fabric of our relationship with the past. This relationship is at the centre of the formation of collective identities and has important effects on the sometimes difficult coexistence of different voices in our societies. The digital revolution forces us to rethink these issues in light of complexity based on the proliferation of a multivocality that is often more like dispute than dialogue. Research on the use of audio-visual narratives in the teaching of history outlines working with films as a promising means of facing the apparent paradox that historical knowledge places us before: to understand a strange past, we need to develop some degree of familiarity with it (Macón & Solana, 2015).

Contents of This Book

The topics covered in **Part 1 "Present Challenges to Historical Thinking and Historical Consciousness"** offer an overview of the challenges and possibilities of using digital media in the teaching of history. In his chapter, Terry Haydn examines the use of digital devices in the teaching of history over the last three decades. Although his work is framed in the British context, it is also relevant for other educational systems. The chapter analyses, first, the evolution of digital devices and their increasing incorporation into the teaching of history. Several timepoints are identified in the incorporation of different digital resources and their impact on the teaching and learning of history. The analysis highlights the fact that large investments in digitization were not useful for teachers and did not favour an increase in student performance. However, digital resources that had a greater or lesser impact on the teaching and learning of history are indicated. Secondly, the chapter describes policy-makers' conceptions of the role of digital devices in meeting the objectives of teaching history and reveals a close relationship between the two. Similarly, the conceptions of policy-makers are contrasted with those of experts who use digital devices to teach history, and the discrepancies between the ideas of the two groups are verified, not only in terms of how these devices could be better used in the teaching and learning of history but in purposes of the school history. Finally, the chapter offers some conclusions regarding how to make better use of digital devices for the teaching and learning of history in ways that will improve the development of society.

In chapter 3 "Historical Analogies and Historical Consciousness: User-Generated History Lessons on TikTok" Robbert-Jan Adriaansen analyses the use of historical analogies in *TikTok*, one of the most popular social media platforms at present. After a few brief indications regarding analogical thinking in history, different types of analogies in history are described, considering, among other aspects, the time (present or historical) of the source and the target element of the analogy, as well as its directionality. Furthermore, the study reflects on which analogies are used most frequently by historians and in education. The benefits and limitations of the use of analogies

and the different types of analogies used for the development of historical consciousness are also analysed. Subsequently, the possibilities and limitations of the *TikTok* platform and how historical analogies are used in this platform are examined. The study was developed using the 5100 most recent history TikToks (since February 5, 2021) and identified three popular hashtags: #historytiktok, #historymemes, #historylesson. The selection of the hashtags was based on their popularity and educational content; other history hashtags that were also popular but were highly contaminated with non-history-related content were excluded. The study used a mixed-method that included a quantitative analysis and an analysis of the content of the TikToks. The chapter opens up new lines of action for the development of historical consciousness through analogies.

Part 2 "Innovative Digital Tools for Historical Understanding" includes three chapters that present the advantages and limitations of digital tools for promoting historical understanding. It is important to take into account that these tools have been specifically designed by their authors to take advantage of the possibilities that digital media offer. Thus, part 1 "*Present Challenges to Historical Thinking and Historical Consciousness*" is different from part 2 "*Innovative Digital Tools for Historical Understanding*" because the first is about the free use of digital media in the context of both formal and informal contexts, but part 2 is about the use of specifically designed instructional tools to be used in the classrooms and under the supervision of a teacher. We think this is an important difference in this area of study, particularly when the issue of the advantages and disadvantages of digital media is considered. Probably many of the disadvantages stem from the free use of the information offered by the websites in general, and the advantages could appear as they are part of carefully designed digital environments.

As seen in chapter 4 "Historiana: An Online Resource Designed to Promote Multi--Perspective and Transnational History Teaching" by Maren Tribukait and Steven Stegers, in 2009, *The European Association of History Educators* (*EUROCLÍO*) created *Historiana* as an alternative to the idea of a European textbook. *Historiana* is an online platform that houses thousands of historical sources and hundreds of proposals for activities designed to promote historical thinking through the use of various tools for the classification, comparison, contextualization and analysis of texts and visual sources. Transnational in nature and created for and with history educators, its objective is to develop multiperspectivity via the creation of specific materials for effectively implementing it in the classroom.

Historiana works mainly on the basis of projects to develop new content and functionalities. In this chapter the authors analyse the potential of this platform, focusing mainly on one such project, *Learning to Disagree,* which focuses specifically on the development of multiperspectivity in the current context of resurgent nationalism and populism. This project seeks to respond to the challenges that growing political polarization present for educators, particularly considering the impact of extracurricular digital practices on the teaching of history and the digitization of the public sphere. Faced with the proliferation of fake news and extremist positions and the deep questioning of some of the consensus beliefs on which European liberal

democracies are based, *Learning to Disagree* rethinks and reinforces the concept of multiperspectivity as a way to promote students' civic competencies.

The resources, activities, assessment tools and teaching strategies generated by the project are included in *Historiana* and are accessible to educators through tags and filters designed to facilitate their search. These resources are aimed at promoting constructive dialogue and debate in the classroom. They aspire to stimulate students to consider other points of view, to reflect on multiperspectivity and its limits and, ultimately, to transform debate practices in the digital field. The chapter considers both the evolution of *Historiana* and the steps to follow to ensure the future development of this initiative.

In chapter 5 "Leveraging Intercultural Social Media-Type Platforms to Promote Historical Consciousness and Historical Understanding Among Young People: Exploring Opportunities and Challenges", Liz Dawes Duraisingh explores the opportunities offered and the challenges presented by the use of social media platforms to promote the development of historical consciousness and historical understanding. The exploratory study of the *Stories of Human Migration curriculum,* offered within the *Out of Eden Learn* framework, aimed to promote research and exchange among students of diverse origins. Using an intercultural approach, the study involves adolescent students in seven different countries from various social groups. The results of the study point to some of the learning opportunities that social networks can offer. First, they can facilitate a more nuanced historical understanding of migration in the past and present, based on knowledge of a variety of diverse experiences on the topic. Second, they can help adolescent students develop their historical consciousness, placing their own lives in a broader context within which they can establish relationships between their own life histories and the past. Third, they facilitate students' development of a greater critical awareness of how social and historical knowledge is constructed and how their own ideas about migration are influenced by their perspectives on the world in general and by their culture. The work also includes some challenges that must be faced, such as the possible uncritical assumption of a "unique history" that does not contemplate diverse perspectives or the presence of the three O's: overgeneralization, overconfidence and othering (Dawes Duraisingh et al., 2021). The students who participated in this study enjoyed the social network format and expressed interest in learning history.

In chapter 6 "A New Approach to Virtual Reality in History Education: The*Digital Oral Histories for Reconciliation*project (DOHR)" Lindsay Gibson, Jennifer Roberts-Smith, Kristina R. Llewellyn and Jennifer Llewellyn. propose a new approach to the design of virtual environments that improve the teaching and learning of history. After describing the origins and development of virtual reality, they point out the different dimensions from which virtual environments can be classified in history and describe the three main virtual environments that have been developed in this discipline: digital historical games, three-dimensional historical reconstructions, and interactive storytelling. Furthermore, they analyse the benefits and drawbacks of applying virtual environments to historical education, taking into account the learning that these environments generate in students, the access that they provide to different elements of the past, and the development of historical

thinking and historical empathy. Within this framework, the *Digital Oral Histories for Reconciliation* (DOHR) is presented. The project is driven by former residents of the *Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children* (NSHCC), a segregated orphanage for African American children in which neglect and abuse were committed; by representatives of the Nova Scotia educational system; by members of the Restorative Inquiry (RI); and by researchers from seven Canadian universities. The DOHR curriculum is being developed as part of this project, which aims to provide students with an understanding of the history of the NSHCC within the larger framework of African history in Nova Scotia. The curriculum is developed in a virtual environment using a new approach called "relational presence", with which it aims to promote rationality, historical thinking and historical empathy in students. Although the DOHR VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) has not been empirically validated, the preliminary research on the curriculum and its application suggests positive results, including a feeling of flow among the students and the acquisition of new historical knowledge about African inhabitants of Nova Scotia.

Part 3 "Digital Scenarios for Colonial Tensions" is about colonial tensions in digital scenarios. Chapter 7 "'It Isn't About Who Was Worse': Colonialism and Historical Debate on Social Media" by Everardo Pérez- Manjarrez analyses how young people evaluate historical controversies regarding colonial issues and the ways in which they participate in historical debates on these issues in social networks, such as *Twitter*. The results show that young people express their thoughts, concerns, and commitments in a much more fluid way on digital platforms than through traditional media. This seems to be an advantage of technology as an important tool for the development of critical historical thought and historical consciousness; it can also contribute to the continued reproduction of colonial imaginaries. In many cases, the reproduction of a discourse of hate and segregation of the indigenous peoples colonized during the conquest of America is observed; the replication of such ideas is related to an essentialist conception of history in which colonization is viewed in terms of cultural superiority and historical actions are signified by the conceptual categories of the dominant groups. To this point, the author warns about the importance of providing students with tools that enable them to identify representations that promote polarization and hate speech and offer them a space to review their historical prejudices and moral judgements about the past.

Additionally, chapter 8 "Digital Historical Maps in Classrooms. Challenges for History Education" by Cristian Parellada and Mario Carretero emphasizes the way in which digital technologies can provide new resources and expand the possibilities of critical teaching of history through the use of dynamic historical maps. The authors understand maps as social constructions that are related to the national master narrative and that serve as symbolic supports of it that justify territorial conquests in the past. Specifically, by analysing the national historical maps reproduced in textbooks, the authors show how these maps reproduce an essentialist conception of territory related to the master narrative. Additionally, the authors show how these master narratives are internalized by the students and citizens in general and reproduce an essentialist conception of the national territory that blocks a critical understanding the territorial expansions. The chapter is about the history of Argentina at the end of

the nineteenth century, but its claims and analysis could be applied to various other American nations, where native territories were conquered after the independence from the European metropolis. To this end, the authors investigate the potential use of digital maps as instructional tools in the teaching of history, which could facilitate to understand that the national territories often have had a process of change across times. They conclude by considering that the potential offered by digital should be considered in synergy with the whole instructional design to be applied in the history classroom.

Part 4 "Videogames and History Education" is about video games and history education. Chapter 9 "Digital Entertainment Gaming as a Site for (Informal) Historical Learning? A Reflection on Possibilities and Limitations" by Pieter Van der Heede aims to reflect on the potential of video games to promote the acquisition of historical content and the development of historical thinking in players. Video games on historical topics are not only among the entertainment activities pursued by students but can be incorporated into classroom activities. At present, the number of people who play video games that include historical references has increased considerably. Among them are *Call of Duty, Assassin's Creed* and *Civilization,* each of which has different characteristics. For example, the objective of the game *Civilization* is for the player to build an empire in competition with other civilizations; in contrast, *Call of Duty* is a war-like video game focusing on the Second World War, and the objective of each edition is to recreate one of the most important battles of that war. Through the concept of the *mediating layer,* the potentialities that the video game offers when it is incorporated into an instructional sequence in the classroom are investigated to critically analyse the games as historical artefacts. However, in addition to the potential of these types of games, it is also important to consider some disadvantages that their uncritical use in the classroom could have: First, they are instruments that were created for recreational and noneducational purposes, and second, they could contribute to the development of stereotypical historical understandings. Finally, the chapter presents some possible future lines of research that will allow us to analyse the potential of video games in the development of a critical understanding of history.

Chapter 10 "Informal Strategies for Learning History in Japanese Mass Media Visual Culture: A Case Study of the Mobile Game*Fate/Grand Order*" by Federico Peñate aims to evaluate the potential benefits of learning history through the Japanese mobile game *Fate/Grand Order*. The Japanese video game industry is different from the Western video game industry in its historical representations. The chapter analyses the role that this industry plays as an integral part of Japanese culture. These types of products have certain characteristics; they are developed in the form of franchises and with different types of visual narratives that include manga and anime. In addition, these types of products are created for and target fans, generally known as otaku, who are committed to the story and the characters. *Fate/Grand Order* includes characters from history, folklore, and myth, and these components are modelled according to the aesthetic patterns of digital media. The players identify with these characters; outside the game, they often reproduce them in illustrations, comic strips, original stories, and discussions.

An analysis of the digital community dedicated to *Fate/Grand Order* on *Reddit*, a website that promotes the exchange of content on specific topics and among fans, provides an understanding of how the historical discourses developed through the interaction of consumers and video game enthusiasts are shared. The results show that although the content is mainly directed toward the fictional universe of the franchise and playful interaction with its characters, there is room for active discussion of history and knowledge of the past.

Part 5 "Films and Theatre as Tools of Historical Dialogue" is about films as digital tools for history education. Chapter 11 "Historical Films in History Classrooms: Documentaries or Fiction Films? Teachers' Views and Practices" by Maria Repoussi and Maria Mavrommatti is based on the idea that films are currently one of the main sources of historical messages in our societies, and the teaching of history cannot ignore their prominent position. However, the new space that films occupy in both studies of history education and in history classrooms faces various challenges. This article aims to shed light on the conceptions, attitudes, and instructional practices of teachers in relation to historical films. It presents quantitative and qualitative data from a study conducted in Greece with 498 primary and secondary school history teachers. In addition, it presents a summary of the literature on the relationship between cinema and history and on documentary cinema as a specific cinematographic genre. The results of the quantitative study correspond with the existing literature on the use of historical documentaries in the classroom, showing how teachers mostly often tend to prefer historical documentaries and consider them objective accounts of the past. The interviews, on the other hand, investigated the conceptions of teachers who consider documentaries yet another historical reconstruction that is open to interpretation. A hypothesis resulting from this study is that there is a connection between teachers' epistemological ideas about history and the different ways of using historical films in the classroom. According to this hypothesis, those in favour of a positivist history avoid historical fiction as a subjective format and prefer documentaries because they are objective and reliable. In contrast, teachers with a more interpretive vision of history take a different position regarding visual representations. These teachers question the idea of a single historical truth, and their work with films focuses on trying to develop understanding in the classroom.

Finally, Chapter 12 "*Theatre of War*: Lola Arias' Documentary Theatre as Innovative Tool for Historical Dialogue" by María Cantabrana and Mario Carretero analyses the work of the renowned playwright Lola Arias (1976–), whose work is mainly focused on Documentary Theatre. Her work has been characterized as exploring the limits of historical representation in a process that creates a dialogue between the true and the fictitious, working on the idea of "remaking" conflictive pasts with the participation of their real protagonists. In her film *Theatre of War*, Argentine and British veterans of the Malvinas/Falkland War (1982) present their experience of the conflict and interpret their own roles in a fascinating dialogic experience. In line with the latest studies on historical culture, conflict, and history teaching, this chapter analyses the potential of this type of cultural production to promote multiperspectivity and historical dialogue through its key aspects: (a) The substantive challenge of official narratives of historical events, which are generally nationalist

and/or imperialist, by contrasting them with historically silenced voices; (b) a fundamentally dialogical approach to these new narratives that breaks from the traditional univocity of the nation-state; and (c) the mediation of historical resources that reinforce the de-naturalization of historical accounts, opening up a horizon of new critical elaborations on the past. Documentary theatre in general, and the works of Arias in particular, are a novel opportunity to deepen the discussion of educational proposals that offer new and complex representations of the past, highlighting interesting clues while navigating the challenges that the multiplicity of narratives in the digital world present.

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Present Challenges to Historical Thinking and Historical Consciousness

Hard Choices: What Does It Mean 'to Be Good at ICT' as a History Educator? a View from England

Terry Haydn

Abstract Over the past three decades, developments in new technology and digital communication have led to revolutionary changes to the ways in which history teachers and history teacher educators teach their students about the past. There have also been radical changes in the way that young people get their information about the past outside of formal education, with a much higher proportion of this information being accessed by sources that are not mediated by the university academic, the history textbook, or the history teacher in school. During the same period, in England as in many other countries, there have been continuing arguments about the aims and purposes of teaching young people about the past. What are the implications of these developments for those who teach history? The chapter looks at the recent debate about new technology and history education in England, where competence specifications relating to the use of ICT in the teaching of history have fluctuated dramatically over the past two decades. Analysis of the views of policymakers and practitioners—particularly those who are considered to be 'experts' in the use of new technology in history education—reveals widely divergent views on what teachers and learners need to know about new technology and digital communication. In the final section of the chapter, some conclusions are drawn, which suggest ways forward in terms of enabling history teachers to make the best use of new technology, in a way that is of maximum benefit to effective history teaching, the good of society and the future well-being of the human race. Although the chapter focuses on the English context, the implications of the study are relevant to many other education systems.

Keywords History education · Digital literacy · History and social media · Communities of practice · Expert practitioners · ICT education policy

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Introduction

The past three decades have seen revolutionary developments in new technology and digital communication. There are hard choices to be made by history educators in terms of what their priorities should be in terms of optimising the potential of new technology to improve teaching and learning in history, and in terms of providing a digital education appropriate to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The chapter explores how ideas about the uses of new technology for improving teaching and learning in history have evolved in recent years in England, and considers the implications in terms of what might be the most useful and important things to focus on when preparing history teachers to work in a technology-rich environment.

The first section of the chapter provides a summary of the ways in which new technologies and developments in communications technologies have impacted history education in England over the past three decades. This is followed by a summary of recent debates in England about the aims and purposes of school history over the same period. This is important as it has a direct bearing on the ways in which new technology might advance those aims and purposes.

The second strand of the chapter focuses on the ideas and actions of politicians and policymakers in attempting to optimise the potential of new technology for improving educational outcomes. These are contrasted with the views of practising history teachers about their ideas about 'priorities' in the use of ICT, and in particular, history teachers and teacher educators who have very strong credentials in terms of their deployment of new technology in history teaching. They have published in the field of ICT and history education, either in books, book chapters, and journal articles or through blogs and websites. They have a claim to influence the community of practice of history teachers in England through their large number of 'followers' on Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms, and their well-attended conference and teacher development presentations. The contrast between the perspectives of policymakers and expert practitioners reveals a stark disjunction between the ideas of the two groups, not just in terms of how new technology might be best used in history teaching, but also, their ideas about what school history is for, and the ways in which it might benefit both the individual learner, and society as a whole.

In the final section of the chapter, some conclusions are drawn, which suggest ways forward in terms of enabling history teachers to make the best use of new technology, in a way that is of maximum benefit to effective history teaching, the good of society, and the future well-being of the human race.

The Impact of New Technology on History Education in England, 1990–2020

The past few decades have seen a revolution in developments in communications technology. Some of these developments were designed specifically for educational purposes (for example, the interactive whiteboard), others were not originally developed with education in mind (for example, PowerPoint and the data projector), but have nonetheless percolated through to the education system and influenced the ways in which teachers teach, and learners learn history (Akanegbu, 2013; Firmin & Genesi, 2013). Well into the twenty-first century, the dominant paradigm for history lessons in English schools was teacher instruction and questioning, combined with the use of the textbook and worksheets. In spite of the high profile of the internet, CD-ROMs, the personal computer, and history simulation programs in the media, comparatively few history teachers were making regular use of new technology (Harrison, 2003; Ofsted, 2007). This was to change rapidly with the increasing availability of data projectors and the Wi-Fi-equipped classroom. In terms of 'killer applications' (that is to say, developments that had a seismic influence on practice), these two developments, in combination with the facility to show PowerPoint presentations to the whole class were to transform the standard way of teaching history lessons for the majority of teachers in England (Haydn, 2013; Walsh, 2017). An OECD study in 2010 found that although there were many ICT applications that were not widely taken up by teachers in England (for instance, the interactive whiteboard), the vast majority of teachers wanted to have a data projector equipped classroom, which was also equipped with Wi-Fi so that resources from the internet could be deployed in teaching sessions (OECD, 2010). The other new technology application which emerged as being 'essential', or ubiquitous was the humble memory stick, which nearly all teachers used to collect and share resources (more recently, the emergence of 'cloud' storage has reduced reliance on memory sticks). Another development that influenced history teachers' practice from around this time was schools' adoption of Virtual Learning Environments (Blackboard, Moodle or similar), which acted as online repositories for departmental resources, homeworks, etc.

Recent years have seen two parallel sets of developments in relation to history education and ICT. The first can be characterised as the development and marketing of fairly expensive and sophisticated hardware and software, which can be used in the teaching and learning of history. In 2004, the then Education Labour Secretary Charles Clarke launched a massive investment in funding interactive whiteboards in English schools. Teachers generally were under a degree of pressure to make full use of the whiteboards, given the scale of this investment. A report on the use of ICT to promote achievement in history by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) reported that 'teachers failed to exploit interactive whiteboards or digital projectors fully. In some cases, the whiteboard was as static as the blackboard it replaced' (Ofsted, 2011, para. 135). An OECD survey in 2013 ranked UK investment in interactive whiteboards as the highest in the world, with whiteboards estimated to achieve 93% penetration in UK classrooms by 2016 (OECD, 2013). Not only did

this investment fail to raise pupil attainment; all the evidence suggests that the vast majority of teachers in schools made little or no use of the interactive whiteboard, and tended to use it only as a projection screen (see, for example, Christodoulou, 2020; Hinds, 2018).

Another expensive form of educational technology which evinced the enthusiasm of many policymakers and ICT researchers in England was the tablet computer, most prominently expressed as the aim to equip schools with an iPad for each pupil. This extended to some schools insisting that parents bought iPads for their children as a condition of entry into the school (Helm, 2013). The early government commissioned evaluation projects into 'the iPad classroom' were cautiously positive and enthusiastic, pointing to the potential of tablet computers to enhance engagement and learning (see, for example, Clark and Luckin, 2013; Geer et al., 2017; Perry, 2003). However, Convery, a member of one such evaluation study, argued that often the research was conducted by researchers who had a positive overall view of the potential of new technology to improve teaching and learning, and who often reported 'the potential' of iPads rather than more concrete gains, blaming 'Luddite' teachers as the problem (Convery, 2009).

As with interactive whiteboards, iPads have not had a transformative impact on classroom practice in England, and several years after their introduction and trials and evaluations, there are few history departments in England where one-to-one iPad use is standard pedagogical practice. Two other expensive and 'sophisticated' new technology developments for which there was external advocacy, but at best modest take-up by front-line history teachers were voting technology software (such as *Turning Point,* and similar), and e-portfolio software (OECD, 2010).

The second strand of developments in the use of new technology in history education stemmed from the development of Web 2.0 applications on the internet, and the emergence of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and history education websites. In the UK, these have attracted massive numbers of history teachers and student teachers into 'community of practice' conversations, activities, and sharing of resources. In terms of impact on history education practice, the use of the internet and social media far exceeded the influence of interactive whiteboards, e-portfolios, voting technology, iPad classrooms and other expensive hardware and software innovations. There are very few history teachers in England who do not use the internet and social media to acquire and share resources and ideas for teaching. As Richardson (2006) argued, there is something very powerful about being able to share (very quickly, easily, and at no cost) resources and ideas with a web audience that is willing to share back what they thought of those ideas.

So, it could be argued that with the exception of the data projector, and presentation software such as PowerPoint (or similar), the main impact of new technology on history teachers' practice over the past three decades has been their use of the internet and social media.

Politicians and New Technology

From the 1980s onwards, English politicians (of all parties) were unreservedly positive and enthusiastic about the educational potential of new technology, which was seen as a magic wand or 'quick fix' for the perceived gap between educational standards in England and those in high performing Pacific Rim countries.

Conservative Minister David Hunt (1995) predicted that 'the nation which embraces technology most willingly and most effectively will be the winners in tomorrow's world'. As Labour Party leader, and later as Prime Minister, Tony Blair was evangelical about the educational potential of new technology, with a succession of high-profile statements about the essential part that new technology must play in raising educational standards (Blair, 1995, 1997).

Selwyn warned of the vague and inchoate nature of this techno-fundamentalism, accusing policymakers of 'a strictly techno-utopianist and futurist viewpoint, where virtually all of society's problems, be they economic, political, social or ethical, are subject to a technical fix' (Selwyn, 1999, p. 80).

On the rare occasions when the precise advantages of computers in relation to the processes of teaching and learning were specified by politicians, the facility to increase access to information was seen as one of the key educational attributes of new technology. In advocating the extension of internet access in schools, Blair made the point that new technology could increase the volume of information available to learners: 'It's going to bring libraries and archives right into the classroom […] The children can access virtually anything they want' (Blair, 1998).

If learning is seen principally in terms of the transfer of information, new technology, with the facility to transmit massive amounts of information very quickly, would appear to have much to offer. As John Naughton (1998) pointed out, 'It's not every day that you encounter a member of the government who appears to understand the Net. Most politicians (Clinton, Blair, Blunkett, to name just three) see it as a kind of pipe for pumping things into schools and schoolchildren'.

This vision of the potential of ICT to improve educational outcomes, focused to a large extent on the idea of developing a technologically enabled workforce, and using communications technology to transmit a greater volume of information to learners. In the words of Cochrane (1995), 'In future, there will be two types of teacher, the IT literate and the retired'.

In terms of investment in ICT in schools, attention was focused on providing more 'computer rooms', generic ICT training for teachers, money for the purchase of educational CD-roms, money to equip classrooms with interactive whiteboards, and pilot schemes for one-to-one iPad or other small screen devices (OECD, 2010).

Revisions to the National Curriculum in 2013 reduced the importance of teaching digital literacy in the ICT curriculum, which was renamed 'Computing', with increased emphasis on programming and removal of 'social' aspects of new technology. The National Curriculum for English also saw a reduced role for media literacy, with more emphasis on the teaching of the classical 'canon' of English Literature (Department of Education, 2013).

Politicians and School History

As in many other countries, the past decade has seen continuing debates about the aims and purposes of school history. The part that new technology might play in historical education is to at least some extent dependent on what those aims and purposes are. The radical changes in how people receive information about the past (and the present) also have implications for what constitutes a historical education appropriate for present times. The revolution in social media over the past decade means that there has been an increase in the proportion of information about history that people receive from sources that are not mediated by the academic historian, the school teacher, or the history textbook (Haydn & Ribbens, 2017).

This raises the question of whether the aims of school history are 'enduring', or whether a historical education should take account of societal change. One of the paradoxes of the current version of the National Curriculum for history is that it is stated that pupils should be taught about 'the challenges of their time' (DfE, 2013, p. 1), and yet the politicians who brought in the current version of the history curriculum have argued strongly and unapologetically that school history should not be corrupted by notions of 'relevance' and a need to respond to present-day concerns. The Secretary of State who ushered in the present version of the National Curriculum for history argued that 'Curriculum content should contain the classical canon of history […] We should pull back from seeking to make content more relevant to the contemporary concerns and lives of young people' (Gove, 2010).

The call for a return to more traditional forms of school history was not limited to matters of curriculum content but also extended to a call for a return to traditional teaching methods, with more emphasis on 'direct instruction' (teacher exposition), rote learning, testing, the acquisition of facts and the transmission of a more extensive body of knowledge about the past. There were criticisms of what was described as 'progressive' teaching methods such as discussion, group work, and enquiry-based learning. These were seen as less time-efficient compared to direct instruction by the teacher, and the use of textbooks and pupils being given more to read about the past, either in books or through online materials (Gibb, 2016; Gove, 2012).

Scrutiny of the statements of policymakers about ICT and history education from 2010 onwards reveal three significant divergences from earlier policies, and from the current discourse of the majority of history teachers and teacher educators. They are as remarkable for what they do *not* talk about as what they do focus on. First, in contrast to the techno-evangelism of earlier iterations of education policy and curriculum specification, there is little or no mention of new technology as an important issue for history teachers. The current *Teachers' Standards* (Department for Education, 2011) make no reference to the ability of student teachers to use new technology. Second, there is only occasional reference to history student teachers' understanding of history as a form of knowledge, with its distinctive disciplinary features, conventions and procedures for ascertaining the validity of knowledge claims. Unlike many other European countries, English politicians have had little to say about historical consciousness, historical culture or 'historical thinking' (Cajani et al., 2019). Third,

there is hardly any mention of the role that history education might play in developing the digital literacy of young people. This is remarkable given the high profile of this issue in the media, in history education blogs, websites and Twitter feeds, and in many other countries (note the high profile, for example, of Sam Wineburg and Mike Caulfield's work in the US (Caulfield, 2020; Wineburg, 2018). The only Department for Education document addressing online safety and information literacy makes no mention of history as a school subject that might contribute to this agenda (DfE, 2019).

History Teachers, Digital Practices and the Aims and Purposes of School History: The Perspective of Expert Practitioners

Earlier sections of the chapter have looked at what Ball termed 'the context of practice', that is to say, the ways in which history teachers have actually made use of digital technology over the past three decades, and the context of influence and text production—the statements, actions and written policy documents made by politicians and policymakers (Ball, 1990). Scrutiny of these two perspectives reveals a difference between politicians' ideas about the affordances of digital technology in education and the teachers who actually do the job.

Another strand of the enquiry into the use, impact and potential of digital technology to improve teaching and learning in history relates to exploring the views of 'expert' practitioners in the use of new technology in history education. Although Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) reports consistently note the considerable variation in the degree to which history teachers and departments make use of new technology (Harrison, 2003; Ofsted, 2007, 2011), findings also report that there are a number of history teachers and teacher educators who are very accomplished at using new technologies to improve history education, and who have considerable influence over the community of practice of history teachers in England. This is evidenced in *Teaching History,* the main professional journal for history teachers in England, in book chapters and academic journals written by these experts, in their well-attended public presentations at history education conferences, and in their large following on history education social media. What insights can be derived from consideration of the views of these expert practitioners?

One of the most obvious points arising from the writing of these expert practitioners is that unlike earlier competence specifications for student teachers it is not a 'coverage' model of expertise. These high-profile practitioners do not have substantial numbers of 'followers' on social media because of the *breadth* of their digital expertise; it is rather that they have focused on particular facets of new technology, and found ways of developing their potential for improving teaching and learning in history. Jones-Nerzic (2013) explores the potential of student-led filmmaking in history; Messer (2013) focuses on the use of wikis; Martin on the use

of ICT to get students to interrogate history datasets (Martin, 2003), Payne and Walsh (2016) explore the challenges of digitising archive collections for use by students, and Lyndon (2013) has experimented with the use of blogs, podcasts and webquests. Many of the articles, chapters, blogs and conference presentations focus on exploring the potential of the internet and Web.2.0 and social media dimensions of digital technology.

Expert status is not dependent on stellar levels of technological expertise; it is not about being brilliant in using an interactive whiteboard, or knowing the advanced features of PowerPoint as a presentation tool, or being able to create sophisticated web pages. Nor does their attention focus on the use of expensive and sophisticated ICT developments. There is very little in their writing or their conference presentations that focuses on interactive whiteboards, e-portfolios, or one-to-one iPad classrooms. Most of the applications that the expert practitioners write about or talk about are cost-free. Several history educators in England have explored the use of web discussion boards to bring the voice of the professional historian into the history classroom (see, for example, Chapman, 2012; Tarr, 2020). Martin (2014) and Tarr (2020), both of whom have a substantial following in the history education community, have promoted the use of Twitter in the history classroom, and there are now hundreds of history teachers in England who use Twitter as a form of professional development (Tarr, 2018).

History teachers in England have made extensive use of digital technology in recent years, but not in the technicist way that policymakers envisaged, with their emphasis on teachers using new technology to develop the ICT skills of their students. Looking at 'the historical record' of history teachers' use of digital technology in England, its most influential attribute has been the facility it offers to collect and share useful resources and ideas, and to develop history teacher networks to discuss and share good practice (Haydn & Ribbens, 2017; Walsh, 2003).

But part of the difference between the vision of history educators and policymakers about what digital technology had to offer in history education was not down to ideas about what new technology could offer, but about the aims and purposes of school history. As noted earlier in this chapter, politicians wanted more emphasis on the transmission of substantive historical knowledge of the past, particularly in relation to the national story. The majority of history teachers in England were keen to retain the previous emphasis on history as a form of knowledge, with its disciplinary concepts and emphasis on the importance of understanding the status of historical knowledge. A Historical Association survey of a proposed revision of the National Curriculum for history which drastically increased the content of the history curriculum, particularly in terms of the proportion of British history to be taught, found that 96% of the 545 history teachers who responded were strongly opposed to the proposed new curriculum (Mansell**,** 2013). A sense of the beliefs of experienced and expert history teachers in England can be gleaned from a perusal of articles over the past decade in *Teaching History,* the main professional journal for history teachers in England, and the public media pronouncements of influential experts in history education on their blogs and Twitter feeds. A study of these documents reveals that most leading history educators in England speak of the importance of *both* substantive subject

knowledge *and* disciplinary knowledge of history. There is also widespread support for a socially relevant form of school history, which relates the past to the present and addresses current issues in society. In the words of the Schools History Project, one of the main history teacher associations in England,

> A determination to connect history to young people's lives was the foundation of the original Schools Council History Project [...] As history educators we need to make our subject meaningful for all children and young people by relating history to their lives in the 21st century. The Project strives for a history curriculum which encourages children and young people to become curious, to develop their own opinions and values based on a respect for evidence, and to build a deeper understanding of the present by engaging with and questioning the past.
>
> (SHP, 2020)

This vision of school history is different in emphasis from the idea of the classical 'canon' of the national past which has foregrounded politicians' statements about the aims and purposes of school history over the past decade. It has profound implications for the ways in which the digital revolution of the past decade of history education might influence the teaching of history.

As early as 2011, Cannadine et al. pointed out that the digital revolution was having a major impact on the way that young people got their information about the past:

> There can be no doubt that both inside the classroom and beyond, children today engage with history, and apprehend the past by a range of virtual, digital, visual and electronic means that was unimaginable a generation ago. Taking the long view, this is bound to have a greater impact in the classroom than the imposition of a National Curriculum – in history or indeed in any other subject.
>
> (Cannadine et al., 2011, p. 232)

Wineburg also regarded these developments as of such importance that 'we must rethink how we teach kids every subject' (Wineburg, 2019a, 2019b), whilst focusing primarily on the implications for the teaching of history (Wineburg, 2018). Wineburg's work has already become very influential in the English history teaching community but has not been mentioned (or perhaps even read?) by policymakers who continue to champion a Hirschian view of learning and curriculum.

As Blair (1998) had foreseen, the digital revolution meant that 'children can access virtually anything they want', but this was not necessarily a good thing given the exponential increase in the amount of 'bad history' that they were to be exposed to (Haydn, 2017). English politicians seemed to be oblivious or unconcerned about the arrival of the 'post-truth' era, the rise of populist nationalism, and consequent threats to liberal democracies worldwide (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018; Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018; McIntyre, 2018), or were of the view that the most appropriate response was to revert to the traditional modes of history teaching which pertained prior to the 1970s. But for many history educators, these developments rang alarm bells, and brought about a call for the development of digital and information literacy to be an important aim of history education (see, for example, Walsh, 2008, 2017; Wineburg, 2018, 2019a, 2019b). This was not just about the quality of history education, it was

about dangers to society and civilisation, and the ways in which an appropriate and high-quality historical education might alleviate some of these threats. For many history teachers and teacher educators, in terms of what was important that student teachers should know about the history and new technology, the development of pupils' digital literacy, and their ability to discern between 'good' and 'bad' history in the public domain became more urgent and important than developing their technical competence in various ICT applications, and the facility of digital technology to increase the volume of substantive historical information which could be transmitted to and between learners.

Ben Walsh, a high-profile history educator in England has argued that as well as history teaching being part of the solution to the potential problem of 'bad history' on the internet, an emphasis on digital literacy could play an important part in reminding pupils or the relevance and importance of history to their lives (Walsh, 2017). In 2008, well before 'post-truth' became the Oxford English dictionary's 'word of the year', Walsh argued for the need for 'historical thinking' in an information age:

> Historical thinking can encourage students to think critically about how lazy stereotypes about social, racial or ethnic groups have been manufactured and reinforced over time. Proper historical thinking can also equip students with the intellectual equipment required to see through the approaches used by extremist organisations which use historical facts in particular ways to peddle particular views.
>
> (Walsh, 2008, p. 9)

The digital revolution has implications for pupils' understanding of democracy, and the vocabulary of provenance which has always been part of historical education. It is no longer enough to teach pupils about the secret ballot, the rule of law, separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, and the sovereignty of parliament: they need to also know what populism is (and its history), what a demagogue is, about 'the manufacture of consent', and 'outsider groups', what 'dead catting' is, and what 'playing the race card' means. It is no longer enough to teach pupils about bias, unwitting testimony and corroboration: they need to know what 'astroturfing' is, and about boots, trolling, the backfire effect, digital gaslighting and 'doxing' (Haydn, 2019). Rather than being shielded from 'bad history', pupils need to be exposed to dubious and mendacious historical claims on the internet, and it needs to be explained to them why it's 'bad history', why it is deployed, how it achieves its objectives, and how to recognise it.

Important though the work of Walsh, Wineburg and others is in this respect, it is not enough to simply furnish young people with the intellectual tools to discern good history from bad. Lack of respect for truth and evidence is a major problem in modern societies. For politicians to be caught in a lie no longer serves as an impediment to popular support. One of the reasons that history is potentially such a valuable aid to what Wineburg has termed 'civic literacy' is that respect for evidence and concern for truth are central to the discipline. As Lipscomb (2016) remarked, 'You can't be a historian and a liar'. As well as giving young people the intellectual and practical tools for 'getting at the truth', there is a moral and ethical basis to history which should also be made explicit in the teaching of history. Concern for truth and accuracy,

and professional integrity are some of the qualities which delineate good historians from bad ones. Oancea and Furlong trace this stand of civic virtue back to Aristotle: 'Practical wisdom or the capacity or predisposition to act truthfully and with reason in matters of deliberation, thus with a strong ethical component' (Oancea & Furlong, 2007). An important part of a historical education relevant to the digital age is to get young people to understand that the internet and social media have contributors who try to use history for immoral and unethical present-day purposes, and some who use it in a decent and ethical way. It is important that learners encounter both types of contributions.

Conclusions

The ideas of policymakers and the history education community of practice in England about the impact and potential of digital technology on the teaching of history are not diametrically opposed. Neither group is 'anti-technology', and there is consensus that many facets of new technology enable teachers to teach history more effectively. But differing ideas about the aims and purposes of a historical education mean that the two groups have different views about what features of digital technology are most important for history student teachers to engage with and become proficient in. For most history educators in England, the increase in access to information about the past is only a positive attribute of digital technology if it is accompanied by the development of a digitally literate audience who has the ability to make intelligent and well-informed judgements about the information they receive via the internet and social media. As well as being knowledgeable about the past, young people need to be discerning in their use of information about the past. They need to be able to tell the difference between 'good' and 'bad' history and to see through the mendacious and malign conspiracy theories that accompany the discussion of many current world problems.

In a 2010 OECD study of ICT use in teacher education, several experienced initial teacher education tutors who were considered to be 'experts' in their use of ICT remarked on the close links between lobby groups representing the technology industry and the Department of Education, and the pressure on schools and universities to purchase particular hardware and software packages. One referred to these commercial pressures as 'a slightly different but just as unhealthy equivalent of the military-industrial complex' (OECD, 2010). This chapter argues that policymakers should pay greater attention to the views of education professionals if they are to optimise the role that digital media might play in contributing to 'the public good'.

Given how things are at present in the world, with controversies and conspiracy theories around climate change, the environment, the Coronavirus crisis, migration, tax and many other global problems, in terms of history education's role in 'the good society', and the health and vitality of liberal democracies, the development of young people's digital literacy, and respect for truth and evidence, are perhaps history education's most important contributions.

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Historical Analogies and Historical Consciousness: User-Generated History Lessons on TikTok

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Not a summer passes by or social media use by the younger generation creates a stir over issues related to historical memory. In August 2020, the video-sharing platform *TikTok* made international headlines for hosting a trend that saw users playacting Holocaust victims. In so-called point-of-view (POV) videos, TikTokers dressed up as Holocaust victims, replete with stage makeup that imitates burns or bruises, explained to viewers how they died in the Nazi death camps—often to Bruno Mars's *Locked Out of Heaven* as background music. The videos had thousands of views, while some had more than a hundred thousand likes. In the (social) media outrage that unfolded critics were quick to denounce TikTokers for abusing the Holocaust's shock value for quickly gaining likes and followers, and accused them of a lack of historical consciousness. In response to the coverage and criticism, most TikTokers removed their Holocaust POV videos, and some justified their actions by stressing their intention to educate and 'spread awareness' of the Holocaust (Froio, 2020). The Auschwitz Memorial Museum called the trend 'hurtful & offensive' and warned for the trivialization of history but recognized the genuine intentions of some creators who used the 'symbolic language familiar to them' to express memories (Auschwitz Memorial, 2020). The museum acknowledged the importance of personal stories to educate and commemorate but calls on to refrain from roleplaying, as it puts oneself in the victim's position. Stressing that 'not every social media activity can commemorate the Holocaust,' the museum calls on educators to teach not only the facts right, but also to teach young people to commemorate in respectful ways.

The TikTok case is representative of contemporary educational challenges connected to young people's social media use. At the same time, the moral discussion overshadows the study of how TikTok's platform design allows for new, creative, forms of historical representation and even education. The popularity of history videos on the platform is not to be underestimated, nor is the creativity of its makers

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(Noor, 2019). This chapter will study how the platform's design and its utilization affect the ways TikTokers represent the past in user-generated history TikToks. Special attention will be paid to historical analogies, as history TikToks display significant use of analogical reasoning. First, I will provide a theoretical discussion of how historical analogies are conceptualized in historical theory and history education research; second, I will discuss the relationship between historical analogies and historical consciousness; third, I will analyze the use of historical analogies in relationship to TikTok's platform affordances. This research is based on a dataset of 5100 history TikToks, derived from the hashtags #historytiktok, #historylesson, and #historymeme, and uses a mixed-methods approach combining an explorative quantitative analysis with a qualitative content analysis.

Historical Analogies

In general terms, analogical reasoning transfers or maps information from a particular subject (called the base or source) to another (called the target). More specifically they are inferences that unlike deductive or inductive arguments do not include a general premise, but relate two particulars. Because of this, Fischer (1970) stresses in his classic *Historians' Fallacies* that analogies should not be understood as inferences that can provide explanations. Rather than explaining the causes, consequences, or development of historical occurrences, they help *discovering* possible explanations by highlighting similarities. A basic analogy, therefore, has the following logical form: 'A resembles B in respect to the possession of the property X. A also possesses the property Y. Therefore, it is inferred that B also possesses the property Y' (Fischer, 1970, p. 258). In short: AX : BX :: AY : BY, in which A is the base and B is the target, X is the known property or characteristic, and Y is the unknown property of B that is being established through analogical inference.

Fischer stresses that analogies are a central part of the historian's repertoire for two main reasons: firstly they stimulate creative thought and can be useful to heuristically identify patterns, developments, and situations, and, secondly, they are crucial for communicating and teaching history, as they can clarify historical situations and developments to otherwise uninformed audiences by highlighting similarities to situations they know. In both instances, historical analogies can become problematic when people are not aware of the analogy's limits. First, analogies assume the existence of dissimilarities, because similarities are only drawn between a limited number of variables. Assuming past and present developments to be fully identical would mean confusing the concept of analogy with that of identity. This implies that, when used as an argument, analogies require additional proof—either in the form of empirical evidence that the unknown property Y exists in both cases, or in the form of a deductive argument about the coexistence of X and Y. Second, arguments are used to support explanation, they may become problematic when they 'persuade without proof, […] indoctrinate without understanding, or […] settle an empirical question without empirical evidence' (Fischer, 1970, p. 259). In such cases, they achieve the

opposite of understanding by failing to take contextual differences between past and present into account.

It is important to emphasize that the formula AX : BX :: AY : BY does not define whether A (the base) is a historical occurrence, and B (the target) refers to the present—or the other way around, or whether A and B are both historical references. Van Straaten et al. (2016) identify three possible types of historical analogy. First, the present experience can serve as a base and a historical phenomenon as a target, for example in comparing the Concordat between Mussolini and the Pope as a marriage of interests (Laffin & Wilson, 2005). Second, both source and target can be historical events: by drawing an analogy between two historical occurrences, the target can be understood in reference to the base. Third, a historical event can serve as the base and the present as a target. This type of analogy is oriented toward understanding the present through analogy with the past. This is a classical form of historical understanding but is less likely to be used in contemporary formal or informal history education contexts. This type of analogical reasoning is, however, common in contemporary political (Axelrod & Forster, 2017; Ghilani et al., 2017; Houghton, 1998; Neustadt & May, 1986) and military (Macdonald, 2000; Record, 2002) decision-making processes.

In one of the few studies focusing explicitly on historical analogies in history education, McCarthy Young and Leinhardt (1998) discuss only the first and second type. They distinguish between analogies that make direct historical comparisons and analogies that make contextual historical comparisons. Direct historical analogies compare historical events, structures or metasystems, even though one of these may be more recent. In this case, both X and Y are properties of the past. One could, for example, compare Hitler's failed invasion of Russia to Napoleon's failed invasion of Russia in 1812 (Holyoak & Thagard, 1995, p. 205). This may be illuminating, but not to students who do not possess contextual knowledge about the French invasion of Russia. In such instances, contextual historical analogies become useful in classroom contexts. Contrary to direct historical analogies, contextual historical analogies compare a historical event, structure, or metasystem with a familiar context drawn from personal or shared experience. In this case, the unknown property Y is historical, while the known property X is drawn from experience. In the context of history education, this means that teachers could leverage cross-domain analogies that do connect to the experience of students, for example by comparing—as Tolstoy did in his *War and Peace*—'the marauding French army to a herd of cattle trampling underfoot the fodder that might have saved it from starvation' (Holyoak & Thagard, 1995, p. 205). The difference between direct and contextual historical analogies is that 'direct historical analogies tend to explain what something was, while contextual analogies tend to explain what something meant' (McCarthy Young & Leinhardt, 1998, p. 171).

From the educational perspective, the logical approach put forward by Fischer (1970) does not always suffice to analyze the real-world use of analogies. McCarthy Young and Leinhardt (1998) found that most analogies they encountered in their study were 'unmapped.' With 'mapping' they refer to syncing properties (X, Y)

of a familiar concept, system or domain (the base, A) with an unfamiliar target domain (B). Unmapped analogies do not identify specific properties of base and target systems, but rather rely on general metaphors that stipulate general similarities. Unmapped analogies require additional analogical processing of base and target in which the student must identify relevant properties out of a variety of possible implied—but not explicitly stated—meanings. Most direct historical analogies McCarthy Young and Leinhardt (1998) found were mapped, while most contextual analogies were unmapped. They explain this in reference to the use of analogies in classroom settings, where direct analogies were most often phrased in the form of a question about the similarity of events, which resulted in answers and discussions in which elaborate mapping took place. Contextual analogies, on the contrary, were used to evoke the impact or context of historical events and remained unmapped as the speaker would assume the listener's familiarity with the base, even though that may not be the case. While Fischer (1970) noted the danger of this generalized way of using analogies, McCarthy Young and Leinhardt (1998) aimed at analyzing how historical analogies were used in classroom settings without preestablishing a normative understanding of 'good' versus 'bad' analogical reasoning. Yet, despite the broad use of historical analogies in education and public discourse, historians and history education scholars remain wary about them.

Historical Analogies and Historical Consciousness

One reason for this wariness is that historical analogies, by identifying similarities between past and present, appear to be in conflict with the general historicist assumption that the past is essentially different from the present, and that historical understanding involves grasping processes of change and continuity that explain how this difference has developed (Grever & Adriaansen, 2019). As modern historical consciousness increasingly saw the past as remote and past experience to be untranslatable to contemporary contexts, it became harder to draw historical analogies that assumed continuity (Thomas, 2001). Modern historical consciousness values causal explanation over analogical reasoning because that consolidates, rather than draws into question, the idea of the alterity of the past. This accounts for the reservations historians have about analogical reasoning.

A similar explanation can clarify reservations by history education scholars and history didacticians, even though they perceive historical consciousness not as a collective societal phenomenon, but on an individual level as a cognitive-epistemological category closely linked to historical thinking (Grever & Adriaansen, 2019). In a recent study, Jay and Reisman (2019, p. 99), argue that 'historical knowledge does not easily boil down to core theorems or conceptual truths that hold constant across time and place.' Because the historical discipline prescribes the 'importance of articulating disjunction and difference,' historical analogies can be valuable for opening up an understanding of historical continuity, but there is a danger in the potential suggestion of history relying on universal lawlike principles. Change, they

argue, requires a nuanced contextual understanding of the varying historical contexts in which human experience is embedded. The usefulness of historical analogies for history education, therefore, is mainly that they open up possibilities to critically discuss issues of change and continuity.

These reservations about historical analogy are quite common. Salevouris and Furay (2016, p. 7) disregard historical analogies altogether and emphasize that analogies assume a structural likeliness in historical processes and result in '"cherry-picking" historical episodes in order to bolster a predetermined conclusion.' The problem is that such arguments misapprehend historical analogy. Salevouris and Furay (2016) confuse historical analogies with a specific, fallacious, use of analogy, by claiming that analogies assume a structural likeliness. Fischer (1970, p. 247) calls this assumption a fallacy of perfect analogy—it fails to see that 'analogy, by its very nature, is a similarity between two or more things which are in other respects unlike.' As a consequence, it confuses analogy with identity.

Jay and Reisman's (2019) position is more nuanced and they rightly state that historical analogies do not identify immutable laws, and make a similar point as Fischer when stating that assuming that similarities between specific properties of historical particulars stand for universal historical laws would not only be erroneous, but also dangerous. Yet, they do associate historical continuity with analogical similarity and conclude that analogies fail to account for change—hence they conclude that the educational value of historical analogies would be to use analogies merely as entry points into critically discussing continuity and change, also by assessing the validity of the accuracy of the analogy itself. However, analogies do reference entire processes of continuity and change, they stipulate similarities between two different phenomena on a limited number of properties. Relating analogies to processes of continuity and change can, however, be done in the type of 'mapping' exercises that McCarthy Young and Leinhardt (1998) discuss.

Generally, most scholars will agree with Fischer's (1970, p. 259) conclusion that historical analogies can be fruitful when the past is used to illuminate the present, but that the reverse procedure is 'dangerous to both logic and empiricism.' History educators, of course, aim primarily for the reverse procedure and use analogies to help students understand the past. Even those who plead for a reappraisal of using historical analogies to better understand the present do so while warning for 'bad history,' overgeneralization, and for abusing analogies to affirm assumptions. Tosh (2019, p. 70), for example, argues for an engagement with historical analogy because 'analogical thinking is too prevalent for historians to ignore, and too mixed in its outcomes for them to reject it out of hand.'

The purpose of this chapter is not to come to a conclusion about the values and pitfalls of historical analogies for historical understanding, but it aims to reinvigorate the debate by analyzing the prevalent use of historical analogies in contemporary digital culture, specifically on one of the most popular social media platforms of the moment: TikTok. Tosh is right that analogical thinking is too prevalent to ignore, and its contemporary prevalence is displayed online. But in order to understand how historical analogies are configured on social media we first have to establish an

understanding of how social media platforms facilitate the creation of (historical) representation through their technological affordances.

TikTok's Affordances and Historical Representation

Broadly defined, the concept 'affordances' refers to 'what material artifacts such as media technologies allow people to do' (Bucher & Helmond, 2018, p. 3). Social media platforms leverage technologies that allow people to take certain actions, thus affordances refer to the potential actions that can be taken given the technology. Scholars agree that affordances are not simply provided by the platform's design, but that they emerge from the interplay between a technology's design and how users intend to use it (Evans et al., 2017). They integrate both the possible actions that platforms allow users to take, and how users perceive these possibilities (Majchrzak et al., 2013, p. 23). It has also been emphasized that while affordances open up representational possibilities, they also put up limits and constraints. Constraints should, however, not be seen as the negation of affordances, but as an intrinsic part of what constitutes the dynamics of what allows activities to take place (Cammaerts, 2015, p. 96).

This section relies on a dataset of history-related TikToks created by retrieving the most recently available public posts of three popular history-oriented hashtags: #historytiktok, #historymemes, #historylesson from TikTok's API as of February 5, 2021. These hashtags have been selected based on popularity, and whether they were used to tag posts that actually reflect on the past. Other popular hashtags such as #history or #historybuff proved to be too 'contaminated' with non-history related content to be useful for this analysis. This resulted in an initial sample of 5453 unique posts for the three hashtags combined. Subsequently, language detection was applied (Joulin, Grave, Bojanowski, Douze et al., 2016; Joulin, Grave, Bojanowski, & Mikolov, 2016), and only English-language videos were retained. This resulted in a dataset of 5100 TikToks created by 1330 individual TikTokers.

In their study on the relationship between TikTok's affordances and political communication on the platform, Guinaudeau et al. (2020) state that what makes TikTok unique among social media platforms is that it provides a synthesis of four main trends in social media. First, it has a feed that displays many distinct pieces of content per minute; second, it leverages both visual and verbal information which increases the information density and the capacity to communicate emotions; third, it has a very advanced algorithmic recommendation system; fourth, it has a mobile-only interface that is tailored to take advantage of a smartphone's user-facing camera. It is out of these technological affordances that Guinaudeau et al. (2020) explain TikTok's success: the centrality of the main feed, the 'For You Page,' makes follower count less important to reach an audience than in traditional social media, specifically YouTube, to which they compare their findings. This results in more variation in viewership and also makes more videos go viral faster. The shortness of videos makes that TikTok

videos generally get more views than videos on other platforms. Users who leave comments are also more likely to produce videos themselves compared to YouTube.

Another study on political communication on TikTok by Serrano et al. (2020) emphasize the performative character of the platform. TikTok's constraints make it inconvenient to share external information, like URLs or news articles. Instead, 'every TikTok user is a performer who externalizes personal political opinion via an audiovisual act, with political communication becoming a far more interactive experience than on YouTube or Instagram.' Furthermore, Serrano et al. also conclude that the design of the platform is geared toward producing viral videos, despite the fact that it is also possible to create private videos only visible to friends. This is confirmed by Bhandari and Bimo (2020), who state that contrary to traditional social networking platforms, where users manage their identity through engagement with networks of friends and followers, TikTok's design encourages interaction through either the algorithm, which could assist in creating virality by landing the video on users' For You Pages, or through their own content and self-presentation. The *New Yorker* journalist Jia Tolentino (2019) calls TikTok an 'enormous meme factory' for this reason: the social network isn't social because it builds on offline social networks, but because it is geared toward interaction by having users create content that is 'shared, replicated, and built upon.'

We have already seen in the introduction how the algorithm-orientedness and the desire to land on the For You Page affects TikTokers' actions, choice of topics, and use of hashtags. Although the inner workings of TikTok's algorithm are subject to speculation, suggestions to increase virality include using trending hashtags and sound bites, recording in high definition, having your post incite user engagement, and collaborating with other TikTokers (McGlew, 2020). It makes sense to hypothesize that TikTok's affordances and constraints affect historical representation as well, as both the technical and the perceived affordances of the platform, such as beliefs about how the algorithm works, directly affect user behavior and the content of their videos.

This is confirmed by looking at the use of hashtags in the dataset. Hashtags such as #fyp, #foryou, and #foryoupage feature in the top-10 most frequently used hashtags, featuring, respectively, 1974, 1397, and 845 times, confirming an algorithm-oriented use of hashtags. The use of #xyzbca (featured 168 times) also confirms this, as the hashtag #xyzbca, together with the variation #xyzcba, became popular because of rumors that it would somehow increase the chances to land on the For You Page (Sommer, 2020)—chances which could actually increase as more people use it, but this remains subject of speculation. In any case, this use of hashtags adds a dimension to the second function hashtags have on TikTok, namely as an index to the content—this use of hashtags is similar to other platforms such as Instagram (Adriaansen, 2020, 2021). The assumption that hashtags are used as an index underlies the choice to collect data focusing on the hashtags #historytiktok, #historymemes, and #historylesson, as hashtags provide a prime way of searching the platform for specific posts. The use of hashtags is also related to another affordance, namely 'challenges.' Challenges invite TikTokers to participate in creating viral content using similar

formats, challenging TikTokers to do or perform something, generally to the backdrop of the same sound fragment, and often with the use of overlay text. They rely on either a specific choreographic structure or on a specific daunting task that TikTokers replicate. Some history TikTokers in the dataset tap into—non-history related—viral challenges and connect them to their historical topics of interest. The 'How I Walk Challenge,' for example, features TikTokers performing different kinds of 'walks' displaying how they react to walking by different people or different places. The TikToks display a text similar to: 'How I walk when _____,' with the blanks filled in differently given the different situations. While TikTokers generally perform how they walk past friends, their crush, or their boss, @confusedprairiegirl (2019) uses the challenge to represent walking on the Oregon trail—starting optimistically; experiencing hunger; having to 'kill and eat jebediah'; and succumbing to dysentery. The post manages to represent the hardships of life on the Oregon Trail, while at the same time providing a funny and mocking contrast with the overly stylized walks of other, non-history-oriented, contributions to the challenge.

Challenges generally rely on the reuse of the same sound bite, as do viral trends on TikTok in general. The pivotal role sounds play on TikTok needs to be understood from the fact that the platform was originally made for creating dance and lip-syncing videos. For this purpose, a sounds library was created as a core affordance, which allows users to use custom, user-added, or commercial audio clips as the soundtrack of their videos. The use of sounds also affects users' choices and options in representing the past—partly because viral sounds encountered in other TikToks may inspire the creation of new content, but also because reusing popular sounds may positively affect being algorithmically boosted on the platform. Sounds that go viral offer templates for memes that history TikTokers subsequently apply to historical contexts.

When analyzing the use of sounds in history TikToks in the sample, it becomes clear that sounds are used in two ways. First, as background music to a video recording of a user recounting a historical narrative. For this purpose, light music fragments, including fragments from the Summer Presto from Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Glenn Miller's Moonlight Serenade, and Stephen Flaherty's Once Upon a December, elicit a dreamy mood with a hint of times past. These sounds are not particularly related to the content of the representation and are background music to narratives about varying topics such as the history of cannibalism in Fiji (@megafrogirl, 2020), patriotism in Woodie Guthrie's music (@honeynutt.cheerios, 2020), and the history of astrology (@cailleachsdaughter, 2021).

Second, sounds are used to structure a TikToker's performance in a video. In these cases, the audio functions as either the backdrop to or narrative framework of a staged performance, with no new voice recording present. Here, sound is a core aspect of the representation, which would be meaningless without it. @nosebled (2020, February 11), for example, uses the audio of Blink 182's song First Date, syncing the song's chorus—'Let's go; Don't wait; This night's almost over; Honest; Let's make; This night last forever; Forever and ever; Let's make this last forever; Forever and ever; Let's make this last forever'—with text that narrates the Bolshevik seizure of power over Russia, its apparent success of industrial growth, while struggling with

famine, the 1980s oil glut, and finally ending in the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Syncing the song's chorus with the overlay text, combined with the content creator's self-recorded video in which she displays initial hopeful, but increasingly desperate gestures, paints the picture of the Soviet Union as a project that was built on dreams, hopes, and illusions, and carried on until the very end with increasingly desperate attempts of self-reassurance. By doing so @nosebled basically draws a historical analogy between the contents of the song and Soviet Russia. We will dig deeper into this type of analogical reasoning below.

For now, it is important to also highlight the constraints concerning content creation on TikTok, as these allow also and disallow specific forms of historical representation—next to the affordances. The most important constraint of TikTok is the video segment limit. In January 2021, the initial limit was 15 seconds of recorded video, with the added ability to record or upload clips up to 60 seconds. The 15-seconds limit was the original limit for purposes of lip-syncing and dancing, while the 60-seconds limit was added in later updates and requires additional actions to realize. When looking at the frequency distribution of video lengths in Fig. 1, we can clearly see the split at 15 seconds. When recording longer videos, TikTokers generally use the maximum available time. The reasons why correlates with the distribution of user-recorded, original, audio versus non-original audio (reused sounds). Strikingly the vast majority of short videos up to 15 seconds reuse sounds from the sounds library, while longer videos use user-recorded or uploaded audio.

The video length restrictions make that history TikToks can be generally divided into two types. First, narrative-centered videos that use original, recorded audio, which are often longer than the 15-seconds segment limit and address the viewer as its audience. In this first category, the user who posted the video is presenting a narrative about certain aspects of the past. The second type of video does not

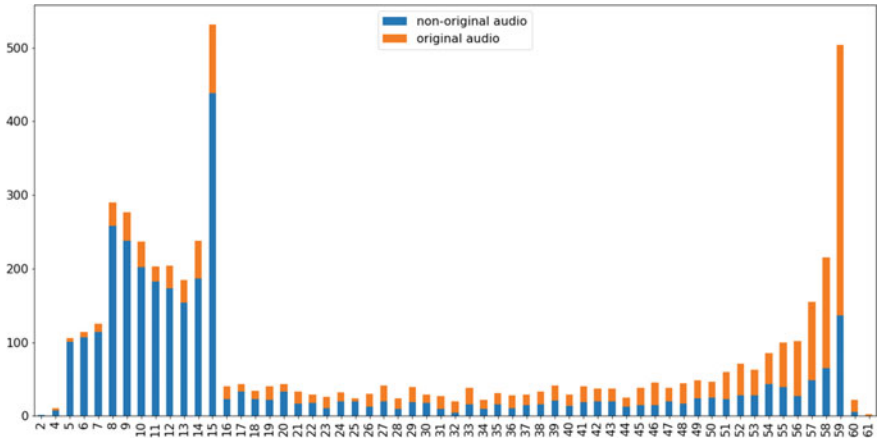

Fig. 1 Number of posts per second of video duration for a sample of 5100 TikTok videos with hashtag #historytiktok, #historymemes, and #historylesson. The colors represent the percentage of videos with original user-generated audio and non-original audio reused from other sources

exceed the 15-seconds limit and typically uses audio from the sounds library, and often invokes a POV-like style or choreographed performance in the video. It is in this second category where historical analogies are prominent. The reason why is straightforward: the audio clips from the sounds library are generally not historical, but contemporary audio fragments—such as fragments of record music or audio from movie scenes or viral videos. This makes history TikTokers to resort to text overlays or the recorded video to include explicit historical references. Because the audio is contemporary, the contrast between present and past that invites for historical analogical reasoning is given by default in these 15-seconds TikToks. By sequencing non-historical audio with enacted historical scenes or real historical footage, these TikToks try to explain history through analogy between the video and audio contents. For this reason, the second part of my analysis will zoom in on a subset of the sample, namely videos of 15 seconds or less with no self-recorded audio ($n = 2162$). By means of a qualitative analysis of several TikToks I will explain the effect of TikTok's platform affordances on analogical reasoning and historical representation.

Historical Analogy on TikTok

To explore the contents of these TikToks, topic modeling has been applied on the combined caption and 'sticker' text overlays of history TikToks with a maximum duration of 15 seconds, and a minimum total word count of 8 ($n = 1587$) to ensure semantic coherence in the combined texts. These texts have been preprocessed, removing hashtags to avoid the prevalence of the #historytiktok, #historymemes, and #historylesson hashtags affecting the topic model. Using the Python module BERTopic (Grootendorst, 2020), sentence embeddings were retrieved and subsequently clustered using the default settings. This resulted in the identification of 21 topics, with a minimum topic size of 10 TikToks. 696 TikToks (44%) have not been assigned to a topic, as their probability to belong to a cluster did not reach the threshold value.

Table 1 displays the identified topics, together with the four most important words in the topic, as well as a manually created topic description. It provides a good insight into the type of topics used in historical analogies on TikTok. Only three topics—2, 8, and 13—bear no reference to the historical subjects that are represented. Topic 2 is interesting because the posts on this topic have captions or sticker texts that reflect upon school history or learning from the past. The captions invite users to comment by asking what history lessons they remember most (@angelcorado2, 2019), give reasons for their interest in the represented topic (@nosebled 2020), or reflect upon the state of history education. At the same time, nine posts on this topic reflect on the historical consequences of Adolf Hitler's rejection from art school; the higher probability of belonging to this cluster can be explained through the fact that these posts generally do not mention Hitler by name. Subsequently, Topic 3 consists of metacomments upon the video, for example, the caption 'This sound was too perfect not to make this 🥲' accompanying a TikTok that combines a sound bite

from L'Trimm's 1998 song Cars with the Boom with references to the 1998 Real IRA's Omagh bombing (@btec_noel_fielding, 2020). Topic 13 contains captions and sticker texts that reflect upon the feelings and emotions of the poster, for example, apologies for the quality of the TikTok because of laziness or being tired.

The other topics provide a clear indication of the main historical interests TikTokers leverage for short posts and analogies. The topics themselves display an Anglo-American historical orientation related to the fact that only English-language TikToks were processed. When creating historical analogies, TikTokers have to translate historical contexts to a situation with clearly identifiable agents. As the main concepts of the topics indicate, these agents are mostly natural persons or states. In the sample, these generally function as the target in historical analogies. Germany, Henry VIII, Stalin, Cleopatra, and the Ottoman Empire all feature as agents whose behavior or motivations related to a specific historical event are clarified in juxtaposition with an analogous sound fragment. Some topics, like topic 3, 10, 17, and 20 are explicitly related to the antics of historical individuals, which can relatively

Table 1 Results of topic modeling combined caption and sticker texts of short history TikToks (n = 1587, 696 posts have not been assigned to a topic)

Topic	Count	Most important words	Topic description
1	196	germany, german, war, soldiers	Second World War
2	96	history, school, my, art	Learning history, historical interests
3	73	anne, henry, viii, queen	Tudor History
4	67	stalin, russia, soviet, ussr	Soviet and Cold War history
5	56	japan, pearl, flag, japanese	Pacific War
6	52	british, britain, empire, kingdom	British imperialism
7	34	oregon, trail, donner, party	Settling and pioneering
8	33	videos, this, my, me	Metacomments on the video
9	29	kennedy, cia, jfk, oswald	Political assassinations, mainly JFK
10	28	roosevelt, president, nixon, taft	US Presidents
11	28	roman, empire, romans, rome	Roman history
12	28	french, france, revolution, louis	French Revolution
13	25	im, feel, trend, slowly	Feelings and intentions of the poster
14	25	jefferson, rights, constitution, states	US constitution and civil rights
15	22	ottoman, islamic, empire, Balkan	Ottoman and Central Asian history
16	22	greek, socrates, trojans, zeus	Ancient Greece
17	14	rasputin, wine, jar, poisoned	Rasputin
18	13	labor, industrial, poor, wages	Industrialization
19	13	women, edith, goodnight, joan	Great women
20	13	caesar, julius, cleopatra, egypt	Julius Caesar
21	13	mexico, spain, chile, nicaragua	Latin American history
22	11	she, her, murders, brutal	Murder and genocide

easily be emplotted in videos that feature TikTokers representing these individuals while text stickers clarify which individuals they represent. Other topics, such as 1, 5, 6, 11, 15, and 21, use featured nation states and empires as actors, while in some topics even more abstract 'actors'—such as ideologies—are displayed, as is the case with communism in topic 4. Narrative emplotment for these more abstract and multi-layered entities works similarly to representing natural persons, as they are emplotted as quasi-characters (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 181), also enacted by individual TikTokers in the videos, that act or think to the likelihood of individual persons. This reduction of complexity may appear problematic, but is also a necessity as an analogy by definition only applies to a limited number of characteristics.

The multimodal character of TikTok—the fact that it allows combining several semiotic modes such as video, text, and audio—also problematizes analogical reasoning in several respects. First, base and target are presented simultaneously in history TikToks. This means that a strict logical understanding of historical analogies on the platform could be helpful in an abstract sense, but cannot contribute to our understanding of how analogical *reasoning* works in these cases. When John Tosh (2019, p. 57) claims that 'the whole point of an analogy is that it notes similarities in things which in other respects are unlike,' because analogical reasoning 'does not rest on a presumption of complete congruence or repetition,' he not only rightly challenges problematic presumptions of scholars about historical analogies, but also identifies an aspect of analogical reasoning that history TikTokers leverage in order to maximize 'memetic' quality of their posts: the fact that the juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated topics can be seriously funny, without being meaningless. A simultaneous juxtaposition of base and target in a history TikTok contributes to the joke because it allows bringing base and target together in a punchline, or because it facilitates a skit that highlights the differences between base and target for humorous purposes, with the analogy keeping the skit together.

To illustrate this, let us study a post captioned 'There's just rocks there guys' by @sigmunclarg (2020), which represents the US space program's desire to go to the moon as a meaningless effort to outpace Soviet Russia in the Space Race. @sigmunclarg is able to bring this message across by staging a mock interview between the world and JFK, with himself playing both roles in the video and with projected texts as the question–answer pairs. The meaning of the interview is established by the sound chosen for the video, which is a fragment from a viral video of a 2015 interview with a customer of the Supreme streetwear store, who queued for ten hours in order to be able to buy a ridiculously expensive branded crowbar (Bigiron, 2017). Supreme is known for its limited releases and special collections, and the video shows the customer commenting upon the fact that the brand is so powerful that it made him buy a crowbar. The audio used for the TikTok features the customer ridiculing his own meaningless purchase (see Table 2).

Here the Supreme store situation functions as the base and the US space program as a target. At first sight, it would be ridiculous to draw a serious comparison between these two subjects, which is also what makes the post funny. After all, the viewers often already know the sound from other, unrelated memes. But the analogy is

Table 2 @sigmunclarg's 'There's just rocks there guys TikTok'

Seconds	Text	Video	Audio
0–2	'The World: "Why does everyone want to go to the moon?"'	@sigmunclarg playing an interviewer, interviewing JFK	Interviewer: 'Why does everyone want a crowbar?'
2–4	'JFK: "Cuz it's the f***ing moon, are you f***in' serious?"'	@sigmunclarg answering as JFK	Interviewee: 'Cuz it's a fucking crowbar! Are you fucking serious?'
4–5	'What are you gonna do there?'	@sigmunclarg as interviewer	Interviewer: 'What are you going to do with it?'
5–10	'F***in' nothing, but we're gonna beat the USSR'	@sigmunclarg as JFK	Interviewee: 'Fucking nothing, but I'm gonna own a fucking crowbar now, so that's the fucking shit!'
10–13	'So you spent $25B + to go to the moon?'	@sigmunclarg as interviewer	Interviewer: 'So you've been waiting 10 hours for a crowbar that says Supreme'
13–15	'Yeah. And?'	@sigmunclarg as JFK	Interviewee: 'Ah I didn't even know it said Supreme – I just want a fucking crowbar'

not meaningless. It pinpoints how great expenses are made for purposes that are practically futile, but driven by a blind desire for status.

Second, the utilization of three semiotic modes—sounds, text, and video—also allows for the configuration of what we could call 'double' analogies—analogies that compare three things and draw to analogies. Now, this is not a common procedure on TikTok, as generally, two modes complement each other, so that the distinction between one base and one target is upheld, but the utilization of three modes does allow for each mode to refer to a different subject. To illustrate this, we will look at a post by @airisusannn (2020) captioned '#greenscreen I KNOW I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE #fyp #onlineclass #meme #history #historymemes #historybuff #apworld.' In the post, @airisusannn uses TikTok's 'greenscreen' effect, which lets users replace the video background. In this case, she displays two historical cartoons often used in history classes about late nineteenth-century Western imperialism (see Table 3 and Images 1). The accompanying sound comes from a viral video in which English-speaking Pakistani children pledge loyalty to their nation during a school event in 2011 (Pakistani Kids Pledge Loyalty, 2020). It features the reaction of the school principal to a boy pledging to put an end to drone raids on Pakistan when he grows up (MEME LORD 007, 2020).

Images:

Table 3 Scenes of @airisusannn's '#greenscreen I KNOW I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE' TikTok

Seconds	Text	Video	Audio
0–4	'World history teachers when they see these cartoons':	Background: 1882 American cartoon 'The Devilfish in Egyptian Waters' depicts John Bull (England) as the octopus of imperialism grabbing land on every continent Foreground: TikToker lip-syncing the audio, pointing toward the cartoon	'Ooh, this is a strong message'
4–8	'World history teachers when they see these cartoons':	Background: 1898 French cartoon 'China - The Cake of Kings… And of Emperors,' depicting European monarchs slicing up China Foreground: TikToker lip-syncing the audio	'No one will have courage to undermine the sovereignty of our country'

1. Henri Meyer, 'En Chine - La gâteau des Rois et ... des Empereurs' (China - the cake of kings ... and emperors), Le Petit Journal. Supplément Illustré January 16, 1898.

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

In the video, @airisusannn is lip-syncing the principal with the cartoons in the background, but additionally, a text sticker is featured on top of the video stating: 'World history teachers when they see these cartoons.' This means that there are three topics referenced: (1) a claim on protecting the sovereignty of the nation, derived from a

present-day viral Pakistani audio fragment, featured in many memes; (2) the history of Western, particularly European, imperialism of the late nineteenth century, as represented by historical cartoons from that era; and (3) contemporary investment in historical cartoons as resources in history education, as represented in the projected text. Two analogies are drawn between these three topics. First, the principal's reaction of enthusiasm about a message is rendered analogous to history teachers' reactions to seeing these historical cartoons—something which is underlined by @airisusannn lip-syncing the sound, while pointing toward the first cartoon at the moment we hear 'this is a strong message.' Second, an analogy is drawn between the contents of the sound and the contents of the cartoons, as through analogical reasoning the problems of Western imperialism addressed in the cartoon are rendered problems of national sovereignty. The pun is not lost on the 1.5 million people who viewed the video (of whom almost a third liked the video), who recount experiences of having to analyze the depicted cartoons in school in the comment section, and comment on the (over)investment of history teachers in cartoons in class.

The third and final implication of the use of three modes for historical analogies is that TikToks primarily use the first type of historical analogy Van Straaten et al. (2016) identify: analogies in which the present is the base and historical occurrences are the target. We have already discussed how this is related to the use and reuse of present-day viral sounds and memes. The second type of historical analogy, in which both source and target are historical, is virtually absent. The third type, in which the past is the base and the present is the target, does occur in several instances—mostly in cases where TikTokers are reflecting upon the understanding or teaching of history in the present (topic 2). @isbagent (2020), for example, posted a TikTok of himself pretending to sit in class, with the text overlay 'Teacher: get into groups, today we will be playing Risk.' The next scene titled 'Me and the Boys,' depicts historical videos of Patton, Rommel, Zhukov, and Montgomery holding speeches and explaining tactics. The analogy between strategic decision-making by WWII generals and playing Risk in class informs the viewer of the motivations of @isbagent and his peers, while it satirizes them at the same time as armchair generals.

Conclusion

Historical analogies form an important part of popular historical culture. Digital historical culture on social media platforms is no exception. In this chapter, I have shown how both the prominence of historical analogies, and the configuration of analogies are a result of the platform's affordances and constraints. Having originated as a dancing and lip-syncing app, TikTok heavily relies on reusable sounds as a basis for creating videos. The historical 15-seconds video duration limit is still very prominent in history TikToks, even though videos up to 60 seconds can be posted at the time of writing. While longer videos are mostly used to present extended narratives, and show TikTokers recounting these narratives, videos up to and including 15 seconds use the platform's affordances differently to represent the

past. They primarily rely on reused audio from TikTok's sounds library, combined with recorded video and text projected onto the video. Because the vast majority of popular sounds come from viral videos and memes, they bear reference to the present or contemporary contexts. Creating historical content using these audio clips necessarily draws TikTokers into the realm of historical analogy, as present-day audio is juxtaposed with either a video or text containing historical references, or both.

While this explains the prominence of historical analogies in history TikToks, the analogies in short history TikToks differ from traditionally narrated analogies in several respects, and can be characterized as 'condensed' historical analogies. First, the target and the base of the analogy are presented simultaneously. For example, when a contemporary pop song that serves as the base plays along with a video in which a TikToker enacts a historical situation as a target. The simultaneity in presenting target and base is an essential part of history TikToks, as it allows for the juxtaposition of differences between target and base in order to maximize the pun of the video, and to turn it into a viral meme. Second, the combined use of sounds, text, and video also allows drawing double analogies that compare between three elements rather than two. Finally, the present-centeredness of the audio as base makes that the vast majority of history TikToks have a present-oriented base and a past-oriented target, which allows to enhance an understanding of unfamiliar aspects of the past through analogy with familiar scenes drawn from contemporary popular and internet culture. Unlike comparative history education assignments, analogies in which both base and target are historical are virtually absent. Analogies in which the past is the base and the present is the target occur sparsely, contrary to the general political use of analogies. However, because history TikToks are also understood as memes by its audience, analogies of the latter type generally provide ironic commentary on the present rather than arguing for some kind of politically motivated historical continuity.

There is little danger in TikTokers or viewers assuming a full identity between present and past, as the sounds that generally function as the base represent specific, everyday situations rather than abstract ideas or complex histories. They are what McCarthy Young and Leinhardt (1998) called 'contextual' historical analogies that make sense because they allude to personal experience rather than to extensive historical knowledge. Even if sounds are drawn from movies, cartoons, or random viral videos that are not known by the video creator or the audience, they will be able to understand the analogy through association with the specific everyday context represented in the sound. And even if they know the source it is very unlikely that anyone will assume a structural similarity between, for example, a twenty-first-century meme and the Second World War.

Even though the motifs and intentions of TikTokers posting history videos are tainted by the zest for likes and hopes to land on the 'For You Page,' the posts gain a lot of traction that invokes additional mapping in the comment section. Similarly, the platform opens up possibilities for use in formal educational contexts where the capacity of students to reduce complex issues to straightforward analogies, combined with additional mapping exercises in classroom contexts can be leveraged to advance historical consciousness and historical understanding.

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Innovative Digital Tools for Historical Understanding

Historiana: An Online Resource Designed to Promote Multi-Perspective and Transnational History Teaching

Maren Tribukait and Steven Stegers

Abstract This chapter explores how Historiana, an online platform made by EuroClio for and with history educators, helps educators to teach history in a way that is transnational and multiperspective. It asks how the multiperspective and transnational approach was shaped, implemented, and developed by looking at the conceptual, organisational, and infrastructural levels. First, it outlines the background to this initiative in 2007, when the development of Historiana started as an alternative to the idea of a European textbook, and in response to the need of history teachers who were committed to the concept of multiperspectivity but lacked the source materials. Then, it explains why the first design of the platform was changed and how Historiana was transformed by a participatory approach involving the EuroClio community of history educators. The contribution and collaboration of over 250 people from more than 40 countries resulted in an online resource that offers access to thousands of historical sources, more than a hundred learning activities, and enables its users to create and share their own eLearning Activities online. Furthermore, the participatory process put forth student-orientation, curricula-orientation, and the adaptability as principles of tool and content development resulted in new tools that help students analyse texts, compare sources and contextualise sources and that allow teachers to implement transnational perspectives. The development of content and new functionalities is mostly done in the context of projects. One of those projects is 'Learning to Disagree' which is aimed at rethinking and strengthening the concept of multiperspectivity in times of political polarisation. The project responded to the revival of nationalism and the rise of populism and extremism by supporting teachers to conduct discussion, dialogue, and debate on controversial issues in the classroom. The resources developed in this project are designed to enable students to understand different points of view, think about the limits of multiperspectivity, and develop the capability and willingness to discuss in a constructive manner. Finally, the chapter will conclude what lessons can be learned from the development of Historiana for

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other digital projects in the field of history education, which also aim to be transnational, multiperspective and inclusive. We will also reflect on recent developments and share what is next in terms of further development.

Keywords History teaching · Multiperspectivity · Online learning · Transnational approaches · Digital tools

Introduction

The role of school history education in today's democratic societies has often been described as a conundrum: on the one hand, since its origins in the nineteenth century, it has been designed to form loyal citizens and has thus played a significant role in nation-building processes, yet on the other hand it has, more recently, been dedicated to the tradition of Enlightenment and of encouraging students to question this framework and to form their own points of view based on evidence and arguments (Van Nieuwenhuyse & Wils, 2012). Liberal democracies in Europe have tried to reconcile these two functions within school history education by attempting to raise critical, democratic citizens; in practice, this has meant transcending a one-dimensional national master narrative and giving students analytical tools enabling them to study a variety of perspectives of the past instead (Bergmann, 2000; Carretero, 2017; Grever, 2009). However, in many European countries, history teaching remains rooted in national history (Carrier, 2013; Stradling, 2019). Against the backdrop of increasing globalisation since 1989 and, more specifically, the extension of the European Union the question arose of whether the nation is still the most suitable framework for history teaching or whether students if they are to become competent citizens, should learn more about the interconnectedness of the world from a historical perspective. Since the 1990s, many organisations and initiatives, including EuroClio, the European Association of History Educators, and the Georg Eckert Institute, have promoted transnational multiperspective approaches to history education (Stradling, 2001).

The development of Historiana, which was started in 2007 by EuroClio, is one prominent participatory initiative dedicated to this approach (EuroClio, n.d.). The main idea was to give history teachers across Europe access to sources from different national contexts in order to enable them to teach European history from a variety of angles. The concept of multiperspectivity in history teaching takes the principle of history as an interpretational discipline and translates it into school practice (Bergmann, 2000; Chapman, 2011; Wansink et al., 2018). In Historiana, it has been combined from the beginning with a transnational approach that emphasises the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity of individual countries and Europe (Stradling, 2003). As it will be shown, the development of Historiana was guided by the idea that history is not only about the dominant groups and those in power, but also about ordinary people, of all genders and economic and cultural and minority backgrounds.

As Historiana seeks to inspire and explore new ways of history teaching, this paper asks how the multiperspective and transnational approach was shaped, implemented

and developed by the EuroClio community and two companies, Webtic and Use Media, who have led the concept, design and development of the technical aspects of Historiana as an online educational tool, including the user experience and interface.[1] While this paper is obviously a project presentation by two people instrumental in creating and executing the project we seek to reflect on our practices when examining this question. We will look at the conceptual, organisational, and infrastructural levels with the help of three snapshots: The first is a flashback to the year 2007 that outlines the ambitions and the working modes of the founding team as well as the first version of Historiana which was launched in 2012 and redesigned in 2017. Then we use a broader picture of the year 2020, which will illustrate how Historiana has transformed into a flexible tool enabling innovation and collaboration within a transnational community of history teachers. The last snapshot is also taken in 2020 but is a close-up of the project 'Learning to Disagree' that focuses on the specific challenges of transnational and multiperspective history education in a time of political polarisation.

In conclusion, we will sum up what can be learned from the development of Historiana in terms of transnational, inclusive and multiperspective approaches, explain why we think such a resource is necessary and reflect on the challenges that still need to be removed in order for it to enter mainstream use.

Flashback to 2007: Historiana as an Alternative to a European Textbook

The idea of developing Historiana was first discussed in 2007 and was triggered by a proposal of Annette Schavan, the German Minister of Education and Research, during a meeting of the EU Ministers of Education in Heidelberg to make a common history textbook from the EU. There were previous proposals for such a textbook, and up till then EuroClio had always opposed this idea, but now that new technologies made it possible to add more and more diverse content, and offer more flexible pathways to this content, it had changed its opinion (Van der Leeuw-Roord, 2008).

Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, the Founder of EuroClio, and Maria Grever, an Honorary Board Member of EuroClio, observed in a memorandum that '*the future of students in the different European Nations is tied to larger European and global currents that must be grasped historically*' and added that '*it is important that students are able to understand these currents and the effects on the world they live in*'. They proposed an initiative that aimed '*to make young people aware of the current impact of Europe on their personal lives and the historical backgrounds of modern Europe*' and found that '*understanding the history of the European continent and its rich and controversial heritage implicates the creation of tools to exchange ideas and to argue from different angles on the past, based on solid information and arguments*' (Van der Leeuw-Roord & Grever, 2007, p. 1). This description implies an understanding of

[1] https://webtic.eu/ and https://use.media/.

multiperspectivity that is rooted in historical thinking and thus corresponds with the definition of multiperspectivity as 'a way of viewing, and a predisposition to view, historical events, personalities, developments, cultures and societies from different perspectives through drawing on procedures and processes which are fundamental to history as a discipline' (Stradling, 2003, p. 14).

The initiative came in response to several developments that the authors identified as factors that had changed the conditions of history education: (1) Most nations in Europe at the time had large numbers of students from immigrant or minority families who did not share a common historical experience and history teachers needed to deal with this diversity. (2) The perception was that historical 'knowledge' had become fragmented and diversified, sapping the authority of monologic narratives. (3) There was a need for young people to learn how to acquire historical information and to assess the information they encountered not only at school but also on the internet or elsewhere. (4) There was a strong tendency towards reasserting national identity through history, heritage and citizenship education, in response to worries about deepening European integration and the enlargement of the European Union (Van der Leeuw-Roord & Grever, 2007, p. 1).

Van der Leeuw-Roord and Grever were supported by Richard Hermans, the Director of the former Netherlands Institute for Heritage, and together they identified experts and other European organisations who worked on the promotion of multiperspective and transnational history, and heritage and/or citizenship education.[2] The Advisory Board aimed to share existing examples of good practice, to address and fine-tune the goals and content, to identify challenges and solutions, to map organisations that needed to be involved, and to discuss and agree on the format, structure and development process. Robert Stradling, who had been a champion for a European approach to teaching History in his work for the Council of Europe since 1991, shared his then-recent experience in developing the Council of Europe CD-ROM '*Crossroads of European Histories - Multiple Outlooks on Five Key Moments in the History of Europe*' (2009), and supported Van der Leeuw-Roord and Grever's idea of developing a website rather than a textbook. He did this because (1) this would make it possible to add new sources and perspectives over time, (2) a website is more accessible for users and (3) there is no limitation to the number of sources that can be added. Furthermore, he proposed a thematic approach, because it enables students to trace back long-term developments, see and analyse turning points in history and identify similarities and differences between events and locations.

[2] The members of the Advisory Board were: B. v. Borries (Hamburg University), J. Cousins (Europeana), K. Donert (Eurogeo—European Association of Geographers), R. Fisher (National Maritime Museum), H. Geiss (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung), M. Grever (Centre for Historical Culture), C. Hageman (Netherlands Institute for Heritage), R. Hermans (Netherlands Institute for Heritage), J. van der Leeuw-Roord (EuroClio, the European Association of History Educators), R. Maier (Georg Eckert Institute), B. Morgescu (EUSTORY), L. Neale (Europa Nostra), M. Sani (Network of European Museum Organisations), D. Smart (EuroClio, the European Association of History Educators), S. Stegers (EuroClio, the European Association of History Educators), R. Stradling (Council of Europe) and A. Weij (Netherlands Institute for Heritage).

After two meetings, the working title 'Past, the Future of Europe', was dismissed because it was incompatible with difficult histories. Instead, the board agreed on the name 'Historiana'[3] for the initiative and a description of what Historiana should be:

> *Historiana is […] an online, multimedia tool […] on the learning and teaching of common themes in history and heritage as alterative to a European Textbook.*
>
> *The website can be used for educational purposes in classrooms, museums and heritage settings and will provide a plurality of perspectives with respect for inter- and intra-state diversity. This will be realized by the inclusion of multiple perspectives which will help to adequately comprehend the complexity in history and heritage and work towards increased historical awareness.*
>
> *Historiana does not aim to be encyclopaedic or to be a comprehensive digital history textbook, but will create opportunities to compare the history and heritage across time and regions, which will allow them to see connections, differences and similarities. The material is designed in such a way that stimulates users to think critically on issues related to history and heritage and to acquire key competences and simultaneously gain knowledge on specific events and long-term developments in history.*[4]

This definition shows that the board refrained from highlighting a common European heritage that aimed to promote a coherent European identity, which had been proposed by the German Minister of Education and Research Annette Schavan in 2007 (Deutsche Welle, 2007).

The actual development of Historiana started in 2009 when EuroClio was successful in winning funding for two projects: 'Discovering Diversity, an Integrative Approach to the History of Migrants (2009–2011)', funded by the Anna Lindh Foundation, and 'Exploring European History and Heritage (2009–2012)', funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. In these projects, history educators and researchers from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Morocco, The Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom worked together on the development of thematic case studies, structured around a set of key questions proposed by Robert Stradling, who agreed to be the editor-in-chief of Historiana (Image 1).

The first version of Historiana, designed and developed by Webtic, was launched in 2012. This version was structured around the historical themes: Conflict and Cooperation, Ideas and Ideologies, Life and Leisure, People on the Move, Rights and Responsibilities, The Environment, and Work and Technologies. Each theme included introductory texts, case studies, collections of source material, and timelines. Some of these themes clearly entailed a shift of focus from 'official' national histories to stories of ordinary people and included marginalised voices that are often overlooked by mainstream historical writing.

Even at this early stage, Historiana received recognition by the Council of Europe North South Centre in the form of the World Aware Education Award and the Special Prize for European Collaboration in the creation of Educational Media from the

[3] Report of the *Historiana Advisory Group*, 13 November 2010 (EuroClio Archive).

[4] *An introduction to Historiana*, 2010 (EuroClio Archive).

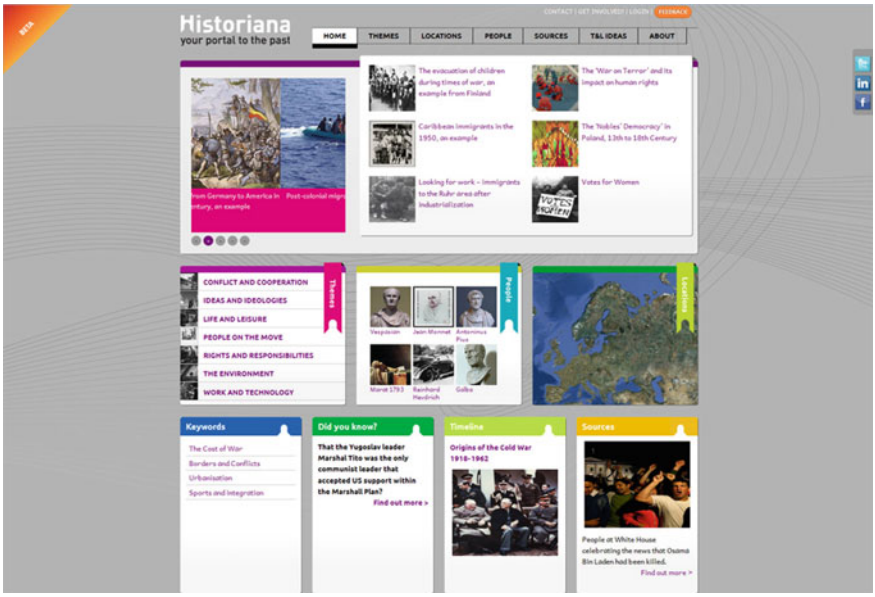

Image 1 The homepage of Historiana, when it was launched in 2012

MEDEA Awards. The awards indicated the idea's potential and the value of a collaborative development process that used transnational teams, a process that contrasted with the production of national textbooks. However, there were several issues that prevented Historiana from fulfilling its potential: (1) The thematic case studies were still national. Each case study had a 'bigger picture' section which showed what the case study was a part of (such as other fights for independence, or other groups migrating for economic reasons), but this did not provide enough support for teachers. (2) Ideas for teaching and learning were lacking. (3) The design of the website did not enable easy comparisons between case studies. (4) It was difficult for teachers to link the case studies to the curricula. (5) The language barrier was reduced, but not overcome. The limited budget for concept, design, testing and development and the limited capacity of the editing team proved to be additional challenges.

Broader Picture 2020: A Flexible Tool for Innovation and Transnational Collaboration

To address the needs expressed by the history, heritage and citizenship educators from the EuroClio network, the development of Historiana changed direction. EuroClio started to develop teaching and learning resources in addition to historical content in order to help teachers tailor multiperspective and transnational approaches to their individual classroom situations. The historical content team decided to shift focus

from themes to key moments, as these were easier to link to the different history curricula across Europe (Jasik et al., 2016).

Another key development was the move towards eLearning, which was accelerated through cooperation with Europeana, a digital platform for cultural heritage that provides access to the online collections of European museums, archives and libraries.[5] EuroClio became a partner in EuropeanaCreative, a project that aimed to stimulate the re-use in different fields of the cultural heritage resources provided by Europeana, including in the field of education. In this project, EuroClio and Webtic made it possible for educators to search and select sources from cultural heritage institutes, and to use these sources to create online learning activities. Many sources on Historiana are visual, which are easier to use as language barriers are smaller compared to textual sources.

EuroClio decided it was worthwhile developing tools for online history education because most tools used by history teachers at the time only helped students to present historical information in new ways (such as videos) or were designed to test knowledge (mainly quizzes). There were few tools that helped students to 'think like historians' and interpret the sources by themselves. Notable exceptions were ClassTools developed by Russel Tarr[6] and DocsTeach, the online tool for teaching with documents from the US National Archive.[7]

The rationale behind the development of these tools was that students are confronted with online source material that is not self-explanatory. An important step to multiperspective learning was considered to be the use of scaffolding strategies to support students' understanding of sources. The tools should also be intuitive and transferable to a range of different sources. The first tool was designed by Use Media, and helps students analyse visual sources. With the help of this tool, students can select parts of a visual source and explain why they made this selection. The purpose is to help students deconstruct the message of a source, but it can also be used by students to apply their historical knowledge or to annotate questions. Students and teachers can use their own language and script for annotations, which is an important step towards reducing language barriers. Similar tools were created for sorting and prioritising sources as well as for text analysis in follow-up projects.[8] The use of blocks and canvas in which students interact with the sources in the tools that was designed for this first tool, has been the basis of all the tools that followed (Image 2).

One example of the use of the Visual Analysis tool, proposed by Robert Stradling, shows both the potential and the limitation of this first tool. This example makes use of one source: A satirical map that was published in the UK before the outbreak of

[5] https://www.europeana.eu/en/about-us (Accessed 4 May 2020).

[6] https://classtools.net/ (Accessed 4 May 2020).

[7] https://www.docsteach.org/ (Accessed 4 May 2020).

[8] The Sorting and Prioritising Tools were developed in the Innovating History Education for All project (2014–2017) funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union. The Comparing, Highlighting and Discovering Tools were developed in the Opening Up Historiana project (2018–2020) funded by the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) of the European Union.

Image 2 The student view of the Visual Analysis tool

World War 1, and later republished in Germany by W. Nolting of Hamburg and used by the Germans as counter-propaganda.

Stradling wanted to ask students first from a British perspective '*What, if anything, makes them effective propaganda for persuading the British public to support the war effort?*' and then explain to the students that the map was used as counter-propaganda, and ask the students to look at the map from a German perspective '*Why might the German government think these would make good propaganda for persuading the German public to support the war effort?*'. Since the questions may need to be formulated differently in a British, German or Belgian history classroom—given the different national historical contexts that the students are familiar with—this exercise in perspective-taking shows how the online tools can be used to adapt a multiperspective teaching strategy to an individual history classroom anywhere in Europe (Image 3).

In the first design of the Visual Analysis tool, it was possible for students to do this analysis from one perspective, but in order to do the analysis again, they had to open two different links in their emails, which would be too confusing.

The reactions to the first online tool from educators in the EuroClio network were promising, but again there were some key challenges that needed to be resolved before Historiana could fulfil its potential. The main challenges were that teachers (1) could not easily invite students to use the tool or review their answers, (2) could not ask an overarching question that students should answer after they had completed their analysis and (3) were not able to ask students to analyse multiple sources in one sequence.

The analysis of multiple sources in one sequence was made possible when Webtic realised the concept, design and development of the eActivity Builder. To present learning activities in a sequence had been part of Webtic's thinking since 2013, but there were no suitable technologies to make this possible, and resources were

Image 3 Hark hark the dogs do bark. © IWM Art.IWM PST 6964

also lacking. When suitable open source software became available with JQuery-UI, which made it possible to drag and drop items in a sequence, Webtic made the concept reality. They coined the terms 'eActivity Builder' and 'Building Blocks' in 2016, and further developed the concept until it was integrated in the live version of Historiana in 2017 (Image 4).

The creation and use of sketches, click models and prototypes with 'mock content' facilitated the cooperation between the different teams (working on historical content, teaching and learning, and concept, design and development). This participatory and cooperative approach helped to 'proof the concept', to identify issues in an early development stage (which is important because making changes is much easier compared to the later development stages), to test assumptions, and to avoid miscommunication. The approach also helped to create ownership of the people involved, who then became Ambassadors for the project.

In each step of the design process, history teachers and history teacher trainers from across Europe were asked for feedback. To gain insights in the teachers' workflow Webtic asked them to provide a step-by-step description of how they create a year's curriculum, how they develop lesson plans, how they prepare for the use with students, and what they do during and after the lessons. They also did literature research about online teaching in general. A team of history educators who were involved in one of the projects contributing to Historiana identified and reviewed

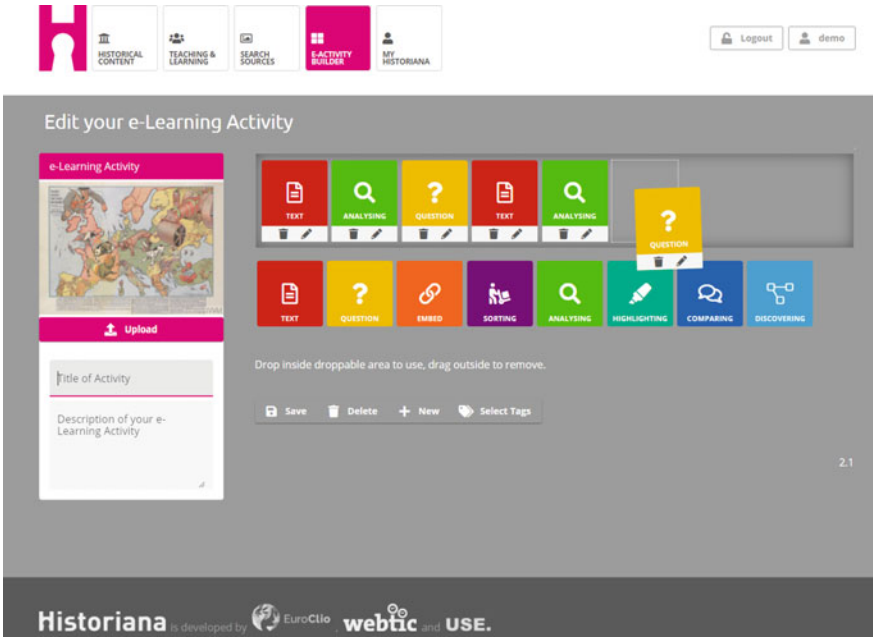

Image 4 The eActivity builder on Historiana

online tools that history educators could use and indicated how desirable the design of the different tools was.[9]

In 2021, Historiana provided access to over 50 source collections, 5 multistranded timelines, 14 variety of viewpoints, 50 eLearning Activities, 100 learning activities and 3 modules centred around key moments, and enabled teachers to search for source material in Europeana's digital collections. Historiana has become the main platform through which EuroClio shares resources with its community.

Registered users can also upload and curate their own sources and add, create, and share eLearning Activities, using the eActivity Builder. When they share a link to the eLearning Activities with their students, the students can complete the activity and submit their answers for review by the teacher. The Historiana tools that are part of the eActivity Builder enable teachers to help students sort source material, compare sources, highlight texts and discover connections. There are also other tools for presenting information to students and asking questions. When other educators open the link, they can create their own copy of the eLearning Activity, which they can edit and share with their students. Since 2020, it is possible for partners to create

[9] The core team was an international group of history teacher and history teacher trainers comprising: M. Hajdarovic (Croatia), S. M. Gestsdóttir (Iceland), R. Kennett (United Kingdom), N. Pirtskhalava (Georgia), H. Snelson (United Kingdom) and P. Tak (the Netherlands). The reviews of the tools are published on the Historiana blog.

and publish their own resources on Historiana. These partners are responsible for the curation, quality control, and copyright clearance of their resources.

By opening up sources on European history, inspiring multiperspective and transnational teaching approaches and developing an online learning environment Historiana has moved successfully towards its initial aim, which was 'the creation of tools to exchange ideas and to argue from different angles on the past, based on solid information and arguments' (Van der Leeuw-Roord & Grever, 2007) in a European context. The participation of a transnational community of history teachers was key to overcoming abstract ideas of multiperspectivity and design content, teaching strategies and tools in a way that can be applied in and adapted to different classrooms across Europe.

Close-Up 2020: Learning to disagree—A Response to Polarisation

Because projects have been such an important part of the development of Historiana, we will have a closer look at one of these projects: Learning to Disagree. This project was initiated when, after the Brexit referendum in 2016, wider political trends had changed, not only in Britain, but in many places in Europe and beyond. The revival of nationalism and the rise of populism and extremism currently pose new challenges to the provision of history education that is dedicated to multiperspectivity, mutual understanding, and a transnational framework. When the liberal, post-1989 consensus is contested in a public climate of polarisation teachers are also often confronted with new situations (McAvoy & Hess, 2013; Van Alstein, 2019): students may question settled issues or generally accepted points of view more often, sometimes bringing populist opinions or false claims picked up on the internet to the classroom. This makes the discussion of controversial issues more difficult but perhaps also more necessary since research has shown that if students are given the opportunity to discuss controversial issues it helps them to open their minds, to acknowledge other perspectives, and to argue for their own point of view; in short to develop social and civic competencies (Goldberg et al., 2011; Hess, 2009; Hess & McAvoy, 2015).

Acting upon these insights, EuroClio launched the 'Learning to disagree' project in 2017, which responded to the new challenges and addressed the impact of students' own online practices on history education. It offers a counter-strategy that aims to strengthen students' social and civic competencies through discussion, dialogue, and debate in the classroom. This means that students should learn to understand different points of view, develop the capability and willingness to discuss issues in a constructive manner, and implicitly reflect on their own online practices. Focusing specifically on controversial issues such as 'problems and disputes which divide society and for which significant groups within society offer conflicting explanations and solutions based on alternative values' (Stradling et al., 1984, p. 2), the

project underscored that disagreement is normal in pluralistic societies, but in order to be constructive, discussions have to be based on facts and arguments. It made use of Historiana, as an established online resource for multiperspective history education, to present and share teaching materials. Furthermore, the project design lays emphasis on face-to-face interactions in the classroom, following an understanding of postdigital education according to which the design and practice of learning activities should be decided upon carefully, but irrespective of the degree to which digital technologies are used (Fawns, 2018).

As obvious as it may sound, controversial issues are not often discussed in the classroom—neither in history nor in other subjects (Bickmore & Parker, 2014; Goldberg & Savenije, 2018; Journell, 2013; McAvoy & Hess, 2013; Kello, 2016). A team of researchers and history educators[10] from 16 European countries therefore developed teaching materials, based on research into teachers' needs that included focus group discussions and a survey (Christophe & Tribukait, 2019). These materials consisted of sets of viewpoints on certain controversial issues as well as teaching and assessment strategies suitable for discussion, dialogue, and debate. Additionally, ready-to-use lesson plans were designed for short interventions that give teachers the opportunity to try out fresh approaches to difficult historical topics and new discussion formats in only one or two lessons (Image 5).

Three challenges, that had accompanied the work on developing resources for Historiana since it began, had to be addressed by the project team:

1. *How to choose topics:* Since controversial issues are only controversial in specific societal contexts, the project team faced the challenge of picking topics that were relevant in more than one country. To solve this problem, it returned to the thematic approach that had already shaped Historiana and decided upon four overarching themes, for which two to four case studies per theme were developed. Three of the chosen themes corresponded with clusters of topics that had been identified as controversial in a survey of European history educators conducted in 2018 as part of the needs assessment (Christophe & Tribukait, 2019, p. 4f.): (1) 'Borders' addresses a central aspect of (historical) national conflicts that was frequently mentioned by participants (see also Carretero, 2017); (2) 'People on the move' takes up the topic of migration that was the contemporary political issue most often mentioned; (3) 'Surviving under pressure' deals with the historical experience of totalitarian regimes, the Holocaust or wars in the twentieth century that were also frequently referred to as controversial. (4) The last theme 'Cultural Heritage' represents a different approach; it focused on street names, monuments, and buildings which often involve one of the aforementioned themes. These themes provide a framework for lessons that represent different types of controversial issues (cf. Council of Europe, 2015, p. 14): while border disputes often present long-standing issues in which teachers need to challenge students' deep-rooted beliefs, the main challenge with contemporary political

[10] The Project partners were: M. Dempsey and A. Malone (Maynooth University), H. Snelson (University of York), B. Christophe and M. Tribukait (Georg Eckert Institute), M. Šuica and L. Šuica (Education for the twenty-first century).

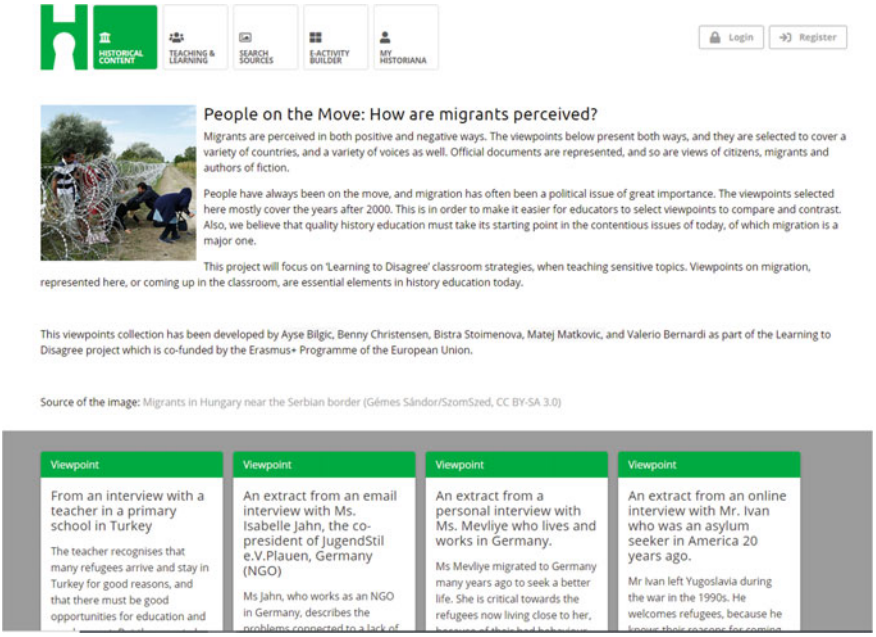

Image 5 An example of a viewpoint on Historiana

questions such as migration is rather the lack of up-to-date information and adequate resources; as for experiences related to totalitarian regimes, the Holocaust or wars, teachers need to consider the sensitivity of the issues and enhance their students' empathy but also their understanding of the complexities of the events (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2019).

2. *How to teach a topic with a transnational perspective*: As mentioned above, a thematic structuring of historical content often goes hand in hand with a case study approach that can, to a greater or lesser extent, be the basis for a comparison (Stradling, 2001, p. 27). This can be illustrated by the theme 'People on the move', which includes a collection of viewpoints on the question 'How are migrants perceived?'. The lesson plan 'Can immigration be seen in both negative and positive ways?' uses the Danish case to explore a question that is posed in many European societies. Firstly, students are tasked with collecting images and opinions relating to refugees in their own society which they should group according to the media from which they were taken and then examine; secondly, they should analyse two letters written to the editor of a Danish newspaper that present opposing opinions and then apply the results to their own country; thus, students are encouraged to reflect on their own stereotypes and those of others in two countries. A stronger transnational comparative approach is chosen in the lesson plan 'How similar are refugees' stories over time?' which deals with the experiences of refugees from different parts of the world who have entered various

countries, e.g. a Bosnian refugee who went to Slovenia in 1994, an Iraqi refugee who went to the UK in 2012, or an African refugee who went to Italy around 2012. Consistent with migration as a global phenomenon, the lesson moves away from national frameworks and focuses instead on individual agency and suffering in similar situations in order to encourage empathy. Students are tasked to read and comprehend a refugee's story in small groups and then stage a panel discussion with some students playing the refugees' roles while the other students listen and analyse similarities and differences in the refugees' experiences.

While the issue of migration proved to be well suited to a transnational perspective, comparative approaches were more difficult to apply to the themes 'Borders' and 'Surviving under Pressure'. For the borders theme, case studies of conflicts in Catalonia, Northern Ireland, Crimea and Kosovo were compiled and several levels of comparison—self-determination versus imperial rule, democratic procedures such as referendums, nationalism and diversity, violation of human rights, violation of international law—were identified. However, as each case already displayed a high degree of complexity the project group refrained from designing a comparative lesson plan—thus repeating the editors' experience with the historical themes approach. Even though a direct comparison was not realised, the collection of case studies still enables teachers from conflict regions to work with their students on a similar but different case. This can make students think about the conflict at home with more analytical distance, which may be helpful when talking openly about the conflict that involves social, emotional, and cognitive risks for students (King, 2009, p. 230f.).

3. *How to create source collections with multiple perspectives*: The idea of the project is to allow a high degree of multiperspectivity and to tolerate viewpoints that are not one's own but, as one focus group participant put it, 'we should be careful not to accept everything'. History educators agree that historical accounts can be judged by their empirical, narrative and ethical plausibility (Rüsen, 2008). In practice, it is, however, not that easy to decide which kind of viewpoints can be presented to students and which should be excluded. In the Crimean case study, for example, the project team underscored that viewpoints have to be based on facts because students are unable to deconstruct false claims in this context which meant, for example, that all *Russia Today* sources had to be excluded. This however carries the risk that students who regularly watch *Russia Today* at home would not contribute to the discussion because they would assume that only a Western viewpoint is likely to be tolerated (cf. Barton & McCully, 2007; McCully, 2005). The way out of this dilemma was to collect nuanced viewpoints from both the Ukrainian and Russian sides and eventually convey the message that there is more political diversity on both sides than external spectators expect at first sight (cf. Barton & McCully, 2007; Hess, 2009). This was also a way of dealing with the difficulty of finding 'authentic' voices of 'ordinary people' in the media of an autocratic system where people may be afraid to speak their mind, especially in a tense situation of violent conflict such as in Crimea following the Russian invasion. Here it should be considered that multiperspective approaches to history are always challenging since few people from the past have left behind

> sources. It is therefore always important not to lose sight of this lack of voices when constructing stories about the past (Bergmann, 2000).

The objective of the Learning to Disagree project was to rethink and enhance multiperspective and transnational history education at a time when these approaches were increasingly encountering resistance in European societies. A few lessons could be learnt from the project: (1) First, the decision to focus on classroom discussions and not on online tools for source analysis reflected the fact that controversial issues cannot be dealt with by relying on disciplinary thinking alone. (2) Some themes could be successfully developed with a transnational approach and fine-tuned into working lesson plans thanks to the rich experience of the EuroClio community but this approach remains difficult, though desirable, for other controversial issues that are closely tied to a specific societal context. (3) The focus on controversial issues forces us to think more deeply about the limits of multiperspectivity, which are theoretically agreed upon among history educators but have to be tailored to each controversial issue—and also to each classroom—in practice.

Conclusions

The exploration of Historiana's development has given insights into the challenges and opportunities of promoting history education that is multiperspective, inclusive and transnational through digital means. The development of Historiana presents an instructive contribution to the debate about multiperspective and transnational history education because (1) it brings in the perspective of an international NGO which contrasts with the view of commercial national producer of educational material and (2) it has used early on a participatory approach which is about to become more mainstream in education research and practice.

Through our work on Historiana, we the authors—as a manager of and a contributor to Historiana, respectively—have learned that multiperspective and transnational teaching approaches are crucial to further develop history education in pluralistic, interconnected, and also polarised societies, but have to be adapted to the political and societal contexts of every classroom. The direct involvement of a transnational community of history teachers in the process of conception and design, the different perspectives concerning historical content, teaching approaches, and societal contexts from across the continent could be taken into account. Thanks to this participatory approach, teachers could bring in their own angles and needs, for example that learning resources need to be easy to use, that they need to be able to review the answers given by students, that they want to give feedback, etc.

We have also learned that different educators have different needs and preferences. Some expect ready to use teaching and learning ideas, others are looking for historical sources that they are not yet familiar with or historical information that is easy to access and reliable. To meet all these needs, Historiana has to offer choices. As a result, it now presents different types of resources: Case studies, viewpoints,

timelines, learning activities, and digital tools. In all cases, educators prefer to have resources that are adaptable and shareable. Historiana also offers learning activities that can be done online and offline. Regardless of all these efforts, it is important to realise that only those educators who are willing to make the effort to find and adapt resources to the needs of their students will use them.

For the development of historical content, the multiperspective approach helped to take a first step away from 'official' national histories by looking at the life of ordinary and marginalised people and thus enable student to perceive diversity in past societies. In terms of transnationality, we realise that nations are important levels of comparison, but need better ways to facilitate this online. We have used multistranded timelines and animated maps to present history in a transnational way, but need a good way of comparing and connecting different stories.

For the development of digital tools, Historiana promotes key aspects of historical thinking—such as comparing, connecting, highlighting, analysing and questioning—as a starting point for their development. We found that in order to support complex thinking, it is helpful to put these activities in a sequence. It is also important that the design is intuitive and easy to use and to reserve time and resources to make improvements after user research.

The process through which these needs were translated into a functioning product turned out to be a steep learning curve. In order to pool the knowledge and experience of experts in history education and experts in concept, design, and development, user research with sketches, prototypes, and mock content proved to be the most promising way to bridge both worlds and develop an online resource that can be used in practice. A key factor in this process is the long-term commitment of EuroClio to further develop Historiana. EuroClio is developing Historiana as a way to implement its mission and uses this process as a way to enable cross-border cooperation between its members. It has now worked on Historiana for over a decade and there are still things to improve. This commitment, of EuroClio, and its partners, Webtic and Use Media, is also needed to cover the costs of maintenance (to ensure the site continues to work) and to build and support a community of users.

It is important for EuroClio to work further on development, because the reasons why EuroClio started the project, have not changed. Diversity has only increased; historical knowledge is still fragmented and diversified; young people still need to learn how to acquire and assess historical information at school, on the internet and elsewhere; and efforts to reassert national identity through history, heritage and citizenship education still need to be countered. With the revival of nationalism, we find it especially important to open up alternative transnational perspectives. We are encouraged by the fact that the concept of multiperspectivity has gained prominence in history education and is now established in many curricula across Europe (Tribukait et al., 2017; Wansink et al., 2018), but are concerned that it is not always implemented in practice. In order to for this to happen, flexible curricula, and opportunities for continued professional development and assessment that support these approaches are needed.

Educators are increasingly searching for resources that they can use online and more of them are developing and sharing resources online. The same is true for

publishers of educational resources, such as archives, museums, and libraries. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated these trends. In response to this, EuroClio will enable more people and organisations to share resources via Historiana, make it easy to make and publish translations and adaptions, and focus on better means of curation and quality control. EuroClio considers the fact that educators have limited time, and realise that in order for them to use resources, they need to be able to find what they need quickly. For this it is planned to enable users to browse, filter, sort resources, and provide overviews of the resources that are there.

At present, the development team is working on a more flexible, less linear way of creating, combining, and presenting content. This should make it easier to compare case studies, to show that something is part of long-term development, that something happening at the same time as something else, and to present ideas to teach and learn with the content that users are reading. In parallel, a support page where teachers can find inspiring examples of the use of the digital tools and resources will be created.

It is encouraging that Historiana is increasingly able to meet the demands of history teachers working under different conditions by using a variety of formats. In terms of promoting Historiana in future, it is also promising that EuroClio has been able to involve more organisations in the development process. To date, relatively small but international teams of committed historians and history educators have worked on the development. Now that the platform is maturing, the plan is to focus more on user research, providing opportunities for professional development, and enabling partners to create content in different languages.

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Leveraging Intercultural Social Media-Type Platforms to Promote Historical Consciousness and Historical Understanding Among Young People: Exploring Opportunities and Challenges

Liz Dawes Duraisingh

Abstract How might we promote the development of young people's historical consciousness and historical understanding by taking advantage of contemporary digital tools such as social media-type platforms? This chapter explores some of the opportunities and challenges involved in intercultural digital exchange programs which enable students to learn both with and from one another in ways that draw directly on their individual experiences, observations, and perspectives. While exploratory in nature, it draws specifically on data from the *Stories of Human Migration* curriculum offered by Out of Eden Learn—a program and design-based research project designed to promote thoughtful intercultural inquiry and exchange among diverse youth. It is argued that besides promoting student engagement, such platforms can help young people to (1) develop more nuanced historical understanding of a topic of enduring and contemporary significance; (2) situate their own lives within a broader context than their immediate lived experience; and (3) develop greater critical awareness, including an awareness of the ways in which their own perspectives are shaped by cultural and historical forces. The case is made that learning opportunities mediated by such platforms open up a host of interesting questions for the field of history education and could usefully supplement other teaching approaches.

Below, the conceptual background to this work is provided. The Out of Eden Learn program and research methods are then described. The findings, which follow, should be viewed as more of a mapping out of observed learning possibilities than specific results or program outcomes. Challenges and puzzles are then discussed, as well as potential avenues for further research.

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Conceptual Background

This section addresses various relevant areas of practice and research: research into young people's understanding of history and the related phenomenon of historical consciousness; the developmental needs of adolescents; intercultural digital exchange programs; the concept of intercultural competence; and the topic of human migration.

Young People's Historical Understanding

For decades, many history education experts (e.g., Lee, 2005; Lévesque, 2008; Wineburg, 2001), have pushed for a rigorous, inquiry-based approach to history education—one which fosters an understanding of history in a disciplinary sense, such as the ability to interpret historical sources or develop complex historical explanations. Related research in the cognitive psychology tradition has studied the development of young people's understanding, including what they find difficult or counterintuitive about "thinking historically" and the tacit second-order ideas that underpin how they interpret the past or construct explanations. Researchers have shown that young people often fail, for instance, to consider the constructed or contested nature of historical accounts and the complex interaction between structural forces and individual human volition in terms of how events or phenomena unfold (Barton, 2008; Lee, 2005). Lee and Shemilt (2003, 2004, 2009) and Blow (2011) have mapped out how young people's meta-historical reasoning can develop over time, thereby allowing them to overcome "epistemological and methodological dead ends" (Seixas, 2004, p. 105), such as the idea that all accounts of the past are as good as one another.

Meanwhile, a different research strand has adopted a socio-cultural approach to call for history education that takes better account of young people's identities and perspectives on the past, as well as how history is used in wider society (Barton, 2009). This research has examined the role of dominant cultural narratives in terms of shaping young people's perspectives on the past (Barton, 2001), including prevailing national or other group narratives. It is suggested below that well-designed learning opportunities on a social media-type platform can offer students a powerful demonstration of the constructed nature of knowledge—both historical and otherwise—and, potentially, how their own perspective on the world is influenced by various factors including their geographic location, the communities to which they belong, their life experiences to date, and even prevailing cultural and political narratives.

Historical Consciousness

Historical consciousness is fundamentally about how as humans we orient ourselves in time and relate our own lives to the past and future: what theorist Jorn Rüsen calls "historical identity" (1993, p. 68). Historical consciousness encompasses historical understanding but also goes beyond it because of its concern with individual and societal orientation. Clark and Peck (2019), citing Rüsen, describe it as referring "both to the ways people orient themselves in time, and how they are bound by the historical and cultural contexts which shape their sense of temporality and collective memory." It is suggested below that a program like Out of Eden Learn offers young people opportunities to actively consider or situate themselves within broader historical narratives as well as grapple with the ways in which their own and others' orientation to the past have been shaped by cultural and historical contexts. Furthermore, it could help expand the purview of historical consciousness, as typically conceived. Recent scholarship has called for the concept to be decoupled from national narratives and Western ethnocentrism (Grant & Rogers, 2019). An intercultural social media-type platform can be one way to sidestep the constraints of exclusionary national history narratives: on Out of Eden Learn students are invited to share stories and perspectives of their own choosing and they rarely showcase official national narratives, even if associated progressive narrative templates (Wertsch, 2004) may be implicit in stories about family or community.

The Developmental Needs of Adolescent Learners

The research from which this chapter draws involved teenage students—that is, people in a life phase when issues of identity are of preeminent importance (Erikson, 1968; Nakkula & Toshalis, 2006) and they are developing an integrated sense of self and a new capacity to consider their lives as an overall "story" (Harter, 1999; McAdams, 2003). In societies where they are expected to develop greater autonomy, they are likely to be concerned with aspects of their identities including race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and/or professional or occupational identity—even if some of this work is now being postponed due to the challenges and demands of our contemporary, globalized context (Arnett, 2004). The learning design at the heart of this study was intended to promote participants' understanding of the topic of human migration while also providing a venue for exploring their own identities and lives through interaction with diverse peers (Dawes Duraisingh et al., 2018).

Intercultural Digital Exchange Platforms

Technological advances and a demand for educational opportunities that help prepare young people for a complex, globalized world (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Gaudelli, 2016), have led to opportunities for school-aged students to engage virtually with one another from around the world (e.g., e-Twinning, Global Cities, Global Nomads, iEARN). Since adolescents are developmentally primed to be interested in their peers (Steinberg, 2014), students are naturally excited to engage in authentic conversations that allow them to expand their knowledge of different people and places (Lee & Markey, 2014; O'Dowd, 2007), especially via formats that resemble familiar social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or Weibo. Such platforms also foster an intrinsic motivation to learn because the unpredictability of peer-to-peer interactions among students living in different parts of the world allows for a great deal of surprise and novelty (Oudeyer et al., 2016).

Popular social media venues are unlikely by themselves, however, to foster meaningful learning experiences with regards to history. First, the echo chamber effect is well documented (Pariser, 2011; Zuckerman, 2013). That is, despite the promise of greater connectivity, people of all ages are inclined to seek out people similar to themselves and may not encounter a wide variety of perspectives or life experiences online. Second, there can be a lack of moral sensitivity and respectful curiosity in online spaces (James, 2014), a situation that is exacerbated when public rhetoric about migration, for instance, is stereotype-laden and provocative. As described below, Out of Eden Learn attempts to leverage the learning potential of social media-type platforms while mitigating some of the limitations and challenges of social media norms.

Intercultural Competence

Meanwhile, proponents of intercultural or global education advocate for the promotion of intercultural competence among young people—an arguably vital capacity in our interconnected yet divided world. Various frameworks highlight cognitive and affective dimensions such as openness to and curiosity about other cultures, greater awareness of one's own culture, and an ability to communicate sensitively with people from different backgrounds (Deardorff, 2011). Importantly, the concept of *inter*cultural exchange implies learning about one's own culture at the same time as learning about someone else's (Bennett, 2009), with possible implications for promoting historical understanding and historical consciousness. Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching, for example, emphasizes critical cultural awareness or *savoir s'engager*—that is, the ability to interpret explicit or implicit perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures. This attention to the importance of situating oneself culturally (and linguistically) presumably includes a consideration of the historical dimensions of culture

and serves an orienting function comparable to that of individual historical consciousness, including awareness of the influence of culture on how we view the world. The curriculum in this study invited students to negotiate multiple perspectives on human migration in ways compatible with the critical awareness goals embedded in Byram's model.

The Topic of Human Migration

Migration, a constant feature of our overarching human story, is of considerable contemporary relevance. Despite its complexity, it is often dealt with rather narrowly in public discourse with a focus on extraordinary stories of adversity (Marlowe, 2018) or the criminality of undocumented migrants (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). More subtly, academics and journalists may focus on individual narratives at the expense of broader structural forces, thereby exaggerating the degree to which migrants are in charge of their own destinies (ibid.). Accounts can also oversimplify migration at the individual psychological level, overlooking the richness or hybridity of migrants' experiences, identities, or aspirations (Dryden-Peterson, 2017; Knight, 2011). Introducing students to the complexity of this topic can enhance their historical understanding and help them orient themselves in the present. Meanwhile, the topic lends itself to a Big History approach—that is, the transcendence of national historical narratives and the shifting of historical scale from the macro to the micro (Bain, this volume).

Materials and Methods

Design-based Research

Design-based research in education builds on existing knowledge and research to create promising learning conditions and then iteratively improve on the design. Meanwhile, tools and theory can be generated from these "laboratories" by looking at what learners choose to do and say, in ways that account for the real-world complexity and messiness of learning (Sandoval & Bell, 2004; The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). The program and curriculum at the center of this study—Out of Eden Learn's *Stories of Human Migration*—draws on constructivist, learner-centered education principles (Blythe, 1998; Tishman et al., 1993). That is, learners are seen to actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive it, and productive learning environments are viewed as ones in which they are invited to develop their own ideas through various modalities. At the same time, the curriculum was influenced by research related to progression in historical understanding (Ashby et al., 2005; Lee & Shemilt, 2003, 2004) in terms of envisaging what a nuanced understanding of

migration could look like, and how students might interpret different accounts. Nevertheless, this chapter explores learning possibilities that stray beyond the primary intention of the curriculum, which was to promote thoughtful intercultural inquiry and exchange among diverse youth and engage them around the timely contemporary topic of migration.

Study Background: Out of Eden Learn

The *Stories of Human Migration* curriculum was developed as part of a bigger project called Out of Eden Learn (https://learn.outofedenwalk.com), a collaboration with writer and National Geographic Explorer Paul Salopek whose Out of Eden Walk project retraces the migratory pathways of our human ancestors (https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/out-of-eden-walk/). The curriculum brought together teenage youth from around the world to learn both with and from each other about human migration, free of charge. They were encouraged to think about migration expansively and in ways related to their own lives, whether or not they considered themselves to be migrants. Numerous sources, including pieces by Salopek and firsthand accounts by migrants, were also woven into the curriculum. At the time the data were collected, the curriculum asked young people to listen to and then recount the migration stories of family or friends; take slow walks in their neighborhoods, paying particular attention to visible and invisible borders; analyze contrasting media representations of migrants and migration; and create resources to help newcomers navigate their local communities. Using pseudonyms, they posted their work on a password-protected platform for their assigned learning group and read and commented on one another's work. The curriculum therefore combined low-technology activities that invited students to engage with their communities and a social media-type format that promoted constructivist approaches to learning.

This curriculum was offered as part of a broader effort to promote thoughtful intercultural inquiry and exchange among young people. In all Out of Eden Learn curricula, participants are invited to slow down to observe the world carefully and listen attentively to others; exchange stories and perspectives with one another; and connect their own lives to bigger human stories. Consistent with these goals, the Out of Eden Learn Dialogue Toolkit (Kreikemeier & James, 2018) encourages young people to listen and respond thoughtfully to one other. At the time of writing this curriculum is still offered but has been updated. For example, the prompts have been tweaked to promote greater reflection and critical awareness; different resources are included; and the Dialogue Toolkit now includes three new tools to encourage critical conversations.

Sample

This chapter builds on previous analysis aimed at understanding how social media-type platforms might enhance young people's understanding of and engagement with the topic of migration (Dawes Duraisingh et al., 2018); additional analysis was then conducted using the same data set. The sample consisted of all work and comments from two study groups, as posted by 140 teenage students located in Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and the United States, all participating in the program via regular classroom instruction. Detailed demographic data were not collected to protect student identities. However, they were known to be situated in a variety of public and private institutions—some demographically quite homogeneous and others more racially and ethnically diverse—and variously enrolled in English language, history, journalism, and photography classes. 65 post-survey responses were also analyzed. The survey questions included ones that asked participants what they thought they had learned about human migration; if particular interactions with other participants had felt important; and what they thought was challenging about learning about migration.

Data Analysis

In the initial qualitative analysis conducted by Dawes Duraisingh et al. (2018), 50 pieces of work were first coded abductively by hand (Deterding & Waters, 2021). That is, the coding was informed by a constructivist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) while also taking into account the curriculum goals and design. Emergent themes were consolidated by the team into a codebook and applied to the entire data set using Dedoose software. Over several rounds of coding, ten initial coding categories were consolidated into three: curiosity and engagement, nuanced understanding, and critical awareness. The authors then recoded the data according to the revised categories and established consistency in coding.

For the purposes of this chapter, the author reviewed the coded data set through the lens of her previous work on young people's historical understanding and historical consciousness (Duraisingh, 2012). While some of the earlier analysis was relevant, particularly with regard to nuanced understanding and critical awareness, she also identified ways in which young people related their own lives to the past or drew connections between past, present, and/or future.

Observations

This section outlines some of the learning opportunities observed on the platform as they relate to historical understanding and historical consciousness; challenges and limitations are also discussed.

Opportunity #1: Developing a More Nuanced Understanding of Migration Past and Present

History textbooks necessarily tend to skim over or generalize about what a phenomenon or event actually meant to individual people. A social media-type platform enables students to peruse a wide range of historical and contemporary migration stories generated by peers who are situated in different geographic and cultural locations, enabling students to grapple with the diversity and complexity of migration experiences as well as the interplay between human volition and structural forces beyond individual control.

In the following extract, for example, a student recounts how her parents moved from China to Singapore seeking economic opportunities and then from a *kampong* or village with limited facilities into public housing.

> *Personally, I feel that migration brings about many changes - psychologically and physically. For example, in my story map, you are able to see how the migration impacted my mother. However, this is not representative of all the migrants. For example, I have been researching about rural-urban migration in China and India recently, and though the migration does allow for more job opportunities, it does have many downsides and impacts on the person and the country.*

Her accompanying story map showed the multifaceted nature of her mother's experience. She is also careful not to overgeneralize, emphasizing that her mother is "not representative of all the migrants" and pointing to the general difference between rural–urban migration and transnational migration and the fact that not all migration stories result in overall positive outcomes for individuals.

Some students offered detailed accounts of individual migration stories which offered glimpses into the complexity and sheer variety of individual experiences. For instance, one student wrote about a man originally from the Caribbean now living in Maine who entered the United States via Canada in order to join his brother and seek out a more prosperous future for himself. As a black man he experienced significant bureaucratic hurdles and racism within the local community before finding an internship and eventually qualifying as a welder. He has two children and is now prospering and at home in his community, periodically visiting his place of birth but with no intention of returning there permanently. Another student recounted his family's migration story over several generations. His Chinese ancestors moved to the island of Borneo after being defeated by a rival clan in China; they remained in Borneo for five generations. The student's grandfather, a carpenter, met a woman

from Hong Kong and moved to a different town to set up a market. The student's father, the eldest of three siblings, moved to the island of Java to pursue an education and after marrying, settled in the city where the student now lives. Here, in condensed fashion, we see various forces at play over time: displacement because of conflict; strategic migration in pursuit of economic and educational opportunities; and the wildcard of falling in love.

Students exhibited a great deal of interest in the kinds of stories that were posted by their peers on the platform, often asking for more details. Many of their questions were concerned with the psychological experience or impact of migration. For example, one student wrote, "Since life was so difficult here in Singapore, do you know why your grandmother wanted to move here in the first place? What were the specific pull/push factors that made her migrate here? Did she expect that she will face these difficulties in Singapore?" These questions suggest that the student is grappling with the complexity of the specific situation including the interplay of individual motivation and forces beyond an individual's control. Students tended to be particularly interested in contemporary migration stories of their peers in ways that suggested that they were eager to learn about life experiences and to anticipate how they themselves might navigate upcoming life transitions. One student noted to another "we should keep in mind that migrants are not just migrants, they are unique individuals with different backgrounds, mindsets, and character. Thus, we should take time to understand them a bit more, which would also help enrich our learning experience"—pointing both to the educational value and moral imperative of learning about other people's stories and perspectives.

Opportunity # 2: Situating One's Own Life in a Broader Context

While a social media-type learning platform like Out of Eden Learn helps young people to understand the sheer variety of migration experiences, it at the same time cultivates a sense of the interconnectedness and commonality of human experience. It can also shed light on the seamlessness between the past and present and help young people to situate their own lives, identities, and values within a broader landscape than their own immediate lived experiences. Previous research found that students do different things when they make connections between their own lives and the past: *analyzing* to help explain why they are living the life they are living or why society is as it is; *identifying* to understand their inheritance or background, the generation they belong to, or their place in history; and *valuing* to state who they admire, life lessons they have learned, or what they think is right or wrong about the past. They also make different narrative connections between their own life stories and history, such as situating themselves at the confluence of unfolding historical narratives; tethering their own story to that of a larger group—be that humanity writ

large or smaller groups; and historically contextualizing their own or their family's story (Duraisingh, 2012). These kinds of moves were evident in the students' posts.

The *Stories of Human Migration* curriculum defined migration in expansive terms, presenting it as an intrinsic aspect of the overall story of humanity. Several students reflected on the universality of the phenomenon: "Everyone has a migration story, even if you haven't moved from place to place." Others spoke about broadening their understanding of the concept to include local as well as international migrations and to consider migration as a psychological phenomenon as well as one of physical movement. The activity which invited students to explore visible and invisible borders in their everyday surroundings prompted students to ponder commonalities in human experiences that went beyond migration per se. One student wrote: "For me, my own border is the sky. Take a look at your sky, look and think of what lies beyond those barriers that protects us from the vacuum spaces, Radiation, and the vastness of dark, scary scenery…". The student here speaks directly to his peers—"Take a look at your sky"—invoking the commonality of human existence and shared planet. His post goes on, like several others, to reflect a sense of belonging to a generation that will be adversely impacted by the actions of previous generations related to the environment. At the time of writing the world is in the midst of the COVID19 pandemic; unsurprisingly, currently participating students are pointing to new pandemic-related boundaries and restrictions of movement as well as ways in which the pandemic is creating a shared human experience—a narrative that transcends local or national borders.

Issues of identity came up frequently among students. One student responded to a post in which another student described how her family came from different parts of India to reside in Mumbai. She commented rather wistfully: "It looks so beautiful there. I like the story of how your family traveled. It's rather intriguing. I wish I knew my families own story of how they got to America. We have Irish decent and that's all anyone knows." Students also commented on who they admired and why, and what they learned from these role models. Grandparents were often written about with great love and admiration. One student wrote about her Yiayia, an immigrant to the United States from Greece who lost her parents as a teenager and migrated "in pursuit of a better life for herself." She raised two daughters on her own, supporting them as a seamstress. Her granddaughter concludes "She is the strongest woman I know and if it wasn't for her, our family in America would never exist." Here the student draws on the narrative of the American Dream, a relatively common trope among participants located in the United States. Students sometimes extrapolated broader values by which to live from the stories they read. One student, offering advice to her peers, distilled the following lesson from an article: "She expresses a bigger universal message that is important to remember just on a daily basis, regardless if you're going through displacement. Which is to stay true to who you are, and to not conform to others social acceptances of what's ok."

Some students commented on the ways in which this learning experience contrasted with more typical school-based ones. One student, for instance, commented enthusiastically on a student's post about her mother's migration from Albania to the United States during the Cold War: "This is a very interesting story,

and it is very well written. I think it's fascinating to hear a story that I may not have from just learning history in school. I also think that it's great how your mother held on to those traditions to pass down to you. Great job!" In return, the student replied: "thank you! there are a lot of immigrants with interesting stories that are lost because no one shares them, the traditions remind us where she is from, I feel that it is an important part of my life." Here we see two major themes at play. First, there is the sense that there are important histories or stories to be uncovered outside of official versions of the past, including ones that transcend national borders and help us to understand the present. Second, there is a sense of the importance of maintaining traditions and identity—something that was frequently picked up on by students, who at this phase of their life are naturally concerned with issues of who they are and how they fit into the world more generally. It is also worth noting that while students appreciated hearing others' stories they also appreciated having the chance to share their own.

A few students made explicit historical connections to explain or analyze the contemporary situation. For instance, several compared the Trump administration's stance toward migrants to the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany, whether or not historians would view this analogy as appropriate.

> *Migration in the media has been a very big topic recently for both large American political parties (Democratic - Republican) I think the large conservative bias media like (FOX News) is dehumanizing the refugees. By making people afraid that they are terrorists. I think the media should show what they are escaping from because than it will show that the refugees today are similar to the refugees escaping Nazi Germany in the past.*

Here we see students engaging with contemporary news events by invoking the past as a means to make a moral argument. Students also made connections between their peers' posts and what they were learning in school. One US-based student commented on a post that described another student's family being forced to flee during the Japanese invasion and occupation of Indonesia during World War 2. "Hi! I find your grandparent's story interesting. It actually kind of relates to what I'm learning in my history class now (Dutch and colonialization)! … How did your grandma's family survive in the forest?" While there is a great deal of unpredictability in the substantive content that comes up on a social media-type platform such as this, the format consistently encourages students to forge connections across different times, places, and experiences and with one another.

Opportunity #3: Developing Greater Critical Awareness

A social media-type platform also offers students opportunities to become more critically aware about how knowledge is constructed and how their own views on migration are influenced by their vantage point in the world and by cultural, political, and economic forces (Dawes Duraisingh et al., 2018).

Some of the critical awareness that was fostered resembled the regular classroom work that history teachers do regarding the evaluation of historical sources. Student

responses varied in ways mapped out by the literature on progression in historical understanding (Lee & Shemilt, 2004). When asked to compare contemporary media sources some students focused on finding out the "truth" and were concerned with the relative accuracy of different accounts as judged by the authors' credentials or the "thoroughness of facts"—not a trivial concern in an age of fake news and the proliferation of dubious online sources (Wineburg, 2018). More sophisticated answers focused on language choice and how different terms for migrants might influence perceptions of them. Some students commented on authorial tone, visual components, and other moves designed to elicit emotions such as sympathy or indignation; they also considered the likely purpose, intended audience, and perspective of authors. In their post surveys, a number of students claimed to be reading the news more critically as a result of the *Stories of Human Migration* curriculum—for example, "I definitely interpret news media differently, I used to be sort of naive when it came to what happens in our world, but now I am much more aware and pay much more attention to what I hear and see." Others showed an awareness of the media's influence. For instance, one student while concurring with another student's opinion about migration also included a question about the degree to which the media might be influencing those opinions: "What is the media doing to either challenge or support your ideas?".

In addition to considering how migration is depicted in the media, students were invited to more broadly consider their own and other people's perspectives on migration. Young people generally embraced the opportunity to learn about different perspectives. One noted in her post survey: "I was able to see different perspectives and other stories that were unique. I was also able to share my own thoughts at the same time. This was a very different experience [to be able to] look at stories through different perspectives of different people." Students also commented frequently to one another about their shifts in perspective or thinking about migration; "Wow I really enjoyed this post! You took this to a unique place that dealt with pressing social issues. I never really considered the negative borders that are around that I can't even see." Others spoke about considering individuals in new ways or realizing their lack of knowledge: "I think about the students who come to our school from other countries much differently. Some of them could have gone through a lot to come here in search of a better life, and I wouldn't even know it."

A few students made statements that indicated they had gained new insights into how one's cultural context can help shape perspective: "I learned a lot about perspectives and that people writing in different parts of the world have different cultural values and that results in them having different perspectives." Meanwhile, another student noted "As a result of my participation in this learning journey, I have begun to make an effort to become less judgemental and more understanding because I, now, have reflected on and realized my bad habit of subconsciously enforcing my own biases on others." Another student acknowledged the limitations presented by one's own life experiences and a tendency to assume that those life experiences are the norm:

> *I think learning about or discussing human migration is challenging because some people might not want to accept that living conditions where other people come from are better or worse than where they live and it might be hard for them to understand that not everyone grew up the same way they did.*

A few students made more meta comments: "rules, norms, and boundaries or the ways in which we move around are culturally generated and our perception of what is normal is shaped by the environments in which we grew up." In a related line of research involving Out of Eden Learn, researchers found that a small number of participants attributed the program with helping them to reflect on their perceptions of different cultures and how those perceptions had been shaped (Dawes Duraisingh et al., 2021).

Challenges

This chapter by no means claims that learning through social media-type formats could substitute for other forms of history education: challenges to learning arise even as new opportunities open up. For example, the very enthusiasm that students show for hearing from diverse peers in authentic ways can lead them to uncritically substitute one "single story" (Adichie, 2009) for another. While the following student shows growth in his understanding of migration, he is arguably switching to a different overarching story even while naming different reasons for migrating: "Now I think differently about migration. Before I thought that people migrate because they wanted but now I think that people migrate because they need it. For example they do it because of war, because of poverty, because they need to get a job, etc."

Other work stemming from the Out of Eden Learn program has identified the "Three O's" (Dawes Duraisingh et al., 2018, 2021): overgeneralization, overconfidence, and othering. Flagrantly offensive statements were mercifully absent in this study. However, the following extract shows the subtle presence of the Three O's and the ways in which they can co-exist: "The two articles tell heart wrenching stories about leaving their war-torn homes and it becomes apparent how migration is a very hard and long process, but worth it when being able to find peace in the end." In some ways this statement is innocuous and even desirable as the student shows concern for migrants; the desire to impose moral meaning is also understandable, especially given her age and developmental need to make sense of the wider world. However, she makes a somewhat sweeping or overgeneralized statement about migration as an experience and sounds overly confident that she now understands what is involved: more cautious or tentative language may have been preferable here, as well as an acknowledgement of the limitations of what one can learn from two sources or of what she currently understands. Furthermore, phrases such as "heart wrenching stories" and "their war-torn homes"—while arguably valid—hint at othering or the student putting distance between herself and the people she describes.

Practical challenges also exist. Convening numerous classes is technically difficult and required Out of Eden Learn to build a customized website from scratch—although individual teachers could presumably partner with one or more counterparts in different locales to create a shared curriculum that leverages student experiences, observations, and perspectives on a given topic. Out of Eden Learn uses asynchronous dialogue to overcome time differences and misaligned school calendars; unfortunately, some classes stop participating, not all posts receive comments, and dialogue threads can tail off. More insidiously, intercultural exchange programs have been critiqued for promoting the status quo and leaving Western assumptions or power differences unchallenged (Gorski, 2008). The fact that this and similar programs often operate in English means that some students are able to share their thoughts and perspectives more fluently than others, even if the language-learning opportunity is appealing. Further, given the norms around regular social media usage, it is not always easy to develop the kind of substantive or critical dialogue among young people that might promote critical awareness or nuanced historical understanding.

Discussion

What might these observations mean for history education in general? First, there are implications around student engagement. Students enjoyed the social media-type format—which is unsurprising given their natural curiosity as teens to learn about their own and other people's identities and lives and the integration of social media in their everyday lives. Students' comments to one another often involved them making connections and asking follow-up questions, reflecting an apparent intrinsic motivation to learn, as well as a desire to reach out to peers. Given the current rapid shift to distance and online learning in light of a global pandemic, teachers may become increasingly inclined to explore new and appealing digital learning formats such as the one designed by Out of Eden Learn.

Second, this format offers opportunities for important substantive learning that relates to both historical understanding and historical consciousness writ large. Many students commented on how much they learned about migration, suggesting that they expanded their repertoire of available migration stories and came to appreciate at least some of the complexity of the phenomenon and its significance in both the past and present. The pedagogic design encouraged them to situate their own lives within a broader historical and geographic context than they might have otherwise, and some students appeared to embrace the potential of the learning experience to gain new insights, for example, into the constructed nature of historical and contemporary knowledge or the complex interplay between structural forces and individual human volition in life experiences. However, deeper epistemological insights seemed to be developed by relatively few students in this study—pointing to the necessity of the guidance of a skilled history teacher and supplementary teaching about the topic at hand for students to get the full benefit of the experience.

Third, the intercultural dimension of Out of Eden Learn opened up options for students to consider their lives in ways that feel apt given the cultural fluidity and hybridity that is a hallmark of this era, despite the rise of nationalism or even nativism in some contexts. Here the synergy between models for intercultural competence such as that of Byram (1997) open up intriguing possibilities for thinking about how the development of young people's understanding of the concept of culture and cultures might implicate the development of their historical consciousness more generally—not only because of the historical dimensions of cultures and their importance for exploring identity, but because the ability to situate oneself culturally arguably involves similar processes to situating oneself historically. Indeed, considering one's own culture relative to those of others is perhaps an important aspect of individual historical consciousness and one that knits together past and present; situating oneself with regard to one's government, or economy may be similarly important. It is worth considering more generally what history educators can strategically learn from other fields including foreign language learning, intercultural communication, and global education.

A host of other questions are raised by this study, especially as the analysis rested on students' online posts, comments, and reflections which represent only partial traces of their thinking or learning: interviews or focus groups could reveal a good deal more. Furthermore, the pedagogic intervention at the heart of this research was not explicitly designed to promote young people's historical understanding or historical consciousness: a tighter design could yield more insight into the potential of social media-type formats for history education, including the degree to which more specific substantive historical understanding might be promoted without losing the emergent, learner-directed benefits of peer-to-peer learning. Meanwhile, more general questions arise about what works best in these kinds of online learning formats. This study involved an intricate platform and curriculum design and it is hard to disentangle the relative importance of various features, including the hard-to-replicate aspect of being associated with a writer walking around the world or the way in which the platform clustered students together. The entire field of intercultural digital exchange is relatively new and under-researched; many questions remain, for example, around issues of accessibility and inclusion, technical aspects such as the impact of the length of programming, the effect of the prevailing use of English in such programs, the role of individual instructors in facilitating learning experiences, and the relative efficacy of specific technological tools or design features (The Stevens Initiative, 2020).

Questions also come up that are less related to the social media-type format. For instance, it is worth considering if learning opportunities that draw on students' everyday experiences and which encourage research skills—such as closely observing a given environment or attentively listening to an interviewee—could be more effectively integrated into history education so that students can generate and exchange some of the material that they work with, thereby making instruction more personally relevant and engaging. It is also worth considering if studying enduring themes like human migration can help young people make explicit connections between the past and present, as well as to navigate the complex contemporary

world; other possible themes might include the relationship between humans and the natural or built environment or human responses to infectious disease. Also, how might teachers harness students' broader developmental needs to explore their own lives, identities, and values to engage them in the study of history and potentially improve their historical understanding and promote historical consciousness? In sum, many questions and uncertainties remain. What seems clearer is that new technologies such as social media-type platforms herald exciting new possibilities in the field of history education, in terms of both practice and research.

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A New Approach to Virtual Reality in History Education: The *Digital Oral Histories for Reconciliation* Project (DOHR)

Lindsay Gibson, Jennifer Roberts-Smith, Kristina R. Llewellyn, Jennifer Llewellyn, with the DOHR Team

Abstract In this chapter we propose a new approach for designing virtual environments (VEs) that has the potential to make important contributions to teaching and learning history. We briefly outline the history of VR and define key terms and concepts. We describe three types of history-focused VEs, digital historical games, 3D historical reconstructions, and interactive storytelling, and discuss the opportunities and challenges they offer for history teaching and learning in terms of learning, accessibility, historical thinking, and historical empathy. In the final section, we describe the *Digital Oral History for Reconciliation* (DOHR) curriculum and virtual learning environment (VLE) that was created to promote relationality and historical empathy. We describe a new approach to designing curriculum-specific VLEs that offers several potential benefits for teaching and learning history and the design of interactive storytelling VLEs.

Keywords History education · Virtual reality · Teaching and learning · Reconciliation · Relationality · Historical thinking · Historical empathy · Oral history · Digital history · Virtual reality design · Difficult history

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More than a decade ago, both Staley (2003) and Allison (2008) argued that virtual reality (VR) technology had already shown its potential to improve how history is taught and learned in classrooms. More recently, Checa and Bustillo (2020) contend that history is one of the most promising knowledge areas for VR. Despite the potential of VR to improve history teaching and learning, Wright-Maley et al. (2018) reminds us that, "as is often the case with prophecies, there have been disappointments and surprises" (p. 603). Over the past two decades history educators have experienced unprecedented access to digital technologies that have fundamentally changed how history is researched, taught, and communicated (Staley, 2014). At the same time, many history educators have been reluctant to adopt digital technologies, perhaps because they have witnessed cycles of techno-romance that accompany the emergence of digital technologies that promise to transform teaching and learning, but often fail to deliver (Hicks et al., 2014).

In this chapter we propose a new approach to the design of virtual environments (VEs) that has the potential to make important contributions to teaching and learning history. We begin by providing a brief outline of the history of VR and defining key terms and concepts. We then describe three types of history-focused VEs, and discuss the opportunities and challenges they offer for history teaching and learning. We conclude by describing the potential benefits of the virtual learning environment (VLE) created for the Digital Oral History for Reconciliation (DOHR) project curriculum.

Virtual Reality and Virtual Learning Environments: Some Key Terms

Attempts to create the illusion of being immersed in a virtual world are not new. Computer scientists first began designing "virtual experiences" in the 1950s (Korbey, 2017). When Jaron Lanier first coined the term "virtual reality" in 1987, VR technology was already being used for educational purposes by the military, aviation, and medical industries to simulate activities that were considered too dangerous or risky to perform with real people or expensive technology (Staley, 2014). By the 2000s VR was considered a "mature technology" and scholars and practitioners in a variety of fields had been touting its benefits for more than twenty years (Spiegel, 2018). Most VEs were displayed on a computer screen, user interaction was controlled by a mouse or joystick, and immersion levels were low (Checa & Bustillo, 2020).

By 2020, the development of new VR head-mounted devices (HMDs), 360-degree video, tactile gloves, motion sensors, increased processing power, and widespread availability of high-speed internet vastly improved the quality of VR experiences (Hasson et al., 2019). Although VR experiences are increasingly realistic, immersive, and interactive, Staley (2014) states that "virtual reality is as much virtual as it is reality" in that no VR systems have been able to make VR indistinguishable from actual experience (p. 98). VR still requires expensive and unwieldy hardware

including processors, projectors, sensors, gloves, and headsets to create "sensory immersion" experiences in virtual environments (Staley, 2014; Watters, 2016).

The term "virtual" has been indiscriminately used to describe a wide range of technology and digital media, which has led to widespread confusion about what VR is (Laurel, 2016; Watters, 2016). VR is generally understood to be an immersive and interactive computer-generated three-dimensional (3D) digital environment designed to create presence in a virtual place or space (Allison, 2008; Staley, 2014). A virtual environment (VE) is a virtual place or space generated using VR. Immersion in a VE is created using sensory stimuli such as images, sounds, haptics (touch), and smells to make the user feel physically present in a non-physical world (Carrozzino & Bergamasco, 2010). "Interactivity" describes the degree to which the virtual environment responds realistically to the actions of a user (Papanastasiou et al., 2019). Immersion and interaction are understood to interact in VEs to generate presence and flow. Presence is the sense of "being there" in a virtual place or space (Heeter, 1992; Lee, 2004; Slater & Usoh, 1993), and flow is the state where users become so immersed in a VE that they are disinterested in other activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Scoresby & Shelton, 2011).

VR and augmented reality (AR) are often confused, and while they share several similarities, they are different. In VR the user's perception of reality is based entirely on computer-generated environments, whereas in AR the user is provided with computer-generated information to enhance their perception of reality (Challenor & Ma, 2019; Yildirim et al., 2018). VR is also different from 360-degree video, which is a two-dimensional (2D) moving image that can be projected onto a 3D sphere in a 3D digital environment, but does not in itself constitute a VE. Google cardboard, which claims to offer "immersive experiences" (Cardboard, n.d.) in VR provides a 360-video experience that creates the illusion of three dimensionality, but features relatively low immersiveness and interactivity.

Virtual Environments in History

Most VEs used in K-12 history classrooms are designed for entertainment, and few are intentionally designed for pedagogical purposes as "virtual learning environments" (VLE) (Fowler, 2015). We use "VE" rather than "VLE" in this chapter to acknowledge that varying purposes VEs used in K-12 history education were originally created for.

Carrozzino and Bergamasco (2010) propose a two-axis model for classifying VEs. On the interaction x-axis VEs are classified by the "naturalness" of the interaction: non-interactive, mediated interaction, and natural interaction. Non-interactive devices that require high levels of mediation, like keyboards, joysticks, and mouses, are located at the left side of the interaction axis, while devices that feature more natural interactions such as speech recognition systems and motion sensors are located on the right side. The immersion y-axis features non-immersive environments (desktop computer and speakers) at the bottom, more immersive invasive

technologies like HMD, headphones, and wearable tactile gloves in the middle, and fully immersive non-invasive environments at the top. Thus, the top right quadrant is the ideal location for VEs because they are immersive, interactive, and more likely to generate presence and flow (Carrozzino & Bergamasco, 2010). Another design factor for improving presence and flow is "representational fidelity," the degree to which a virtual illusion looks, sounds, or feels like physical reality (Bulu, 2012).

Desktop VEs that feature computer programmes that simulate real or imaginary worlds in 3D format on screens are the most cost-effective and accessible VEs, but are limited in terms of presence and flow (Carrozzino & Bergamasco, 2010). More immersive VEs provide users with the illusion that they are inhabiting different environments and bodies through the use of dynamic visual perspective, stereoscopic vision, binaural acoustic feedback, and realistic interaction with the environment using interfaces that manipulate, operate, and control haptic feedback (Spiegel, 2018).

There are three main types of history-focused VEs—digital historical games, 3D historical reconstructions, and interactive storytelling—and each type features a range of VR technology. The most commonly used type of VEs are commercially produced digital historical games designed for user entertainment and typically played with desktop VEs that have low levels of immersion, varying levels of interactivity, and high levels of representational fidelity. Whereas previous generations' perceptions of the past were shaped by radio, film, novels, and television, digital historical games are among the most popular forms of media people use to engage with history in their daily lives, and digital historical games shape many people's conceptions of the past (Chapman, 2016; Staley, 2014). Digital historical games focus on numerous historical themes, geographic locations, and time periods, and there are several gameplay options. There are first-person shooters; strategy games that re-enact historical events; simulator games where users operate different modes of transportation; first-person multiplayer melee combat games; real time strategy games that allow for counterfactual and alternate histories; open-world action-adventure games that explore historic sites; puzzle adventure games that explore different perspectives; and, other genres, themes, and hybrid types (Chapman, 2016). In the last decade, a multidisciplinary group of scholars drawn from diverse fields have created a new field of research focused on "historical game studies" (e.g. Kapell & Elliott, 2013; Kee, 2014b).

The second type of history-focused VEs is 3D reconstructed historical places that feature representations of cities, buildings, and simulations of ancient structures (Schreibman & Papadopoulos, 2019). For Staley (2014), experiencing significant historical sites that are still intact or places that have disappeared are among the most important possibilities afforded by VR technologies. In these types of VEs there is no single goal in mind and participants are invited to move around and interact with the 3D historical place to better understand it (Staley, 2014). 3D reconstructed historical places are usually designed for desktops, immersion is typically low, representational fidelity varies widely, and interactivity is usually limited to exploring the VE. For example, in the *Soweto'76* 3D Interface users move through a 3D reconstructed street in the township of Soweto as it existed prior to the June 16, 1976 student uprisings

against Apartheid (*Soweto'76*, n.d.). VEs that reconstruct historical environments and artifacts that have been destroyed or damaged also play an important role in preserving them for posterity, as a restoration tool, or to perform virtual restorations without negatively affecting the originals (Slater et al., 2018). For example, the *Digital Hadrian's Villa Project* created a 3D digital model of Hadrian's Villa, a World Heritage site in Tivoli, Italy. Some reconstructive VEs also include enactments of historical events that took place in the environments they reconstruct. One of the most sophisticated examples, the *Virtual Paul's Cross Project*, uses surround sound in a physical installation to project a digitally generated impression of the auditory conditions in which John Donne preached in the seventeenth-century yard of St. Paul's Cathedral in London (Wall, n.d.).

In the third type of history-focused VE, interactive storytelling, users enter a VE and revisit important events in a person's life to better understand the person and the time period they lived in (Shin, 2018). They usually feature photo-realistic images of storytellers, immersive displays to create the illusion that the viewer is in the same space as the storyteller, and some degree of interactivity where the storyteller or the virtual space responds to the actions of the user (Kwon, 2019). Over the last decade interactive storytelling has been increasingly used to preserve the voices of marginalized people for educational purposes. These VEs are sites of environmental storytelling where users are immersed in an environment that communicates content, invites users to explore and interact with people and objects in the VE, and stimulates emotions to influence future actions (Kee & Darbyson, 2011; Shin, 2018). Early applications used 360-degree video in what has become known as "immersive journalism" (Baía Reis & Coelho, 2018; de la Peña et al., 2010), but interactivity was limited to witnessing stories. More recent versions have used artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms to add some degree of interactivity to video projections of Holocaust survivors' testimonies in museums. This type of history-focused VE has also attracted more ethical critique than other types (DeJong, 2020; Nash, 2018).

Virtual Environments in History Education

There is a dearth of research focused on the use of VR-based VEs in history education, which makes it difficult to make claims about almost every aspect of VEs in history education, including how often teachers use VEs to teach history, how different types of VEs are being used, and the benefits and challenges of using VEs to teach history. The lack of research is understandable given that newness of VR technology and the time lag between the introduction of new technology, its implementation in classrooms, and researchers' ability to conduct research studies and publish peer-reviewed articles (Bolick, 2017). Most VE research in history education focuses on historical digital games that utilize technologies that are not "virtual" because they feature low levels of immersion and natural interaction and are unlikely to generate presence and flow. All VR technologies, including desktop VR, AR HMDs, or VR HMDs, have inherent affordances and limitations in what they can and cannot do,

but their effectiveness depends on how they are used; or as Constance Steinkuheler puts it: "games, like any other media […] are only as smart as the practices that surround them" (2016, p. 357). Despite these caveats, in the next section we discuss the potential benefits and challenges of using VEs for history teaching and learning as discussed in the scholarly literature.

Potential Benefits and Challenges of VEs for History Education

Learning. VEs are understood to have potential to enrich, enliven, and recreate the past in ways that secondary sources such as textbooks, role-plays, lectures, and videos cannot (McCall, 2012). Scholars commonly agree that VEs contribute to increased motivation, interest, attitudes to learning, and participation in learning activities (Challenor & Ma, 2019; Checa & Bustillo, 2020). Students who are disinterested in history, deterred by lengthy or difficult texts, or struggle academically have displayed increased motivation and positive attitudes towards learning during activities that utilize VEs (Kee & Darbyson, 2011; Shin, 2017). Because immersive VEs generate presence and flow, several studies have found that VEs can increase student learning rates and memory recall, particularly young students (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Scoresby & Shelton, 2011; Yildirim et al., 2018). Another commonly cited benefit of VEs, particularly games and simulations, is that they help students develop the knowledge, abilities, values, and dispositions needed for improved problem solving, creativity, and collaboration (Kee & Darbyson, 2011; Papanastasiou et al., 2019).

Although engaging learners is important, Wright-Maley et al. (2018) contend that engagement is an insufficient rationale for incorporating digital technologies to teach history. Most history VEs are commercially produced digital games designed for "nostalgic entertainment" not education, and may have limited benefits for students' learning (Staley, 2014). If VEs are going to serve a meaningful educational purpose, they must be shown to improve the learning of important historical content and disciplinary processes. Research about the effectiveness of VEs for improving learning is mixed and several studies have reported that learning did not increase (Checa & Bustillo, 2020; Kee & Darbyson, 2011). Furthermore, several studies that reported increased learning took place over a short time period, involved small sample sizes, and featured research design flaws (Papanastasiou et al., 2019). Other studies experienced what Carrozzino and Bergamasco (2010) describe as the "Guggenheim effect," where the appeal of the VE technology distracts from the intended learning goals. For example, Squire's (2004) research found that although students enjoyed playing *Civilizations III*, they made limited progress in historical thinking, and the advances occurred as a result of classroom discussions, not playing the game.

Accessibility. VEs are thought to provide opportunities for students, particularly those with physical or cognitive challenges, to experience historical places in the past

and present that would not typically be available because of issues of time, distance, scale, cost, and safety (Kee & Darbyson, 2011; Yildirim et al., 2018). This includes historical evidence that would otherwise be inaccessible to students including architectural plans, models, photographs, film, maps, paintings, artifacts, and buildings (Bonnett, 2001). VEs are also believed to have considerable potential for preserving and providing access to oral histories of people who experienced significant historical events and time periods (Challenor & Ma, 2019). Although audio, film, and video recordings have been used to preserve oral histories for decades, Shin (2018) argues that VEs have unique potential to engage users with complex historical narratives.

Despite having the potential to make history more accessible for students, VR technology is largely inaccessible for most history teachers and students. Although the cost of VR technology has decreased, widespread usage is still unlikely to occur because the cost of purchasing and maintaining VEs is prohibitive for most schools (Carrozzino & Bergamasco, 2010). Only well-funded schools and cultural institutions have the financial resources and space needed to purchase, maintain, and house VEs (Papanastasiou et al., 2019). VEs also require large amounts of bandwidth to function as immersive environments, and many schools' networks lack the capacity to support multiple VEs at the same time. Also, most VEs are single-user experiences, which limits the possibilities for student collaboration and the number of students who can use them at the same time (Carrozzino & Bergamasco, 2010). Not all students are comfortable wearing HMDs, goggles, sensory gloves, or other technologies and numerous studies have reported that some users experience "cybersickness," including dizziness, motion sickness, headache, sweating, disorientation, vertigo, and nausea when wearing HMDs (Papanastasiou et al., 2019). Spiegel (2018) also raises concerns about the potential risks to users' bodies when using VEs, potential mental health risks including depersonalization disorder, and other moral and social risks. Many history teachers are also reluctant to use VEs because they do not know how to use VR technology, troubleshoot technological problems, maintain equipment, design meaningful learning opportunities, and assess students' learning (Wright-Maley et al., 2018).

Historical Thinking. Historical thinking is the process of analyzing and interpreting historical evidence with the aim of constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing historical narratives (Stipp et al., 2017). At its core, historical thinking eschews the teaching of fixed grand narratives and focuses instead on teaching students to assess, critique, and construct historical accounts and interpretations with increasing sophistication (Kee, 2014a; Seixas & Morton, 2013).

Several scholars have illustrated how VEs can be a powerful tool for teaching epistemological understandings that are foundational for historical thinking (Allison, 2008; Kee, 2014b; Staley, 2014). The past is everything that ever happened and existed anywhere, it no longer exists, and cannot be recreated. History consists of narratives constructed from the analysis of historical evidence that impose coherence on the messiness of the past and make it into history (Bruner, 2005). Like written narratives VEs are abstractions of the past, except they use images, sounds, and interactive affordances in addition to words. Despite the best attempts of VE designers, VEs are imperfect recreations of past events that cannot replicate reality nor make the

past come to life (Slater et al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2017). McCall (2011) discusses the importance of students recognizing that VEs are constructed interpretations of past events and places that need to be analyzed and critiqued like other secondary sources. According to Allison (2008), inviting students to critique the authenticity, accuracy, and realism of VEs, or experience a historical event from different perspectives, has the potential to deepen students' understanding of the past, history, and reality.

A significant body of history education research has conceptualized the structure and form of historical thinking in terms "second-order" historical concepts, which are defined by Lee and Ashby (2000) as ideas that shape our understanding of the discipline as a form of knowledge. In a historical thinking approach, second-order concepts such as historical significance, cause and consequence, evidence, progress and decline, and historical empathy are taught with first-order concepts, facts, and generalizations to deepen students' knowledge of substantive content and how historical knowledge is constructed. Kee and Darbyson (2011) and Wright-Maley et al. (2018) illustrate how digital historical games have been used to support the teaching and learning of second-order historical thinking concepts included in Seixas' (2006) framework. Both authors describe how learning activities that approach VEs as constructed narratives have been used to teach about five historical thinking concepts included in Seixas' framework: historical significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, and historical perspectives, but they do not discuss the ethical dimension.

Historical Empathy. VR technology has been referred to as an "empathy machine," and one of the most frequently cited benefits of using VEs in education is that they can stimulate empathy (Alsever, 2015). Empathy is the ability to cognitively understand and affectively respond to what another person is feeling or experiencing by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation. Through the process described as "embodiment" VE designers attempt to provide users with the sensation of having the experience and seeing themselves as part of the VE (Shin, 2018; Slater et al., 2018). Hasson et al. (2019) argue that different methods of embodiment, including inviting users to experience a VE from another person's perspective, provide VEs with "almost limitless potential to simulate reality from different perspectives" in ways that cannot be done in the real world (p. 2). Some studies have shown that immersing users in another person or group's experience, including refugees or those with physical or cognitive challenges, can reduce negative attitudes, increase empathy, and promote cooperative behaviour (Hasson et al., 2019; Shin, 2018).

History education scholars have defined and conceptualized historical empathy, analyzed student examples of it, and identified effective pedagogical methods and strategies for promoting it (Ashby & Lee, 1987; Endacott, 2010; Foster & Yeager, 1998). Historical empathy is a second-order historical thinking concept defined as, "the process of students' cognitive and affective engagement with historical figures to better understand and contextualize their lived experiences, decisions, or actions"

(Endacott & Brooks, 2013, p. 41). Endacott and Brooks (2013) theorize historical empathy as including three interdependent aspects: historical contextualization, perspective taking, and affective connection. None of these aspects encourage learners to imagine themselves to be "in" the past, nor to experience events or emotions exactly as they were felt by historical actors. Instead, the goal is to understand and contextualize the lived experiences, decisions, and actions of people that lived in a time that was often much different than the present.

History-focused VEs provide generative opportunities for developing students' historical empathy because they invite students to enter and inhabit a historical VE, interact with different historical actors, explore different interpretations of historical events, and understand different perspectives (Schultzke, 2013; Staley, 2014). Challenor and Ma (2019) suggest that VEs can enhance learning of emotionally complex topics such as the Holocaust because they require students to consider multiple perspectives to understand what happened, how it happened, and what the consequences of events were for people who experienced them. Teachers and students often forget that people in the past lived and operated in different physical, spatial, and intellectual contexts, and VEs can generate understanding of these contexts in ways that other types of secondary sources cannot (McCall, 2011). Experiencing historical places through different cultural and ethnic perspectives can also help students understand why certain groups have different historical memories and affiliations with particular places. Chang et al. (2015) refer to this as a "sense of place," which they define as "the combination of feelings of attachment, dependence, concern, identity, and belonging that people develop regarding a place" (p. 166).

Given the historical realism of some VEs, there is also the potential that users will uncritically accept them as reality, rather than as constructed narratives (Gratch, 2018; Sullivan et al., 2017; Wall, 2014). All sensory experiences, including sound, touch, taste, and sight are historically and culturally generated ways of knowing (Smith, 2007). Even if VE designers could replicate sensory experiences from the past, it would be impossible to determine what those sensory experiences meant to the people who experienced them. Due to technological limitations and gaps in the evidentiary record, even the most realistic VEs cannot replicate sensory experiences, and haptic interfaces that simulate touch are still in early stages of development (MacLean et al., 2017). No matter how realistic VEs appear to be, users need to be reminded that the past cannot be brought to life and VEs are reproductions of the past. We agree with Staley who suggests the following sign be attached to all VEs: "This is not the past. It is a useful device for thinking about the past" (p. 127).

As Allison (2008) points out, advanced technologies like VR do not solve all the problems history educators face, and often raise new issues that are difficult to overcome. VEs offer unique and potent opportunities for teaching and learning history, but they also raise significant challenges including lack of accessibility for teachers and students and how to design and use VEs to support the development of historical thinking. In the final section, we describe the *Digital Oral History for Reconciliation* (DOHR) curriculum and VE, and describe a new approach for designing curriculum-specific VLEs.

The Digital Oral Histories for Reconciliation (DOHR) Project

The Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children (NSHCC) was a segregated care institution for African Nova Scotian children in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia from 1921 until the early 2000s. Generations of residents experienced neglect and abuse throughout the nearly eight decades it was in operation (Province of Nova Scotia, 2019). Following a seventeen-year struggle for justice by former NHSCC residents, the Government of Nova Scotia established a four-year Restorative Inquiry (RI) into the history and legacy of the NSHCC. The Government of Nova Scotia "recognized that the history, experience, and legacy of the Home reflects the systemic and institutionalized racism that has shaped Nova Scotia's history and continues to impact the lives and experiences of African Nova Scotians to this day" (Province of Nova Scotia, 2019, p. 3). The RI was "future focused, yet concerned with getting a comprehensive understanding of the past in order to know how to move forward toward a just future" (Province of Nova Scotia, 2019, p. 26).

DOHR is a community-driven research project that brought former NSHCC residents, representatives from the Nova Scotia education system, and members of the RI together with artists and researchers from seven Canadian universities to develop a two-week grade 11 Canadian History curriculum unit that supports the RI's educational mandate. In October 2019 the two-week curriculum was piloted in two Grade 11 Canadian history classes in Nova Scotia high schools.

The curriculum focuses on deepening students' understanding of the history of the NSHCC within the larger context of African Nova Scotian history. The first-voice experiences of three former NSHCC residents, Gerry Morrison, Tony Smith, and Tracy Dorrington-Skinner, are centred in the curriculum, and students are invited to join the former residents in a "Journey to Light" that sheds light on what happened in the past in order to find a way to a better future (Province of Nova Scotia, 2019, p. 5). The overall purpose of the curriculum is to promote relationality—to equip students with tools to understand their relationship to difficult historical knowledge, to the lived experiences of historical actors, and to the future of their communities (J. J. Llewellyn, 2012). The DOHR team integrated theories drawn from various fields including restorative approaches to learning, historical thinking, oral history, difficult history, Africentric principles, and culturally relevant pedagogy when designing the curriculum (Epstein & Peck, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Llewellyn & Llewellyn, 2015; Llewellyn & Ng-A-Fook, 2020; Seixas, 2017).

The five-lesson curriculum was designed to be completed in ten 80-minute classes. Lesson 1 invites students to join former NSHCC residents in their journey to light, and introduces the goals of the curriculum and key curriculum concepts. In Lesson 2 students are introduced to significant events in African Nova Scotian history and use two historical thinking concepts, historical significance and continuity and change, to contextualize the history of the NSHCC. Lesson 3 focuses on analyzing different types of historical evidence, including VR oral histories in the DOHR VLE, to make plausible inferences about residents' quality of life at the NSHCC. In Lesson 4

students examine and assess the interrelated factors that caused the NSHCC to become a place of harm. In Lesson 5 students share their learning and develop a "restorative plan" that builds just relations in their communities.

The DOHR Virtual Learning Environment[1]

DOHR used a VLE to render oral histories of former NSHCC residents to make their stories accessible to students, and to relieve the former residents of repeated in-person storytelling (Roberts-Smith et al., Forthcoming). The DOHR VLE is a 13–15-minute individual and small group learning activity embedded in Lesson 3. A trained facilitator introduces groups of four students to the DOHR VLE, and helps students put on a VR HMD at one of the four individual VLE stations. The experience begins with a short, documentary-like 360-degree video segment that introduces the three storytellers, Smith, Morrison, and Dorrington-Skinner. Students then choose one oral history from each storyteller (three stories total) out of twelve possible stories. The twelve oral histories are rendered in a multi-modal blend of 3D graphics, 360 and 2D video, 2D images, environmental and spatially located sound, voice-over narrative, and text. Students then experience the same short sequence in which the three storytellers reflect together about their memories of one common room in the NSHCC. Lastly, students witness another 360-degree, documentary-like video in which the storytellers, without the use of voice-over, describe how they came to be activists. After students remove their HMDs, the facilitator leads a short restorative "sharing circle" where students debrief their experience and share their learning.

Given the unique pedagogical aims of the DOHR curriculum, including promoting relationality and historical thinking, we utilized a distinctive approach to designing the VLE. While our VLE falls into the category of interactive storytelling, we have taken a different approach to the definitional VR concepts of immersion, interactivity, and representational fidelity in our rendering of a three-dimensional (3D) digital environment. Like most VR-based VEs, we aimed to create a sense of presence; however, rather than give participants the illusion that they are "actually there," we want them to be aware that they are witnessing a story being told by another person that they might not have access to otherwise. We use the term *relational presence* to describe this form of presence (Roberts-Smith et al., Forthcoming).

The goal of creating relational presence has had several consequences for the DOHR VLE design. Although we want students to understand what it was like to live in the NSHCC, we did not attempt to create representational fidelity in our renderings. Instead, we portray the NHSCC using a multi-modal, impressionist aesthetic that

[1] The DOHR VR experience was designed using the principles of "co-design" articulated in the work of Steen (2013), whereby stakeholders are actively involved throughout the design process and afterwards. The full citation for the DOHR VR experience can be found in the reference list under Roberts-Smith et al. (2019).

reinforces the former residents' oral histories. We want to make it clear that the world the students are encountering represents what the place means for storytellers and learners rather than an exact simulation of how it looked (Roberts-Smith et al., Forthcoming). Although our renderings might be considered high-fidelity from an aesthetic perspective, they do not aim for the kind of realism expected in a traditional understanding of representational fidelity (see Fig. 1).

Because the project emphasized the importance of students witnessing former NSHCC residents' oral histories, we limited interactivity in the VLE to providing students with the option to choose which stories from the three former residents they want to experience. This is not to suggest that listening to the oral histories is inactive or passive; rather, like Low and Sonntag (2015), we conceptualize listening as a learning process that builds relations between storyteller and listener (Roberts-Smith et al., forthcoming 2020). Although the DOHR VLE is delivered using the Oculus Rift

Fig. 1 Screen captures showing three different approaches to multi-modal impressionist rendering in excerpts from Morrison's story, "Swamp Water" (top left); Dorrington-Skinner's story, "Mrs. Johnson's Helper" (top right); and Smith's story, "The Switch" (bottom). See Roberts-Smith et al. (2019)

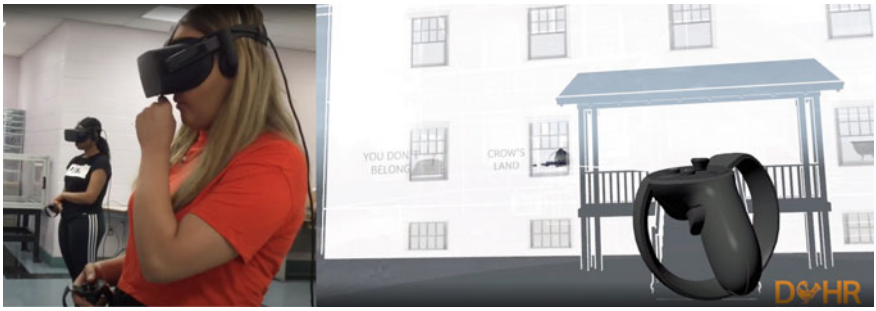

Fig. 2 The DOHR VLE is delivered using the Oculus Rift VR HMD (left). The in-world story selection mechanism uses an avatar of the actual hand-held controller to emphasize the constructedness of the experience

we deliberately preserved the low-level immersiveness of the Oculus hand-controller as a reminder to learners that the DOHR VR experience is constructed. There are no anthropomorphic avatars in our VLE, and no attempt is made to generate a sense of virtual "embodiment" by creating roles or characters for learners to assume. Instead of creating virtual representations of storyteller or student, we make space for each to occupy their own, actual-world perspectives. For storytellers, this means their oral histories are told using their voices, and for learners, it means witnessing the stories as students, not in roles (Roberts-Smith et al., Forthcoming; see Fig. 2).

Similarly, the DOHR curriculum's pre- and post-experience learning activities challenge the traditional understanding of immersion by emphasizing that the VLE is not a complete experience in itself. Whereas traditional VLEs generate the kind of flow where students are fully engaged in their learning task and feel a sense of enjoyment while participating in the VLE, experiencing difficult knowledge in the former residents' stories can lead to affective dissonance and discomfort. We hope that this productive discomfort will prompt questions to be further investigated in the curriculum. How could this have happened? Why didn't I know about this before? What is my responsibility to respond now that I have heard these stories? (Roberts-Smith et al., Forthcoming).

Conclusion

We think the notion of relational presence as we applied it to the design of the DOHR VLE offers several potential benefits for teaching and learning history, and for the design of interactive storytelling VEs. While this approach to VLE design will not be relevant to all history-focused VEs, it offers a different way of thinking about VE design principles like immersion, interactivity, and representational fidelity, which might transfer to other contexts. The DOHR VLE represents a powerful means of preserving the oral histories of marginalized people and presenting them in a way

that builds relationality, a sense of place, and historical empathy. Since most students cannot interact with the former NSHCC residents or visit the NSHCC directly, the DOHR VLE exemplifies the kind of experiential learning that is likely to benefit from a VE (Dalgarno & Lee, 2010).

Additionally, scholars have demonstrated how witnessing oral histories builds relational connections that are intergenerational and support reconciliation (K. R. Llewellyn & Ng-A-Fook, 2017). In this way, the DOHR VLE is an instructional tool that can be used to propel learners towards deeper engagement with difficult history and the ethical dimension of historical thinking. Epstein and Peck (2018) define difficult history as "historical narratives and other forms (learning standards, curricular frameworks) that incorporate contested, painful and/or violent events into regional, national or global accounts of the past" (p. 1). For Seixas and Morton (2013) the ethical dimension imbues the study of history with meaning, expands students' historical consciousness by helping them learn from ethical transgressions in the past, encourages them to judge the past more fairly, and supports them in better handling present and future ethical dilemmas.

The DOHR VLE has yet to be validated with empirical research, however, researchers have conducted a study of the curriculum, including the VLE experience, and are currently analyzing the data. Preliminary results suggest that students experienced a strong sense of flow, acquired new historical knowledge about the NSHCC and African Nova Scotians, and built a sense of relationality to former NSHCC residents. Further data analysis will focus on assessing the degree to which the VR experience and the curriculum met its objectives, including improving students' ability to build more just relations.

Given the scarcity of research focused on VEs in history education, there are many fertile areas for future study. Research focused on how VEs are embedded in classroom-based curricula is most urgent. To date, most VE research has focused on digital historical games, but research is needed that investigates the opportunities and challenges that different VE types offer for teaching history. Designers have given the technical design of stand-alone VEs most of their attention, but the field has not yet applied pedagogical design practices to VEs (Fowler, 2015). One of the significant advantages of considering VEs in the context of a blended in-person and virtual curriculum design is that it avoids technological determinism, where virtual experiences are "considered both a product and an outcome of technology" rather than an outcome of the ways designers manipulated the technologies (Baía Reis & Coelho, 2018, p. 1093). Envisioning VE as one learning activity in the context of a larger curriculum makes the technology secondary, and emphasizes the agency of educators to design and use the VE in ways that best serve their students and their pedagogical purposes.

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Digital Scenarios for Colonial Tensions

‘It Isn’t About Who Was Worse’: Colonialism and Historical Debate on Social Media

Everardo Perez-Manjarrez

Abstract How do young people discuss history online? What is at stake for them when they engage in debating colonial heritage? This chapter reports on the ways in which young people debate controversial history on social media platforms. Typically, is taken for granted that youth navigates digital environments with a clear understanding of the content and social relations available therein. However, research shows that they are underprepared to deal with the misleading narratives that are ubiquitous on the social web. In this sense, training youths to scrutinize historical narratives and civic discourses has been keen research interest in history education. Yet, how they explain history in interaction with others has yet to explore as it is usually in this way that the sense-making of history occurs in digital environments. Herein is presented a qualitative analysis of three representative online historical debates on Facebook, out of fifteen examined, in which twenty-one young participants with culturally diverse backgrounds participated. The debates deal with the 2017 remarks from Spain’s public television chief Jose Antonio Sanchez, who justified the sixteenth-century Hispanic colonization of the Americas at a keynote public lecture. The findings show three types of approaches to historical debates: mirror talk, battle talk, and persuasive talk. The participants engage with the debate considering different focuses: historical violence, historical actors, and/or historical context; these focuses determine to some extent if they debate history from one single perspective or take different angles to discuss the issue. Finally, the implications of these three types of historical debate for youth civic engagement and historical understanding are discussed.

Keywords Historical debate · Social media · History education · Controversial issues · Historical dialogue

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In recent years, by mid-October, the commemoration in many countries of the so-called 'discovery of America' (e.g., 'Columbus Day') ignites a massive range of heated discussions on social media. People all over the world share their opinions about this issue on social media expressing what they allegedly know about it, along with political stands, moral judgments, and misjudgments of the past. In these cases, historical explanations come with claims of animosity toward, sympathy for, or compliance with the colonial heritage of Christopher Columbus' arrival in what is now known as the Americas. This is an unprecedented phenomenon with significant consequences on how societies relate to the past and discuss it, resulting from the technological advances of the last decades (Collins & Halverson, 2009). It also raises the questions on whether or not social media reshapes the discussion on colonialism and its sociohistorical implications, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of these digital platforms to debate contested historical events are the present chapter explores these issues by analyzing the ways in which historical discussion unfolds on social media and its implications for history education.

Nowadays, people are exposed to a great volume of historical information on digital platforms, in contrast to what they can get in formal settings such as schools or museums (Kelly, 2016; Wright & Viens, 2017). This has made it easier to reach more historical information and gain knowledge about different cultural productions and interpretations of the past (Carretero, Berger & Grever, 2017; de Groot, 2016). Consumption of history has then become more diversified and 'virtual' real life has turned people's relations with history more complex (Maggioni & Fox, 2020). Digital platforms have expanded people's scope of historical interpretations and have given them more agency. Now, more than ever, people express their thoughts, concerns, and commitments on digital platforms more fluently than in offline environments (Bennett, Maton & Kervin, 2008). However, research exploring people's digital consumption of history has drawn attention to evidence of bias in historical explanations and misinformation available on the internet, and the related challenges and drawbacks to historical literacy and historical dialogue this entails (Haydn & Ribbens, 2017; Wineburg, 2018).

This chapter presents the analysis of the reactions and cross swords on social media about the 2017 public speech of executive Jose Antonio Sanchez, president of RTVE, Spain's state-owned public radio and television corporation. The defense of colonialism and the analogy between the Aztecs with the Nazis in his speech immediately caused outrage and confrontation. This is an exemplary case of how colonialism is still a central issue on the international agenda and how societies have failed in preparing people to deal with both its legacy and consequences. Recent international research shows the permanent goal of recreating the colonial narrative in school history content as well as the difficulty and discomfort among youths to understand and debate it (Carretero & Perez-Manjarrez, 2019; Van Nieuwenhuyse & Pires Valentim, 2018). The problematic legacy of colonialism is not only evident in

formal education settings but in different social practices such as commemorations and recently on social media platforms; however, fewer studies have paid attention to youths' sense-making of colonial pasts in these new digital environments (Carretero, Wagoner & Perez-Manjarrez, 2022). This study seeks to bridge this gap, as well as to explore the new challenges and opportunities it involves.

History Education in the Age of Social Media

In the last years, studies have shown that social media has become a primary learning environment for young people (Gardner & Davis, 2013). Social media stands out within the social web in putting them in the forefront, expanding and transforming the ways by which they communicate and relate to each other. But social media has also become a new battleground for 'cultural wars' and polarization. Civic and history education studies have pointed out the challenges of debating historical controversies (Hess & McAvoy, 2014; Kello, 2016). In social media, young people are exposed to seemingly contesting historical narratives that hinder healthy debate and fruitful dialogue (Haydn & Ribbens, 2017). Studies in this field are still emerging and particularly historical debate has been little studied. Most research on history education and digital platforms mainly focuses on the consumption of historical content on the internet (Wineburg, 2018).

Young people navigate a complex paradox in social media platforms: they have an inexhaustible source of information about any topic of interest; but, contrastingly, the relation with the truth, what is accurate and trustworthy, has never been as contested as it is today (Wineburg, 2018). Studies have shown that social media platforms are flooded with many misleading and unverified narratives which amplify disinformation and polarization (Buckingham, 2019; Lewandowsky, Ecker & Cook, 2017). Research shows that youths in different countries find it difficult to evaluate the quality of information they read on the internet. Therefore, they tend to perceive as credible information that is misleading if not directly false (Haydn & Counsel, 2004; Haydn & Ribbens, 2017; Wineburg, 2018). This has two major implications: the internalization of misrepresentations of history, and the uninformed consumption of historical content that can lead to non-prosocial attitudes toward current contemporary social controversies with strong historical roots (Haydn & Ribbens, 2017).

Against this background, there are initiatives providing technical education to history teachers, aiming to equip them with the tools to introduce online learning in the classroom and handle these predicaments (Heafner, Harshorne & Petty, 2014). This type of proposal has improved teachers' performance and skills but has brought little evidence of its efficacy on the young people's improvement in dealing with historical content and dynamics on the internet (Ikejiri, Oura, Fushikida, Anzai & Yamauchi, 2018). Some researchers on history education have tackled these problems by tapping into models of historical thinking. They argue that mastering the conceptual constructs and skills of historical thinking will permit individuals to

assess historical evidence to discriminate between interpretations and misjudgments of history (Wineburg, 2018). Significant advancements have been conducted especially on source verification, teaching young people to identify and assess historical contents on digital platforms (McGrew, Breakstone, Ortega, Smith &Wineburg, 2018).

However, the accuracy of the source is not the only problem. Historical thinking development involves more than a cluster of cognitive skills as it is also related to identity, ethical, social, and cultural dimensions (Carretero & Perez-Manjarrez, 2022). The attitudes that people hold toward digital historical content, and the symbolic load it has on itself, have important effects on how they make sense of it and engage in conversations with others about it (McGrew et al., 2018). The ability to disentangle this web of meanings within online content (accuracy, morality, identity load) in relation to the context (cultural worldview and value systems) is fundamental, as it is crucial to understand the motivations and intentions to debate this content with others. In the last years, scholars have explored the processes by which young people make sense of history from the approach of peer-to-peer interaction (Barton & McCully, 2010). Showing the advantages of learning through dialogue and debate and the need to explore further to understand this practice that is essential in social media interactions.

History Education Through Debate

Public discussion of history is a social act generally embraced by people that generates different reactions and outcomes, from common awareness of public concerns, achievement of social consensus, to exacerbating polarized contested views and irreconcilable disagreement. Yet, despite widespread social interest and involvement in public debate, excitement about the discussion of historical issues in the classroom is somewhat static or even absent (Clark, 2009). Up until recently, debating as a teaching mechanism or historical concept to advance people's historical thinking has not been considered as fundamental. There are some implicit references to debate as a relevant environment or skill to develop historical thinking. For instance, the emphasis on making different historical perspectives available to learners to foster perspective-taking has been a recurrent claim in historical thinking models (Seixas, 2017). However, this has been mainly related to enhancing individual perspective-taking instead of promoting joint learning and open discussion.

In the last years, incipient initiatives in history education and debate have emerged with promising results. Scholars have approached existing school history curriculums from the lens of debate, concluding that the design of conventional history education, at least in the cases of the US and other developed countries, hampers historical debate (Clark, 2009; Stearns, 2010). The structure and design of school history fail in connecting students with the significance of history, and with the public concerns and discussions in society around the common past. In contrast, debate can bridge this gap by promoting 'critical historical engagement' (Clark, 2009). In this respect, others

have advocated for the use of public hot topics and troubled pasts, such as colonialism, colonial legacy, and historic territorial disputes, to boost the interests of students, their historical thinking skills, and help them tackle social conversation around history (Kello, 2016; Malloy, Kelly,Scales, Menickelli & Scales, 2020; Thompson & Cole, 2003).

On a par with this diagnosis, testing of the feasibility of historical debate has been conducted. Based on the assumption that debates enhance the student's engagement with the past and historical thinking, scholars have tested different types of historical debates and their effects (Ellis & Vincent, 2020; MacArthur, Ferretti & Okolo, 2002; Osborne, 2005). Among all, in view of Ellis and Vincent (2020) the structured controversy format is the most successful as it equips students with the cognitive skills to face difficult conversations. Researchers' findings suggest that an effective historical debate is one that, on the one hand, helps students understand the construction of historical narratives, the historian's method—mainly scrutiny of primary sources—and the forms and discussions in historiography (Ellis & Vincent, 2020; Osborne, 2005). On the other hand, a successful debate promotes high levels of engagement and equal participation, and a collective reflection of societies' past, value systems as well as, on a personal level, a reflection on one's own beliefs and civic identity (MacArthur et al., 2002). In short, a debate 'dramatizes and vitalizes the challenge of constructing historical knowledge' (Ellis & Vincent, 2020: 209) at a time that fosters authentic historical learning and ethical development (Osborne, 2005).

Despite these initial advances, the road ahead is long and not without challenges. If individual tasks of historical thinking are difficult for students, peer-to-peer activities entail a major effort and skills. Findings show that people's accurate use of evidence is variable and developing solid-based historical arguments is complicated (Malloy et al., 2020). Participants find it difficult to interact beyond dichotomous arguments and discussions, and even more, do not tend to demand evidence from other persons to sustain their claims (MacArthur et al., 2002). Also, they had troubled finding the differences between perspectives of the past and the present about specific events. In terms of historical empathy, they also tend to judge people from the past and believe that the past is something to overcome, which inhibits significant debate (Jensen, 2008). At last, the challenges for conducting effective historical debate turn it more difficult for digital environments where debates aren't guided and supervised, and control and verification of content are absent as in experimental or school settings. In social media, the above benefits and limitations grow exponentially, and it takes new research to understand how people face historical debates on these platforms.

Study

The main objective of this study is to analyze the type of approaches people take to historical debates on social media. A case study is made of the 2017 remarks from Spain's public television chief, Jose Antonio Sanchez, at a keynote lecture on Spanish history, and the reactions these remarks caused among people on digital platforms.

Antonio Sanchez's speech elaborates on two key standpoints: Firstly, the statement affirming that 'Spain' was not a colonizing empire, but it brought civilization to the indigenous peoples of the Americans.[1] And secondly, the statement undermining the violence caused by the Hispanic colonization, based on the equivalency between the Aztec Empire to the Nazi regime during World War II as two historical agents that do not merit further consideration.[2] These claims made by this TV executive caused special outrage on social media. A few weeks after his speech, several historians[3] refuted Sanchez's claims demonstrating that his speech was inaccurate and anachronistic, his use of historiographical sources was deceitful, and that his speech intended to bolster a nationalistic and political agenda. This type of historical speech is an exemplary case of the biased historical narratives circulating on social media, spreading misinformation, historical prejudices, and polarization.

The analysis was conducted with Facebook data collected in 2019. This digital platform has proven effective and functional as a platform providing rich data for academic research (Sheeran & Cummings, 2018). Its format and structure facilitate rich debates and foster the exchange of opinions, unlike other digital platforms such as *Twitter* which restrict the length of comments and conversations by its limited number of characters. Herein is presented the analysis of a set of informal historical debates that took place on *Facebook* days after the TV executive gave his public speech. This data was collected from the public *Facebook* profile of the independent media '*Remezcla*'.[4] The richness of discussion seen in this profile was relevant in comparison to other state or corporate media profiles examined. This study is part of a broader research project analyzing fifty historical debates collected from social media digital platforms. The relevance in analyzing this type of informal debate is that, as these are not being monitored and systematically conducted in controlled environments, they foster freer, authentic, and spontaneous interactions among people.[5] Informal debates can tell us about how people tackle socially relevant historical issues and handle interactions with others to make sense of the past, which is not easily achievable in formal settings such as schools.

This chapter presents the analysis of fifteen cases of historical debates on *Facebook*. From this analysis, three types of approaches to historical debates were identified. An in-depth analysis of three representative cases of the fifteen debates is

[1] His exact phrase was: '*Spain was never a colonizer; it sought to evangelize and civilize. How on earth can we be ashamed of flooding the American territory with schools and churches?*'.

[2] His exact phrase was: '*Mourning the disappearance of the Aztec Empire is like feeling sorry for the defeat of the Nazis in World War II*'.

[3] Four history experts criticize controversial comments by RTVE head José Antonio Sánchez. https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2017/04/07/inenglish/1491561652_009421.html.

[4] *Remezcla* is a Latinx grassroots independent media project based in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, NYC, USA, focused on Latinx mainstream culture and counterculture. It does not receive any government or corporate funding and has its own independent editorial policy.

[5] The administrators of the independent Media profile *Remezcla* confirmed that all comments and opinions shared in the post about Sanchez's speech were reviewed according to Facebook guidelines of respect and non-discriminatory, racist, sexist or any type of violence. The data used in this chapter was not censored or edited by the administrators or the author of this study. https://bit.ly/3MeFNlv.

presented here to better explain the characteristics of the three types of historical debates found. The data analyzed is exemplary of the types of debates observed on social media and of the very culturally diverse people participating in them. Twenty-one individuals participated in these debates ranging from years 21 to 25, ten women and eleven men. Fifteen participants identify themselves as part of the Latinx community in the US (born and raised in the USA in Latino families) mostly from the American west coast. Of these fifteen Latinx participants, seven identify themselves as women, six as men, and one as non-binary. Four more participants identify themselves as White Americans, three men and one woman from the east coast. And finally, two more women participants identify themselves as Mexican–American (Individuals with Latino heritage and/or Mexican family born and raised in Mexico). They all have high school studies and four of them were studying for a degree at the moment of the debate. All the participants gave authorization for data usage via a consent request distributed among them. The participants' names presented in this study are not real since they wanted to keep their personal information private, as well as their specific location.

Data were analyzed using narrative analysis in line with the qualitative methodology previously conducted to examine adolescents' meaning-making of historical controversies (Perez-Manjarrez, 2017, 2019). The analysis was conducted on all the participants' narratives and interactions. It focused on the debates' dynamics, type of interactions and the goals, intention, and functionality underlying these interactions. This analysis was divided into two stages. First, the participants' interactions and intentions of getting involved in the debate were analyzed. The participants present certain arguments to complete specific actions. Three main actions were found in the participants interactions and were used to categorize the debates. Firstly, there was confirmation, which is seen when the participants engage to ratify a specific argument and validate a judgment made about the historical event. Secondly, confrontation was analyzed, which was visible when the participants got involved in challenging or opposing an argument and undermining certain beliefs or ethical issues related to the event. And thirdly, was persuasion, which entails engaging in the debate to present an argument appealing enough to convince other of its validity and positive ethical valuation.

Secondly, the analysis centered on the type of historical perspectives and historical assessment in the participants' narratives. The Historical perspective was coded considering the elements, topics, and angles they use to explain the event. Three main trends were identified in this code: (a) focus on historical violence, (b) focus on historical characters' actions; and (c) historical context and characters' intentions. The coding of historical assessment was based on the type and level of discussion they consider to discuss about the issue. Three main trends were identified in this code: (a) Single discussion: they assess the event considering one dimension of it; (b) Dichotomic-oriented discussion: they assess the event from comparisons mainly considering two dimensions, for instance, historical characters and the relationship of past and present; and (c) Context-driven discussion: they assess the event taking into account more than two dimensions, contextualizing historical characters actions,

intentions, causes, and historical context. Overall, these two stages of analysis allow categorization of the three types of historical debates presented as follows.

Approaches to Historical Debates on Social Media: Mirror Talk, Battle Talk, and Persuasive Talk

Mirror Talk

This approach to debate is characterized by the resolute confirmation of one historical claim about the issue in question by all the participants. The debate is sparked by a person's straightforward argument, mainly grounded on snap judgments and strong historical claims against, or in favor of the principal stand or viewpoint generating the discussion. This argument is backed by others with supporting messages, emotional reactions, and adding information sustaining it. In this sense, this approach makes debate top-down oriented. In this study, eight out of fifteen debates were led by this approach, which makes it the most common in the sample. The debate led by Sofia Sanchez is exemplary of this approach. She compares and equates both cultures: Aztecs might seem savages, but the Conquistadors were as violent as they are or even more. Then peers share and confirm his point with their own opinions:

- *Yes, the Aztecs practiced human sacrifices, but what would you call the burning of people and many other forms of torture that the "Santa Inquisición"* (Spanish Holy Inquisition) *practiced? Don't you try to go above us with this BS. If we are going to take this route, your ancestors were just as savage* Sofia Sanchez
- *Nothing in history is more savage than a disgusting European* Erika Nom
- *I think all humans are savages. We just like to believe that others are worse.* Roberto Hernandez
- *Sofia Sanchez, Getting burned at the stake wasn't even the worst. Try being drawn and quartered, being crammed into an iron maiden, or being impaled on a Judas cradle.* Jason
- *Yeah....euros* (Europeans) *top everyone* Erika Nom
- *Aztecs believed blood was life and the upmost sacred offering to the gods, yes bloody I know... But they also were incredible architect's n astronomers n not to mention warriors. So please, don't compare the culture to some racist fool's.* Donovan Smith
- *World history in one sentence: THESE WHITE MEN ARE DANGEROUS* Juan Lopez
- *The Aztecs didn't willing plan and then systematically execute a genocide... the Nazis did, the Spanish did back in the day and then other colonialist powers completed the task. So yeah... Aztecs aren't the problem here...* Lillie Va len cia

From this type of approach, the debate is taken from one perspective and situated in one level of discussion. The participants focus on the historical characters 'nature'

and the comparison between their actions and implications. The debate is framed into one single dimension, warfare, and violence, overlooking other historical approaches. They argue on the moral assessment of the colonization of America, especially on who is more violent and therefore who is to blame. The possible intentions of the TV executive in delivering this speech are also overshadowed. At first sight, the mirror talk approach may appear too simplistic as all the participants seem to solely agree with the counter-argument. Yet, some interactions identified in this debate make it less univocal than it appears to be. While some participants just back the main counter-argument, others elaborate on this claim by bringing in new information that strengthens it, as in the case of Jason delving into the Spanish Holy Inquisition torture techniques. Also, from the basis of the counter-argument main idea, other participants build on their own arguments and forms of historical comparison to confront the TV executive's historical argument. In the end, they all take a stand for the Aztecs and against the TV executive's unsuitable comparison. Sofia's arguments resonate with all those involved, but the interactions do not go unilateral as some of the participants express their own thoughts and take their own stands to engage with the debate.

Battle Talk

This type of approach is characterized by the confrontation of argumentative lines and beliefs. There is a back and forth between conflicting views which makes this approach very antagonistic. These conflicting views are based on strong beliefs and conceptions about the history and resolute judgments toward historical agents. Interactions turn defensive, adversarial, and sometimes aggressive as it seems that there is not a true intention of coming to an agreement but to demonstrate who is right and what the truth is. The debate is triggered by a person's strong historical claim against or in favor of the TV executive's speech. This approach was observed in five out of fifteen debates in this study, and it can be clearly seen in the debate sparked by George Gray's comment. George's argument, complex and contradictory in itself, is very compelling for some people as it is repellent to others. He first denies the assumed well-intended Spaniards who just sought to bring civilization to the Aztecs, clarifying that at the same moment they were persecuting and torturing Jews in Europe. Then he makes a nuance stating that no culture in those times was especially peaceful, neither in the Americas nor in Europe. But ultimately, he ends up backing the Spaniards' colonization as a good outcome for the Aztecs as no better will this culture would have without it. People then argue against or in favor of George's and the TV executive's claims:

- *He forgets that at nearly the same time in Spain, the Spanish were exiting a period of fairly brutal theocracy. Jews were being slaughtered, tortured and expelled for their religion, and people were being executed by being thrown out of windows. Few cultures in the 1400s–1600s was particularly kind, neither the Aztecs nor in*

Europe. Were it not for the conquest, who knows how that civilization would have developed. George Gray

- *Ohhh the innocent Jews! People ignore the ritual murders they did on Christian children. Look up St. Simon of Trent*. Luis Bravo
- *The Aztecs had deities that were very human, the Nazis just had a book by an insane guy who blamed the Jews (who they saw as rats) on everything. Their conquest by Spain was quite different than Stalin's troops marching into Berlin (neither Spain nor the Aztecs were as brutal as either of them). Anyhow, look at Mexico now, you cannot say that the conquest brought good things for them* Guillermo
- *Of course! both the Spanish and the Aztecs were pretty brutal conquerors, but at the end Spain won. Spain might give them civilization, OK, but Mexicans screwed this up. You can see now all that violence they have gone through... Mexico is a third world country and needs to be civilized back again!* Martin Acosta
- *Well the Nazis were a political party and the Aztecs a civilization. Germany wasn't conquered—the Aztecs were. Implying that humans are bad by nature and colonization is the only way out is as false as irresponsible. There is human progress in history and examples of people rejecting dictatorships and building democracies. You cannot simply justify colonization by no means, punk!* Rafael Silva
- *How are the Aztecs any different from the Romans? Ruthless conquerors! The same the Spanish and Nazis. Aztecs deserved it. He is damned right, humans do not deserve any better, we are by nature evil*. Jorge Ruiz

From this approach, debates tend to be driven by dichotomous reactions toward the main historical claim and toward the other peers' assessment of the historical event. The dominant perspective is on the historical characters' assumed 'nature' and their comparison. What is worth noting is from what levels of discussion people participate in the debate. They tend to position themselves, and criticize others' arguments, considering different dimensions mainly via two levels of discussion: (a) comparing characters: Aztecs *versus* Hispanics, Aztecs *versus* Nazis, or even Aztecs *versus* Hispanics *versus* Nazis; and (b) contrasting contexts: Aztecs' contexts *versus* Hispanics' contexts; colonization context *versus* contemporary context; colonization causes *versus* colonization present-day consequences. They overrule the TV executive's speech, along with each other's arguments, by pointing out: tensions or similarities between Conquistadors' and Aztecs' contexts; suitable or unsustainable comparisons between Aztecs and Conquistadors and/or Nazis; and contrasting the colonization in-time consequences and its consequences in the present. Of special attention is that there is a common trend of morally judging the colonization, and the TV executive's speech, by its perceived current consequences. They are either in favor of or against the speech by the personal assessment they do of the assumed Mexico's present-day situation. As in the mirror talk approach, these participants leave out of their judgments the possible intentions of the TV executive in delivering this speech.

Persuasive Talk

This type of approach is characterized by the interest in convincing others by creating eloquent argumentative lines about the historical issue in question. Participants using this approach display a set of historical information to demonstrate that their conclusion is rationally true. They build fact-based arguments, quote historical references, and attach source material such as specialized newspaper articles, to make their points sustainable and compelling. This type of approach makes debate dynamic: There is an initial persuasive historical argument that switches discussion on, moving toward a constant exchange of viewpoints, fact-checking, and counter-argument. Interactions are not univocal as the participants do not only react and respond to the leading comment, but they engage in animated interactions with cross-references to each other. In some cases, they even convince each other, making themselves test their thoughts and possibly change their opinions. This type of approach was observed in two out of fifteen debates in this study. Bruno de Rosa's point sets off the debate by presenting a well-structured argument about the contrasting nuances of Aztecs' history and warlike nature, explaining the causes and opposing parties involved in the defeat of their empire. He also discusses the present implications of nationalistic interpretations of the Aztecs, which lead people to praise an inaccurate image and distorted heritage of them. Bruno even ends up sarcastically affirming that the true Aztec lineage lives now in Spain. This comment engages many people that take the opportunity to debate and share their angles on the controversy:

- *The Aztecs were no angels, they tried to conquer other tribes, they were even responsible for other tribes going extinct. They also owned slaves, gave up their women to the Spaniards as prices. This is why Amerindian tribes allied with the Spaniards to take down the Aztec empire. People want to romanticize the Aztecs when they were just as brutal as the Spaniards, the only difference is their race. Aztec kings gave up their princesses to the Spaniards, many also fled to Spain LOL The Aztec linage of Moctezuma lives in Spain. (Source attached: 'Lo que nos faltaba. La Duquesa de Alba descendiente de Moctezuma!!')* http://josiemarquez.blogspot.com/2010/10/1o-que-nos-faltaba-la-duguesa-de-alba.html. Bruno de Rosa
- *I don't think it's about defending the Aztecs, but rather calling out a wild example of false equivalency and recognizing the latent white supremacy in Latin American politics.* Bill Smith
- *Bruno, Bill This article really sheds light on many spots. The fact that they were 'greeted' does not mean they were fool savages seeing them as Gods. Historian says they were not passive, they seek for dialogue before thinking in war. Other adds that Spaniards' mission wasn't to evangelize and civilize but to take their lands and to establish a system to exploit and control those cultures. That guy's [the TV executive] mouth is full of sh…lies!* Rita Lopez https://verne.elpais.com/verne/2017/04/06/mexico/1491435975_945457.html.
- Bruno *Meanwhile, at nearly the same time in Spain, Jews were being slaughtered, tortured and expelled for their religion, and people were being executed by being*

thrown out of windows. Few cultures in the 1400s–1600s was particularly kind, neither the Aztecs nor in Europe. Were it not for the conquest, who knows how that civilization would have developed—so stop justifying the extinction of a civilization because it was "just as violent" as the one that extinguished it. George Gray

- *George Gray no one is justifying anything. Aztecs would've either had more indigenous tribes extinct completely like many became thanks to them, or other tribes would have been under Aztec rule, but who knows because the Purepechas defeated them about 2 or 3 times when the Aztecs tried to conquer their lands. And again, yon are not understanding that the Aztec empire fell due to the Amerindian allies that Spain had and one of those allies were the ones who were at war with the Aztecs. Aztecs were in conquered lands, the Otomis were the original people of the land they had conquered for themselves, the Aztecs were originally from mid-America (USA), they migrated down to what we now call Central Mexico, in an area we now call D.F* (Mexico City), *in D.F before the Aztecs, there were the Otomis*. Bruno
- *Bruno you are spot on. It kind of ends up belittling the influence those groups had in Mexican culture.* Martin
- *Bruno. George It isn't about who was worse or all the same. It's his blatant denial of historical facts. He is basically saying that his people did no harm lo those indigenous of the Americas. That is absolutely incorrect and a woefully ignorant and problematic view for a journalist/newsman to have. It is possible for him to use his platform to spread his inaccurate views amongst others and that's dangerous. I like* Violeta Martinez

There are two principal levels of discussion in this type of approach: (1) colonization's causes and circumstances; and (2) accuracy and ethics of the TV executive's speech. In the first level, participants focus on various aspects that may explain why the event unfolded in the ways it occurred. They consider three main perspectives: Historical characters comparison, Aztecs' time, and Aztecs' intentions and actions. Some center on the comparison between Aztecs' and the Conquistadors' circumstances; others underline the importance of understanding the general context and époque of the Aztecs—the role they play in the broader indigenous context, the power relations, and the interplays with other indigenous peoples; while others highlight the historical characters' worldview and intentions underlying the Aztecs' actions. Besides examining the historical event by its parts, some individuals cast doubt on the historical content and intentions of the TV executive's historical argument. This is the case of the second level of discussion, in which participants such as Bill, Rita, and Violeta criticize that the equivalency between Aztecs and Nazis is unsustainable, mainly because historians refute this as anachronistic as it is irresponsible; Violeta points out the danger of spreading this type of misleading narratives and the imprudence of doing it to fulfill a political agenda. Interestingly, from this type of approach, there is less attention to the present-day consequences of colonialism or the relation between past and present.

Participants are prone to use or inquire about source evidence to sustain arguments. They fact-check the TV executive's speech and discuss the pertinence of taking sides against or in favor of the Aztecs. Overall, findings suggest that the participants are concerned about what criteria of truth underlie historical explanations and historical judgments. They also are keen to disclose the historical significance of the issue discussed and are skillful in presenting it convincingly. Bruno's alert about the danger of romanticizing a biased image of the indigenous past is very compelling to his peers, for instance. Finally, this analysis suggests that debates such as this can make individuals test their opinions and consider other opinions and facts. The case of Martin is a good example. His engagement in the debate makes him consider other viewpoints and integrate them into his argument. He looks proactive in participating in the debate holding conversations with many peers involved, but also in improving his historical understanding of the event and its broader social relevance.

Discussion: What is Gained with Historical Debate? What Can We Learn from It?

This study sought to analyze the types of approaches that people take toward historical debates on social media, in order to advance understanding of its characteristics, trends, and functionality. Findings support the benefits and challenges underscored in previous research in improving historical thinking education (Clark, 2009; Ellis & Vincent, 2020; Osborne, 2005). It also contributes by providing new insights into the debates' functionality for the participants in making sense of the past and their own cultural background. Results also show that the relation with history on social media is interactive rather than accumulative, as it is usually in conventional history education settings. This sheds light on the recently studied types of relations of people with the past, exploring alternative cultural productions of history or participating in performative historical events (Carretero et al., forthcoming, 2022; de Groot, 2016), making individuals explain history in interaction with others voices while negotiating meanings with their present.

The structure of argumentation and sense-making found in the three types of approaches to historical debate can help understand the above-mentioned. Debates develop in three simultaneous domains: (1) Discussion on the historical issue in question, the colonization of the Americas, ('what actually happened'); (2) Discussion on the interpretations of the issue, the TV executive's speech, ('what is interpreted'); and (3) Discussion on the present consequences of the event, the colonial heritage in Latin America, ('What is conveyed'). It is believed that this structure is useful to understand the debates' dynamics and the complex inner process that individuals experience to make sense of a historical event. This led to a working reflection; as seen in the analysis, and in line with previous research findings, the issue of source verification is crucial in hindering or encouraging trustful historical explanations and solid historical arguments to participate in debate (Haydn, & Counsell,

2004; McGrew et al., 2018). However, as it was seen in the participants' historical arguments, there are more factors shaping the explanation of, and engagement with history. For instance, a latent need to bring the past to the present and see the past from the present consequences was a major trend among all the participants. All the above invites us to keep examining the processes of construction of historical explanations either on digital platforms or in public life, which is rooted in evidence and verification but also boosted by identity, moral and civic factors.

From the data of the mirror talk approach, it can be inferred that there was no special interest in historical accuracy but in endorsing a political stand toward the event discussed. Those using the battle talk approach do not aim to foster discussion to achieve integrative historical understanding but to confirm and validate 'a side' in the debate and demerit others. However, although it was a minority, debates such as those of the persuasive approach can promote both complex and nuanced historical understanding and social responsibility in public debate. Participants engaging in these debates tend to contrast the source views and to make their argument convincing. They appeal to historical sources and 'experts' such as historians or journalists, as well as assumed popular collective emotions to persuade others.

Also, it was observed that when there was disagreement or misunderstanding, they tend to contrast views with source materials or clarify their points and try to set a dialogue, sometimes under an environment of good-natured rivalry and sometimes with passive-aggressive exchanges. Ultimately, although debates on social media usually take place in a context of polarization, at least in this study there are examples suggesting that although these cases are unstructured and uncontrollable, informal debates can help heat down the vibe for some people and in general, to foster dialogic understanding of history. Another encouraging finding is that, even though not all the participants were equipped with sufficient knowledge and were skilled in historical analysis, many of them try to use historical thinking and historical concepts. The most skilled participants were proficient in the use of historical sources, source verification, and tried to present accurate historical arguments and nuanced historical judgments.

Interestingly, many of those less skilled participants used some abilities such as historical distance, historical significance, and contextualization, and of special attention was historical comparison that was used the most. The dichotomy between false equivalency and proper historical comparison stands out in the debates, and it permitted some participants to nuance their positions while being exposed to it. Research on people's ability to compare historical processes is necessary as it was demonstrated the great appeal it has among the participants to construct historical explanations. Finally, it was also shown that individuals make use of discursive practices to strengthen their points. They, for instance, made historical generalizations about violence to disavow responsibility to both Aztecs and Spaniards, and justify their actions. Due to space limitations, this aspect is not fully discussed in this paper, but the relationship between discursive devices, historical explanations, and civic goals in debating history has been explored elsewhere (Perez-Manjarrez, 2019).

Finally, in line with previous research findings (Barton, 2019; Brauch, Leone & Sarrica, 2019), the historical debate has important teaching implications. Besides the development of historical thinking skills, debating can help young learners in their

moral and civic development (Perez-Manjarrez, 2017). This study's findings show that moral judgment and affective responses are trends among the participants, and it might be caused by a contemporary reading of the past focused on the assumed consequences in the present. In this sense, informed discussions could offer a safe environment for them to make their own historical prejudices and moral judgments explicit while creating the space to review them critically and be aware of their own misjudgments. Recent research (Campbell, 2008; Perez-Manjarrez, 2019), shows that debating controversies allow students further development of their understanding of social norms, moral values, politics, and identity. It can be said that debates may help participants positively engage in history and shade their opinions: For instance, there are participants in this study that participated in different types of debates and were able to soften or change their viewpoints and valuation of the issues discussed. It is hoped that all the above results foster, nevermind the redundancy, debates about how people debate history in public life, school, and digital platforms to create safe spaces for dissent, dialogue, and to promote the development of complex and nuanced historical understanding.

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Digital Historical Maps in Classrooms. Challenges in History Education

Cristian Parellada and Mario Carretero

Abstract The aim of this work is to reflect on the use of ICTs (information and communication technologies) to develop historical thinking, and specifically the way in which multimedia and internet technologies can provide new resources and broaden teaching possibilities through the use of dynamic historical maps. Maps are cultural tools that reflect and offer particular socio-political and cultural understandings of a territory. In this sense, maps ought to be recognized as primary source texts and used as such in history education classrooms. As primary sources, they can be critically analyzed for both their construction and their interpretation, and it is possible to consider that it is necessary to recognize the importance maps have in history classroom to encourage a better understanding among students of historical transformations in spaces and national territories. However, maps included in textbooks typically don't represent the past territory, but the current one. In a research conducted in Argentina we analyzed how subjects represent the national territory of the past and the changes that took place on it as a result of historical processes. The results show that the majority of students draw the current borders of Argentina as if it was the territory that gained independence in 1816. It is to say that these results show an essentialist representation of the territory since the participants tend to represent the current borders as if they had always existed. We will consider the importance of including the use of digital tools in the classroom for students to see the dynamics of borders with the aim of developing historical thinking.

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Introduction

Historical maps are an essential tool in the field of history teaching. One of their main purposes is to show the transformations in the territory that have occurred as a result of human actions (Kamusella, 2010). In this sense, historical maps can be defined as a present-day representation of how space was configured in the past. However, despite their notable presence in classrooms, the characteristics of the historical maps that circulate in educational contexts and how students understand them have not been studied in depth (Carretero, 2018a). Previous research shows that most people tend to assume that the borders of national territories remain unchanged over the years. They even assume that borders are entities that were present before the boundaries of the nation were established (Parellada et al., 2020). Our main hypothesis is that these erroneous representations regarding national territory are largely due to the type of cartographic representations that circulate in the school context, mainly through textbooks. In this way, the objective of this chapter is to analyse how digital historical maps can become powerful tools to promote the development of historical thinking. However, we consider it necessary to begin by analysing the features of historical maps included in textbooks because in our view, along with master narratives, they tend to reproduce unhistorical representations of the national territory.

In this vein, before considering the advantages of digital historical maps for history education, it is important to present how students represent the transformations of their national territory in the past and the relationships between their representations and the textbooks historical maps. Thus, as most digital educational resources, the use of digital historical maps in classrooms in itself will not necessarily facilitate by themselves that students will be able to fully understand the transformation of national borders across times. It will be also essential that students will be able to consider the complexity of the historical processes involved in the territorial transformations. In relation to this issue it is important to gain a precise knowledge about how students understand historical maps as symbolic representations of these changes.

With this objective, we will begin by analysing the characteristics of historical maps of the national territory included in textbooks. Then we will highlight the relationship between national historical accounts and cartographic representations, which legitimize certain interpretations of the territory. For this purpose, we will cite results obtained by our research team in previous studies that analysed how university students and textbooks from different countries represent the changes in the dimensions of the national territory as a product of different historical processes will be analysed. Thirdly, we will look at the importance of historical maps as instruments in teaching history and their relationship with the development of historical thinking.

Finally, we will consider the possibilities that digital tools offer for producing cartographic representations that favour a dynamic understanding of the development of national borders. Our expectation is that digital tools can provide a dynamic and complex view of changes in national borders, but it is also important to consider how they can contribute to reducing misconceptions about the national territory.

Historical Maps in Textbooks

When a current map of Europe is compared to maps from the late nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century, substantial changes can be observed in the boundaries represented. For instance, there is a substantial increase in the number of states demarcated and referenced in the current map compared to the map from the early twentieth century. Such a comparison shows that the borders that separate current nation-states are not the result of natural forces or causes; rather, they are social constructions resulting from the actions of human beings and a way of conceiving the world that is typical of modern society (Hobsbawm, 1990). This statement, which is obvious to any historian or social scientist, is not at all obvious to many students and citizens, as we will see later.

Maps are substantial instruments for representing the historical and dynamic nature of borders. It is through them that students of history visualize how the territories of the different nation-states have been modified and configured. Thus, it could be assumed that one of the objectives of including historical maps in textbooks and school atlases is to show students territorial changes (Kamusella, 2010). In this regard, several authors have highlighted the importance of maps in the classroom for teaching and understanding historical events (Bednarz et al., 2006; Bolick, 2006; Cinnamon, 2017). However, we believe that some aspects of the use of maps need to be studied in depth. It is necessary to investigate, on the one hand, the characteristics and didactic effectiveness of historical maps that are included in textbooks and, on the other hand, how students in particular, and citizens in general, understand the historical and geographical information that they transmit (Carretero, 2018a; Parellada et al., 2020).

In what follows, we will show some of the characteristics present in historical maps in textbooks that, in our view, may be inadequate for promoting an understanding of the formation of the national territory. Most of the historical cartographic representations included in school textbooks are based on maps of the current national territory. Figure 1 is a historical map published in a Mexican textbook (Sánchez Michel & Moreno Chávez, 2019) that represents the territory inhabited by the *Purhépecha* and *Aztec* communities between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, although this map represents a territorial configuration of the past, the current Mexican states of Jalisco, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Michoacán, and Colima, among others, can be observed. That is, in the representation, past and present overlap (Parellada et al., 2020; Pérez-Manjarrez & Carretero, 2021). Even the current place names of Honduras and Guatemala are used.

Fig. 1 Map of the Purhépecha and Azteca Kingdoms. Available at https://libros.conaliteg.gob.mx/20/S26051.htm?#page/165

Images similar to the one presented in Fig. 1 are typical of the maps found in textbooks and in historical atlases of different parts of the world that aim to represent historical territories. This is often because the production and circulation of maps in the educational field is regulated by current legislation and, in part, by certain national, social and political biases that are present in the school curriculum. For example, in Argentina, Law 22963 of the Charter establishes that the state can prohibit the commercialization and reproduction of representations of the continental, insular, and Antarctic territory of the Argentine Republic that do not comply with the regulations established by the national government through the National Geographic Institute. That is, the state determines which maps can be published in textbooks and which maps cannot. The cartographic images that can be published are those that conform to the official cartography and are based on the official map.[1] This is a clear example of state intervention in the production and circulation of cartographic images in the educational context; however, these regulations often occur implicitly.

Furthermore, it can be assumed that the historical maps presented in textbooks are not unrelated to one of the main objectives of history education: to forge citizens of the

[1] In 1941, Argentina passed Law 12696 on Geodetic Works and Topographic Surveys. It stipulated that maps published in the national territory that totally or partially reproduced a sector of the Argentine territory had to incorporate part of the Antarctic Sector and the Falkland Islands as territories belonging to the nation-state. Then, in 1983, Law 22963 of the Charter was enacted, which modified the afore mentioned Law 12696 and aimed to consolidate a national awareness of the territory and avoid differences in geographic information about the Argentine Republic. The regulations specify that the only valid cartographic representation is the version created by the national government. At present, this law, with some minor modifications, is still in force in Argentina.

nation-state. This objective, which was promoted in the late nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth century, is typical of a romantic conception of school history that persists in the present day (Carretero, 2011). However, in many countries, this objective is combined with enlightened objectives that are typical of a more disciplinary approach to teaching history. The enlightened objectives, unlike the romantic objectives aim to, construct critical citizens through a disciplinary and documented understanding of history as a social science. In this sense, it is intended not only for students to relate the historical process to the present but understand it in its own context. Currently, in different curricula, these objectives approach an understanding of the past in a complex way, distinguishing among different historical periods, analysing continuity and change, adopting a historical perspective when studying the past, and understanding historical multicausality, among others (Seixas, 2018).

However, as we mentioned, in historical maps in textbooks, the past and the present are confused. In these images, a kind of temporal loop seems to operate in which the territorial configuration of the present is transferred to the past, which often justifies the subsequent existence of the nation-state in that space. This temporal loop is related to the romantic objective of the teaching of history that predominated in the nineteenth century, since it helped maintain and reinforce the idea of the nation-state as an immutable entity. Each historical map in a textbook is related to a narrative and to a set of historical, political, and social meanings that a group constructs for a space (Pérez-Manjarrez & Carretero, 2021). In turn, these meanings and cartographic representations affect the way in which subjects perceive, imagine, and represent the national territory in the past, present, and future. This could be one of the reasons why most students conceive of current territories as political units that do not change over the years (Carretero, 2018a; Parellada et al., 2020).

Let us look at a specific case based on our previous research. In 1816, when Argentina became independent from Spain, the territory over which the incipient state—which, in those years, was called the United Provinces of the South—exercised sovereign rights differed substantially from the current territory. Due to various civil wars, which lasted for over forty years, the boundaries of the different jurisdictions that make up present-day Argentina were not clearly defined (Fig. 2). It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that Argentina acquired its current territorial configuration. In the years after the internal conflicts ended and the country was unified, the state undertook a set of military campaigns aimed at territorial expansion known as the Conquest of the Desert (1878–1885). These campaigns ought to conquer the lands of Patagonia, located south of the 42° parallel, which were under the domain of their original inhabitants (Lois, 2018).

However, despite these considerations the maps in Argentine textbooks that represent the national territory of the early nineteenth century differ considerably from the map shown in Fig. 2, where the national territory still in a process of construction was much smaller than the present one. As the map of Fig. 2 shows, only the two blue areas were in the process of becoming independent of Spain, and the brown areas are explicitly named as native territories. For example, Fig. 3 aims to represent the liberation campaigns of South America. It shows the current external boundaries of

Fig. 2 Political map of South American territories by 1816. Map exhibited at the National History Museum of the Cabildo and May Revolution in 2016. © Mario Carretero.

Argentina as if they existed at the time of independence. In other words, while historically, Argentina did not acquire its current configuration until 1885, the year in which the Conquest of the Desert ended, the map in the textbook shows the current boundaries projected onto a representation that illustrates historical processes, including those that predated the existence of Argentina.

This superposition exceeds mere graphic representation. In this same map, the legend "(Arg.)" can be observed above the Falkland Islands (*Malvinas Islands*). However, the state did not take possession of these islands until 1820; thus, this legend is incorrect for the period represented. However, it is included because it

Fig. 3 Map showing South America's liberation campaigns in the early nineteenth century. Available at https://www.educ.ar/recursos/125203/mapas-de-america-de-temas-historicos

refers to the territorial claim that Argentina has made for decades in the international arena (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, and Worship of Argentina, 2020). Thus, although Argentina did not have sovereign rights over the islands during the period represented and does not have them now, the map shows that the Falklands belong to Argentina. The aforementioned state regulation of the cartographic images that circulate in the school context and their effective enforcement in the field of

history education provide an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between the construction of a territorial image, the teaching of history, and the construction of the nation.

The Territory as a Central Element of Master Narratives

Disciplines as diverse as political science, history, and social psychology have shown how, in the process of nation-building, it is necessary to forge not only an imagined community but a territorial image that will give shape to the nation (Anderson, 1983; Billig, 1995; Herzog, 2017; Kosonen, 2008). Along these lines, Anderson (1983) considered that, in the context of the formation of modern nationalisms, territorial silhouettes were transformed into logotype maps, or simple ways of representing the body of the nation. Through these logo maps, an infinitely reproducible series of cartographic representations of the nation was created and placed on various everyday objects, such as posters, stamps, banknotes, regional products, and textbooks, among others. These logo maps, instantly recognized and visible everywhere, were internalized by the subjects as a symbol of the nation, creating a powerful emblem of incipient nationalism.

Craib (2017) argues that postcolonial administrations produced maps and atlases—national, cultural, and political—as part of the process of connecting a place with a remote past that gave rise to the nation. The author states that "cartographers in such diverse places as Mexico, Thailand, Turkey, and Iran inscribed—and reinscribed—a distant past onto modern maps of the nation in an effort to stress the nation's temporal longevity and cultural coherence, or to visualize and legitimize irredentist aims" (Craib, 2017, p. 21). Specifically, historical maps, as contemporary pedagogical devices, contribute to the visualization of the arguments transmitted in school content. In our opinion, historical accounts give meaning to maps, which, in turn, serve as symbolic and visual support for the representations transmitted in the historical narrative, as shown by our empirical research with high school and university students (Carretero et al., 2018; López et al., 2015; Parellada et al., 2020). In this regard, when there are contradictory narratives characterized by antagonistic positions on the origin and possession of the same territory, the maps that accompany these stories illustrate different borders. In these cases, textbooks tend to silence the arguments and maps prepared by the rival state and to make only their own visible (Cantabrana et al., this book). This suggests that historical maps not only represent the territory but also recreate the master narrative, an official historical account of the nation's evolution that is widely rooted in society and is transmitted from generation to generation (Abdou, 2017). Such accounts have been conceptualized by some authors as dominant discourses through which different groups impose their representations onto national history and identity (Barreiro et al., 2017) and are considered myths of origin by historians (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

Master narratives are one of the main instruments students rely on to construct their representations about the past of the cultural or national community to which they belong. For his part, Wertsch (2018) distinguishes between the processes of

production and consumption to account not only for how cultural instruments are created within a society, but also for how subjects appropriate and transform them in the course of mediated action. For this author, historical narratives constitute a cultural tool that mediates subjects' relationship with the past and contributes to the production, transmission, and consumption of a common origin and destiny. This relationship is complex; it does not imply at all that the narrative that is produced is consumed as such but suggests that there are processes of appropriation and resistance that may explain its changes over time.

Studies on production have explored the historical and social conditions in which the master narratives taught to students in schools were developed. Analyses have therefore considered how national narratives were forged from the second half of the nineteenth century in order to contribute to the development of a national identity (Hobsbawm, 1990) and create imagined communities (Anderson, 1983) that would lend symbolic support and social cohesion to the new nations under construction. It is important to remember that these identities did not exist at the time and were created to take the place of very different identities, whether regional or local. Similarly, it has been shown that these stories continue to be present in both formal and informal education contexts (Carretero, 2017; Keirn, 2018). It is essential to note that they were certainly foundational, but in the imagined sense, as has been indicated, and not necessarily in the real sense.

In this regard, Carretero and Bermudez (2012) identified six dimensions inherent to the historical master narratives: (a) the establishment of a main historical subject; (b) a monocausal and teleological historical plot based on the conquest of freedom and the recovery of a territory that is usually considered previously invaded; (c) an essentialist notion of nation and national identity; (d) a heroic status of historical figures who, through their actions, contributed to forging the nation; (e) processes of collective identification with the protagonists of the story; and (f) a narrative moral anchor. These dimensions have been empirically verified through the study of master narratives produced by both Argentine students (Carretero & van Alphen, 2014) and Spanish students (López et al., 2015).

In these arguments, territorial conflicts often prevailed and were related to ideas of conquest, reconquest of the search for freedom. The stories about national history began with a territory occupied by foreigners and ended with the recovery of it by its original inhabitants, who coincided with the national group. Thus, conflicts over the national territory constituted one of the main themes of the narrative, and the subjects considered the nation's ownership of the territory timeless, existing even before the state existed. At this point, little research has been done on how the subjects represent the changes that occurred in the national territory as a product of historical processes (Carretero, 2018a). In a study that our team carried out in Argentina, thirty university subjects were asked to produce a narrative about the independence of the country, which occurred on July 9, 1816 (Parellada, 2019). In the study, the subjects had to draw the borders of the independent territory on a map of Latin America. As previously mentioned, the Argentine territory that became independent in 1816 differs greatly from the current territory (see Fig. 2). The results

Fig. 4 Borders of the Argentine territory by 1816 drawn by a student on a political map of Latin America

show that the majority of the participants (70%) used the current borders to depict the independent territory at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Fig. 4).

The cartographic images produced by the students appear to indicate that they perceive the Argentine territory as having remained unchanged for more than two hundred years, rather than as the result of a series of multicausal changes over time. In this regard, it is very interesting to observe that the students' essentialist representations are similar to those reproduced in the maps in textbooks (Figs. 3 and 4). Additionally, when the students were presented during the interview with nineteenth-century maps on which they could observe that the historical representation of the national territory differed from the current one, the majority did not change their conceptions: "Some of them even stated that these lands were not represented on the map from the early nineteenth century because '[the cartographer] would have forgotten to include them' or that '[the territory that was not plotted] would have been seen later'"(Parellada, 2019, p. 283). This way of reading new information and the persistence of essentialist representations allow us to assume that the image of the current territory is deeply rooted in the minds of citizens.

Similar results were found in Spain when students were asked to produce a story and a map about the process of the Spanish Reconquest (López et al., 2015). This

concept traditionally spans the period and historical process extending from the arrival of the Muslims to the Iberian Peninsula in 711 to the Muslim defeat at Granada in 1492 at the hands of the Catholic Monarchs. When Spanish university students were asked to draw a map of this historical process, the majority of those who were interviewed drew a map that included the current boundaries of Spain, France, and Portugal, as if these countries existed in the eighth century. In our opinion, although more empirical work is needed in this direction, it seems evident that the subjects had clear difficulties understanding the changes that have occurred in the territorial dimensions of their own nation. Therefore, we consider it necessary to promote activities that allow students to critically reflect on the historical maps that circulate in the school context and understand them as social constructs. This could provide students with opportunities to question the master narratives and recognize the complexity of the historical processes related to the transformation of national territories.

The Use of Documents to Develop Historical Thinking

Historical maps, like other documentary sources (photographs, tables, graphs and written texts), provide information about the place and historical context in which they were produced. Specifically, these documents allow us to understand how a society (or a sector of it) represented and interpreted the space. In this regard, in the field of the history of cartography, Harley (2001) proposed three keys to working with maps as historical documents: the context of the cartographer, the context of other maps, and the context of society. Therefore, historical maps could serve as essential elements for allowing students to analyse the processes of continuity and change in the ways a territory is mapped. However, the presence of current geopolitical borders in historical maps reinforces the essentialist conception of the nation-state transmitted in the master narrative (Pérez-Manjarrez & Carretero, 2021).

In recent years, in the field of history education, various didactic proposals have been generated to promote the development of historical thinking in students (Seixas, 2018; Wineburg, 2001). We believe that in addition to reflecting on how to teach history, it is necessary to analyse the representations of where historical processes occurred because this "where" implies a specific territory that can be interpreted in various ways. Our studies show that essentialist representations of a territory tend to be accentuated when the interviewed subjects refer to a national historical process. However, this does not seem to occur when the historical content being considered does not involve the history of the country itself (Carretero, 2017; López et al., 2014).

In sum, a recognition of the importance of maps in history classrooms may be necessary to promote students' ability to comprehend historical transformations of spaces and national territories. In this sense, digital historical maps could provide an advantage in the teaching of history by de-essentializing the representations of the national territory that are transmitted through the master narrative and are legitimized by the historical maps in textbooks.

Promoting Non-Essentialist Representations of the National Territory: Integrating Digital Cartographic Resources into the Teaching of History

In recent decades, digital advances have strongly affected the field of education in general and history teaching in particular (Haydn, in this book; Haydn & Counsell, 2003; Wojdon, 2016). Regarding work with historical maps, there is a current set of projects that, although they were not developed from an educational standpoint, offer a set of unique opportunities for work in the classroom. In the following, we will explore some of the advantages that digital historical maps offer in the field of history teaching for promoting the development of critical representations of essentialist national accounts.

First, one limitation of printed historical maps is that territorial transformations must all be plotted on the same image with different references or using different images. Printed maps are static images, and therefore, it is difficult for them to provide a dynamic image of territorial transformations. Unlike maps in textbooks, digital historical maps can be animated. Some digital maps allow the student to visualize how the borders of a territorial unit have been modified. Furthermore, these changes can be visualized at different scales: global, regional, or local (by country). This allows students to compare, for example, how new societies, empires, or countries expanded, fragmented, or emerged over time.

Second, with respect to the possible interaction between cultural products and the user, digital tools offer an alternative to the type of interaction that occurs between the student and historical maps printed in textbooks. Crampton (2002) states that one characteristic of this alternative is the difference in the interface. Digital maps allow the user to not just visualize the information that they contain, but to interact with it. On digital maps, the student can define the scale of the map, zoom in and out of the area or move through the image to observe other areas that are not included in the image shown on the screen. On printed maps, this scope is predefined by the producer of the textbook, and the student cannot modify it. Although digital maps are also developed prior to their use, the user can intervene in this development in some way; this is hard to do with printed maps. Thus, printed maps promote a low level of interaction between the user and the image, while digital maps provide many more possibilities for interaction (Asche & Herrmann, 1994; Koussoulakou, 1999).

A third difference between historical maps printed in textbooks and digital maps is that the former are often produced in limited colour or with a few spot colours. To a large extent, this may be a matter of production costs, because the use of more colours increases the cost. Differences in colour make the current territory of Argentina contrast chromatically with those of other nation-states and can silence the sovereignty that different indigenous populations had over that space (Lois, 2018; Parellada et al., in press). In contrast, digital maps allow students to re-establish or change the colour palette used to represent the space, which implies the ability to modify references and other visual variables.

Fourth, digital environments enable students to georeference old maps. Georeferencing allows different maps to be superimposed on one another based on the identification of certain cartographic points. In this way, the user can observe the superimposition of an old map on a current map based on the corresponding geographical coordinates without necessarily using national boundaries as a reference. For example, the National Library of Scotland has developed a project in which the user can superimpose old maps onto a physical satellite map of the world without political divisions (https://maps.nls.uk/). It can even convert the cartographic image into a 3D format and create a spherical version of the old map. This strategy of map overlay using georeferencing has some substantial differences from the map overlay used in textbooks. On the one hand, digital georeferencing tools allow the student to choose the map that will act as the basis for the old cartographic document, which can avoid the need to reference the current borders of the nation-state. On the other hand, the old georeferenced map allows the user to visualize how that society conceived the mapped physical space and how it was represented.

Finally, one of the main advantages of digital environments is that they allow users to access a large number of old maps more quickly and directly. Accessing old paper maps is often difficult, if not impossible, for students; it requires going to a library, which often houses only one copy of the map, if any. Furthermore, the reproduction of old maps in textbooks is rather expensive since publishers must have the material and the corresponding permissions to include them. Furthermore, even when publishers have the appropriate materials and permissions, they may not be able to reproduce the maps; for example, in Argentina, they may face the paradoxical situation of not being able to publish historical maps that do not comply with Law 22963 of the Charter. If they did publish them, the textbooks would not be approved by the government and could not be sold. Currently, there are several digital projects, such as the *David Rumsey Collection of Ancient Maps* (https://www.davidrumsey.com/), that house almost 100,000 maps from all over the world, produced between the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries. Some of these maps are even hosted on *Google Earth* and can be georeferenced.

Furthermore, in the case of digital maps, students can use old maps as sources for discussing and corroborating the information transmitted in the narrative and compare them with other maps and documents that include geographical and geopolitical references. By comparing information from different maps, students can recognize the political and social objectives of the cartographer and the social groups that supported the production and circulation of these representations, thus raising questions such as who is the author of this map? In what year was it created? Where was it created? What type of map is it? All of these are questions related to the development of historical thinking, but they are not often asked in textbooks, either because historical documents are not reproduced or because the contents continue to be centred on the master narrative and tend to silence anything that contradicts the official narrative (Barreiro & Castorina, 2016; Carretero et al., 2016; Stoskopf & Bermúdez, 2017).

Currently, some of the characteristics discussed are present in a varied set of projects that allow students to work with historical maps in educational contexts and

on different topics. Some of them are the *Chronas* project (https://chronas.org) developed by Dietmar Aumann and Joachim Aumann, the *TimeMaps* project developed by Peter Briton and Alexander Kent (https://www.timemaps.com/), and the aforementioned *David Rumsey Collection of Ancient Maps* (https://www.davidrumsey.com) developed by the cartographer David Rumsey.

Although each of these projects has different characteristics, they also share some commonalities. First, the maps that can be visualized in these projects, unlike those published in many textbooks, are not constructed according to the conception of the nation-state. Rather, they represent the nation-state and its formation as another moment in world history. Second, unlike the historical maps in textbooks, the aforementioned digital projects are based on cartographic images that offer users a broader historical context in which they can understand the social, historical, and political characteristics related to the representation of the territory and can consider its dynamic nature. Finally, the three digital projects mentioned above emphasize the importance of the map as an indispensable tool in teaching history and allow users to investigate and analyse the information contained in these maps with reference to other sources, which is in line with proposals aimed at developing historical thinking. However, the resources and educational possibilities provided by digital environments do not themselves guarantee that students will develop historical thinking. We believe that these digital resources need to be analyzed in relation to how effectively teachers and students use them in the course of school activities focused on thinking about history in a reflective and critical way.

Teaching with Digital Maps to Deconstruct Master Narratives

The previous sections explained how territory is a central element in the production of master narratives and showed how textbooks, using a set of techniques and, in some cases, legal regulations, produce and reproduce an essentialist and timeless representation of the national territory. Students, when interacting with these representations, consume them and, for the most part, tend to consider that not only the territory but the nation has remained unchanged over time. In this sense, it is necessary to reflect not only on how to teach history in the classroom in a way that promotes students' development of historical thinking but also on the topics that are taught.

Digital developments allow access to different types of historical and ancient cartographic images that provide a set of potentialities for the teaching of history and can overcome the limitations of the maps printed in textbooks. However, as Haydn (2016) warns, the potentialities offered by digital environments will not be developed without the promotion of teaching strategies that allow students to analyse, compare, interpret, select, and reflect on the information that they access. In other words, it is not the use of digital tools themselves, nor their specific characteristics,

but the activities carried out by teachers that have the greatest impact on teaching and learning.

Regarding this point, it is important that students investigate the content of maps. Images with characteristics similar to those of textbooks can be found in digital sources of information, such as Wikipedia. In this collaborative portal, a search for "*History of the United States*" leads to a file entitled "*USA territorial growth*" that contains various maps, including the one in Fig. 5. This map represents the territory of the United States in 1810; however, as seen below, it shows the territory of that country without the presence of native populations. The only references to territories that are not controlled by the U.S. government are to territories of other nations (e.g., Spain). These maps seem to present the view that these territories belonged to the United States and were occupied by other countries, hiding the process of territorial expansion at the expense of native populations (Carretero, 2018b).

Unfortunately, the potential offered by technology is far from being applied in most classrooms and educational institutions around the world. In some countries, most schools have a high level of technological equipment and internet access, while in others, there are enormous deficiencies in this regard (UNICEF, 2020). However, as Friedman (2006) warns, the simple question of access to the internet is not a sufficient reason to stop teaching historical content in an uncritical way. It is important to recognize and reflect on the pedagogical approach that teachers use and on what is taught at training institutes.

Teachers tend to use digital tools according to their pedagogical thinking (Tally & Goldenberg, 2005; van Hover & Hicks, 2018). Thus, teachers with a more expository and traditional view of teaching tend to use digital tools as sources of knowledge

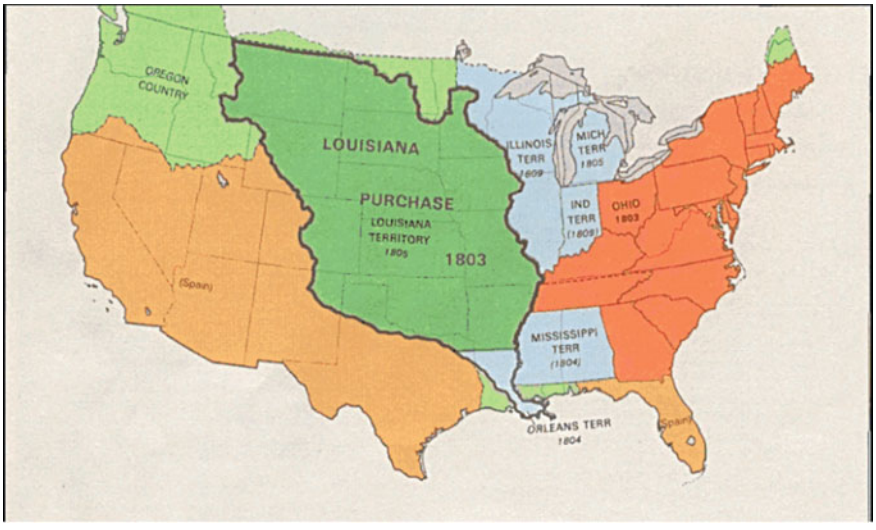

Fig. 5 Map of USA in 1810. Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States

that reinforce their position, while teachers who do not agree with this view promote activities involving the critical inquiry of sources. This does not mean that the use of digital tools is reduced to the pedagogical position of the teacher, but it does reflect the complexity of the problem. We do not believe that the mere incorporation of digital maps into the teaching of history will transform educational practices. Rather, we believe that digital maps undoubtedly have specific characteristics that distinguish them from historical maps printed in textbooks and that allow new horizons for the development of a more critical teaching of history with less of a focus on the master narrative. In this sense, the presence of digital maps in the classroom could promote new teaching approaches and innovations that would be very difficult to achieve in their absence. Finally, there is a need to review the persistence in the classroom of the romantic teaching of national history that was typical of the nineteenth century. As long as the contents of the master narrative are not reviewed, it will be difficult to take full advantage of the potential and teaching possibilities offered by maps in the digital age. Furthermore, we believe that digital maps can provide a vision of a nation's past that promotes a more complex understanding of the relationship between national histories and global history.

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Videogames and History Education

Digital Entertainment Gaming as a Site for (Informal) Historical Learning? A Reflection on Possibilities and Limitations

Pieter Van den Heede

Abstract Over the past few decades, digital entertainment gaming has become very popular among a global audience of players, including a significant number of school-aged young adults. Some of the most popular digital entertainment games offer a (fictionalized) representation of historical events. This chapter offers a reflection on how digital entertainment gaming can be adopted to advance historical learning and the development of processual historical thinking skills. I do so by analyzing historical digital games as cultural artefacts embedded in a broader digitized media ecology, and digital games as integrated into formal school history curricula.

Keywords Digital entertainment games · Historical learning · Historical thinking · Informal learning

Since becoming a popular pastime during the 1970s and 1980s (Malliet & de Meyer, 2005), digital gaming has become one of the most prominent forms of cultural expression in our contemporary digitized global society. For example, as shown by market research companies Newzoo and Statista respectively, the global games market generated a total revenue of 148.8 billion dollars in 2019 (Nesterenko, 2019), whereas the number of people playing digital games worldwide, including a significant number of school-aged young adults, is expected to grow to over 2.7 billion by 2021 (Gough, 2019). Given this increased popularity of digital gaming, and the general observation made around the turn of the century that digital games are often underpinned by designs that mirror fundamental learning principles (Gee, 2003), a significant number of scholars has attempted to study how digital games can be adopted to foster various learning processes (Whitton, 2014). In this chapter, I reflect on how digital entertainment gaming can be embraced to foster historical learning in particular, especially in relation to the development of processual historical thinking skills (e.g. Seixas & Morton, 2013). I do so by assessing how digital games can foster historical thinking both informally as procedural artefacts that are embedded in a broader ecology of digitized and networked connectivity, and formally as integrated in school history

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curricula. In doing so, I bring together both key observations made in the existing body of literature on the use of digital games in history classrooms and formulate a number of venues for future research, especially concerning the informal learning potential of digital gaming as a broader digitized and networked phenomenon.

In what follows, I first discuss how digital games can stimulate historical learning as standalone and commercially distributed cultural artefacts. Next, I will reflect on how historical learning can be stimulated through an active engagement with the broader digitized culture in which digital games are embedded. Finally, I will discuss how digital games can be productively integrated into history classrooms.

Digital Games as Commercial and Entertainment-Oriented Cultural Artefacts

Digital games can best be characterized as *ergodic* cultural texts, which require an active effort of mechanical organization on behalf of the player to traverse (Aarseth, 1997). The activity of playing a game does not solely revolve around the 'reflexive process of producing a meaning,' as is the case for many other cultural texts, but also the 'physical process of producing the digital game' (Apperley, 2010, p. 11), which unfolds through an integrated process of selecting and excluding actions and trajectories. This has significant implications for digital games as historical artefacts. As described by Chapman (2016), historical digital games, in contrast to other forms of historical representation, are characterized by a sense of 'shared authorship' and 'narrative multiplicity'. Whenever players play a historical game, they also produce a play-induced historical narrative that is determined by the actions of at least two (groups of) actors: on the one hand the developer of the game or 'developer-historian', who sets up the components and boundaries of the 'story space' of the game, or fictively constructed ludic imagination of a past world, and on the other hand the player, who determines which stories are told within the boundaries of this story space through an act of configuration (Chapman, 2016, p. 30–34). From a narrative perspective, this act of configuration revolves around arranging two types of components: *lexia*, or the most basic narrative elements that players are invited to arrange to create a ludically emergent narrative, such as the virtual characters, objects and scenery of a game, and *framing controls*, or the procedural rules that define the mutual relationship between these lexia and between the lexia and the player (Chapman, 2016, p. 119–127).

In light of this overall characterization, I argue that the act of playing a historical digital game revolves around at least two types of *ludic revelation.* Firstly, the act of playing any type of game leads to an ongoing attempt at instrumentally mapping the game's lexia and framing controls. In order to successfully engage with a game, players need to gain an embodied understanding of its rules and mechanics, usually through a process of trial and error. A clear example of this form of *instrumental*

revelation, and subsequent attempts at domestication, can be found in e-sports competitions, where (teams of) professional players train extensively to learn and master the rules and mechanics of competitive multiplayer-based games such as *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive* (Valve, 2012) and *League of Legends* (Riot Games, 2009), often without paying much attention to the (limited) narrative layer of these games.

Secondly, playing a historical digital game can also lead to experiences that are explicitly historical in nature. Lexia and framing controls are not only part of an internally coherent game system that can be domesticated instrumentally. Both, in their interconnectedness, are also imbued with rich historical meanings that can resonate with the mnemonic awareness of players to result in experiences of *historical revelation*. Here, I refer to (1) the concept of 'procedural rhetoric', i.e. the notion that digital games present meaningful, ideological, and potentially persuasive arguments about the nature of the (historical) world through their procedurality (Bogost, 2007); (2) the notion that this procedurality is inherently embedded in a semiotic layer that communicates these arguments and contextualizes them (Sicart, 2013, p. 83–88); and (3) the observation that these two notions, in their interconnection, are actively interpreted by players as autonomous cultural agents (Sicart, 2013, p. 91–96). I will illustrate the notion of *historical revelation* by discussing two examples: World War II-themed first-person shooter (FPS) games such as *Medal of Honor* (Electronic Arts, 1999–2020) and *Call of Duty* (Activision, 2003—present), and strategy games such as those from the *Civilization*-series (Take Two Interactive, 1991—present).

In World War II-themed FPS-games, players take on the role of individual Allied soldiers during pivotal battles of the war. In terms of lexia, these FPS-games revolve around the depiction of soldiers, firearms and other forms of military equipment, and historical battle locations. In terms of framing controls, they revolve around the need for players to engage in virtual killing and spatial conquest, and apply visual, motoric and tactical skills to navigate the game world while doing so. When asking players what they consider to be memorable moments in the games from a historical perspective, they often refer to moments such as the ones in the games *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* (Electronic Arts, 2002) and *Call of Duty: WWII* (Activision 2017) in particular, during which players participate in a virtual recreation of the Normandy beach landings on D-Day (Fig. 1). When discussing these moments, players often highlight their 'reenactive potential': the ability of these moments to let players experience the chaos of battle and the sense of fear and vulnerability that Allied soldiers must have experienced when landing on the beaches of Normandy (for the entire paragraph, see: Van den Heede, 2021). As a result, for certain players, engaging with the games' lexia and framing controls during these moments results in an experiential confrontation with, and a particular understanding of, the represented historical events, through an emergent process of historical revelation.

In light of the previous characterization, it is important to emphasize that the reenactive potential of games such as *Medal of Honor* and *Call of Duty* is inherently limited and indirect. It is limited, in that, as stated by Van den Heede (2019), 'players […] can [never fully] overcome their presentist epistemologies, as is also the case for most other forms or reenactment' (Van den Heede, 2019, p. 88). While the act of playing the D-Day sections of *Medal of Honor* and *Call of Duty* might stimulate

Fig. 1 Screenshot of the level 'Omaha Beach' in the game *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* (Electronic Arts, 2002). During this level, players virtually partake in the Normandy beach landings on June 6, 1944 as a US American infantry soldier (Copyright: Electronic Arts, Inc)

players to reflect on relatively ahistorical emotions such as fear, they are often not encouraged to reflect on the potentially divergent beliefs, motivations, and values of the involved soldiers as historical actors. In addition, it is indirect in its depiction of conflicts such as World War II, in that gaming as a form of reenactment does not take on the form of a directly mimetic embodied experience, but that of a motoric, cognitive, and emotional engagement with a computer as a fiction-producing piece of technology. Thirdly, as discussed by Pötzsch (2017), games such as *Medal of Honor* and *Call of Duty* tend to invite players to one-sidedly 'ally themselves to soldiers working on behalf of ultimately benevolent forces' (Pötzsch, 2017, p. 160). This means that these games, when considered autonomously, potentially undermine the premises of a multi-perspective approach to history teaching (e.g. Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 138–167). Regardless, as shown by the player reactions discussed above, the ludified reenactment of D-Day depicted in *Medal of Honor* and *Call of Duty* is actively identified by players as a moment of historical experience, which makes it relevant to discuss it accordingly.

In the strategy games from the *Civilization*-series, players are tasked to '[lead] a civilization from the Stone Age to the Information Age' ("About Civilization VI," 2016). In terms of lexia, the games revolve around a selection of historical world

leaders such as Gilgamesh, Pericles and Gandhi, geographically diverse territories, various types of strategic resources, military units and technological innovations, and much more. In terms of framing controls, the game revolves around the ability for players to engage in long- and short-term strategic planning to, for example, virtually manage cities, set up trade routes, wage war and develop cultural policies that allow the player to successfully lead a civilization. As discussed by Taylor (2003) and Chapman (2013), playing *Civilization* does not only revolve around the need for players to instrumentally become acquainted with how the characteristics of the various lexia are related to one another. By allowing players to gain an emergent understanding of *Civilization*'s underlying model of causality, that is, the game's semiotically contextualized procedural model of how elements such as geography and the availability of resources impact the development of a virtual civilization in-game, *Civilization* can also emergently reveal how such factors have played a role in past societies. As a result, the game presents a model of historical causality that closely adheres to, for example, the one formulated by historian Paul Kennedy in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* by Paul Kennedy (1989) (for the entire paragraph, see also: Chapman, 2013, p. 315–318).

As illustrated by the examples above, digital games have a significant potential to ludically convey historical meaning and produce particular understandings of the past. These understandings can both subvert and contribute to the development of processual historical thinking skills. As such, a primary way to further leverage the learning potential of historical digital games lies in the creation of games whose lexia and framing controls allow for productive instances of historical revelation. This approach adheres to the practice of serious game design (e.g. Dörner et al., 2016). An example of this approach is the game *Attentat* 1942 (Charles University Prague, 2017), an adventure game in which players need to uncover what happened to their grandfather during the occupation of Prague during World War II. In this game, mechanics are centred on solving puzzles and critically assessing historical sources.

However, as my focus lies on informal learning environments and digital games as commercially distributed cultural commodities made for entertainment purposes, it is important to mention that many digital games that are explicitly designed to achieve learning outcomes or bring about societal change, often struggle to reach a larger audience in the global games market. In addition, it is important to characterize forms of historical revelation as 'meaning-making *potentials*' (Pötzsch & Šisler, 2019), in that players can, but not always actively do, identify the historical dimension embedded in a game's design. Therefore, it is useful to reflect on other ways in which entertainment-oriented historical digital games can be used to stimulate historical learning. A second way to achieve this goal is to strive towards forms of *integrated historical contextualization.*

As illustrated by Fisher (2011), historical digital games, such as the World War II-themed FPS-games discussed above, lend themselves well for instances of 'tangential learning'. This refers to the potential of cultural tools such as games to 'help (…) familiarize learners with a body of knowledge rather than actively trying to teach them', which can subsequently motivate these learners to further explore this body

of knowledge autonomously (Fisher, 2011, p. 77). As a result, a meaningful way to promote historical learning through commercial digital entertainment games is to add complementary historical materials, such as primary sources, articles and documentary film clips, which can serve to contextualize the historical lexia and framing controls of a game, and the sense of historical revelation they can evoke as discussed above. Examples of this can be found in the aforementioned *Attentat* 1942, as well as games such as *Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway* (Ubisoft, 2008), and *1979 Revolution: Black Friday* (iNK Stories, 2016). In these games, which respectively represent Operation Market Garden (a military operation in the Netherlands during World War II) and the Iranian Revolution of 1979, players can unlock bonus materials which contextualize what players have encountered through play, by completing a series of in-game tasks and challenges (Fig. 2) (see also: Anderson, 2019). A critical observation that can be made in relation to this approach is that the contextual materials in most of the currently available historical games are factual rather than reflexive in nature. Put differently, these materials tend to be primarily rooted in a reconstructionist historical epistemology, which departs from the assumption that there is a singular and knowable past that exists independently of the observer (Munslow, 2007, p. 1–15). Therefore, a meaningful venue for further exploration into the learning potential of historical digital games lies in efforts to add historical materials that explicitly address aspects that are central to the methodological and theoretical reflection on history as a discipline.

A final example that is worth mentioning is *Assassin's Creed* (Ubisoft, 2007—present), a series of action adventure games that allow players to explore virtual recreations of historical locations such as Italy during the renaissance-period and Paris during the French Revolution, against the backdrop of a fictional narrative. For two of the most recent instalments of the series, *Assassin's Creed: Origins* (Ubisoft, 2017) and *Assassin's Creed: Odyssey* (Ubisoft, 2018), set in Ancient Egypt and the world of the Greek city states during the Peloponnesian War respectively, the game developers created a 'Discovery Tour'-mode. This mode allows players to follow a guided tour through virtually recreated landmark monuments such as the Pyramid of Giza and the Parthenon in Athens. As such, this Discovery Tour-mode can equally be characterized as a form of integrated historical contextualization. However, what sets the *Assassin's Creed*-games apart from previously discussed games is that *Assassin's Creed*'s rules and mechanics often revolve around fighting and exploration activities that are not explicitly imbued with historical meaning. This means that the creators of the *Assassin's Creed*-games have adopted what I will identify as a form of *ludic captivation*: an approach to entertainment-oriented game creation where existing game genre conventions (of for example action games) are used to attract players, who are subsequently invited to explore the historical lexical layer of the game through forms of integrated contextualization, as discussed above.

As standalone cultural artefacts, historical digital games provide several opportunities to stimulate meaningful engagements with history and advance the development of processual historical thinking skills. They can do so by enabling forms

Fig. 2 Screenshots taken from the game *1979 Revolution: Black Friday* (iNK Stories, 2016). In the game, players take photographs of various events during the Iranian revolution of 1979. After taking a photograph, players unlock additional historical materials that contextualize the events that are unfolding in the game (Copyright: iNK Stories)

of *historical revelation* and *integrated historical contextualization*, or by indirectly appealing to players through forms of *ludic captivation*, which can also be meaningfully contextualized historically.

Digital Games as an Expression of a Broader Digitized and Networked Culture

To further assess the potential of entertainment-oriented digital games to advance historical learning and the development of processual historical thinking skills, it is worth discussing digital gaming as a single cultural form in the broader ecosystem of contemporary digitized expression. Over the past three decades, various technologies, services and platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Wikipedia, Reddit and, specifically concerning gaming, Twitch and other streaming services, have been developed and integrated into socio-culturally contingent everyday practices by individuals, organizations and society at large (van Dijck, 2013, pp. 5–9). As such, it is useful to reflect on how individuals who play historical digital games develop broader (online) 'media repertoires', or 'relatively stable cross-media patterns of media practices' (Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017, p. 367) to engage with history; how, by extension, game companies who create historical games do the same to communicate with their players and other external collectivities; and how history educators can develop meaningful strategies to interact with both players and game companies to advance historical learning in online spaces outside formal education. Even though only little research has been done to answer these questions, the approach aligns with existing efforts in the field of public history to develop proper practices to engage in public history projects in various digital environments (e.g. Leon, 2017).

The first way to advance historical thinking in game-related online spaces lies in the establishment and sustenance of institutionally anchored digital infrastructures that allow for productive forms of historical interaction, also with players and game creators in particular. As stated by Wineburg, historical thinking 'is neither a natural process nor something that springs automatically from psychological development' (Wineburg, 2001, p. 21). This means that historical thinking skills such as, for example, the ones discussed by Seixas and Morton (2013), need to be systematically cultivated. In informal contexts, this often becomes difficult, since informal engagements are fleeting in nature and participants are usually not challenged to systematically re-think their historical preconceptions. A possible approach to exceed these limitations lies in the creation of dedicated online community infrastructures, spread across multiple social media platforms and with close ties to preexisting gaming communities, where constructive historical interactions can be initiated and sustained.

An interesting example of such an infrastructure is r/AskHistorians, a 'portal for public history' spread across multiple social media platforms such as Reddit, Twitter, Facebook and podcasting services such as Soundcloud (AskHistorians, 2011). In the r/AskHistorians community, users are invited to ask historical questions and

engage in discussions with other users. What sets r/AskHistorians apart from somewhat similar communities is that users are required to follow strict guidelines when engaging with others, and that discussions on the community platforms are strictly moderated. For example, some rules that users are required to follow when asking questions and posting answers are to give 'serious on-topic comments only' and to 'write original, in-depth and comprehensive answers [to questions], using good historical practices' (AskHistorians, 2020). Examples of such 'good historical practices' according to the community guidelines include the requirement for users to adequately source answers and avoid 'soapboxing', the practice of asking overtly ideologically charged questions (AskHistorians, 2020). As such, r/AskHistorians offers a compelling starting point to further reflect on how historical thinking skills can be advanced in gaming-related online environments.

At the same time, the establishment of online community infrastructures such as r/AskHistorians also raises questions. In her study on r/AskHistorians, Gilbert (2020) shows how the act of community moderation, which in the case of r/AskHistorians is done by volunteers, can become emotionally taxing, for example, due to the overall culture of Reddit, the host platform of r/AskHistorians. As a self-proclaimed 'bastion of free speech', Reddit continues to serve as a home for a wide variety of racist, sexist and other forms of distasteful and controversial content. More broadly, platforms such as Reddit are often characterized by infrastructural features that actively enable forms of online harassment (Kerr & Lee, 2019). Further questions can be raised about the intended target audience of such communities. For example, r/AskHistorians as a community primarily consists of relatively highly educated, young, white, and male US American users (Gilbert, 2020). These and other questions call for a further investigation into the affordances, constraints and implementation conditions of cross-platform digital infrastructures for informal historical learning.

A second approach to stimulate the development of historical thinking skills in gaming-related online environments lies in adopting a repertoire of event-based initiatives in cooperation with player communities and game companies. Over the past few years, an increasing number of game companies have started to adopt a 'games as service' business model. This model entails that game companies no longer limit themselves to creating games as singular cultural commodities. Instead, they continue to provide additional content and upgrades to their games long after the initial release, in order to keep players engaged with the game and generate additional profits (Kerr, 2017, p. 64–105). The additional content provided by game companies can take on various forms, from cosmetic items such as new virtual outfits for a game character that can be purchased by using virtual in-game currencies, to ludic challenges that can only be completed during a limited timeframe. However, game companies have also started to set up broader in-game events to attract players. A remarkable example of this trend is the live music performance given by DJ Marshmello in February 2019 in the popular game *Fortnite* (Epic Games, 2017), which was attended by millions of players simultaneously (Webster, 2019). In line with this trend, a potential approach to stimulate productive engagements with history in gaming-related online spaces lies in setting up singular events in the context of the distinct 'media repertoires' of the targeted player communities and game companies.

An example of such a type of online event is the AMA or 'Ask Me Anything'. An AMA is an interactive interview-session held on platforms such as Reddit, during which an invited guest is present on the platform for a fixed duration of time to answer questions by community members. An example of such an AMA is the one hosted by James Grossman, the executive director of the American Historical Association (Grossman, 2018). Especially when setting up these events, it becomes important to negotiate the interests of the game companies, in order for history professionals to find a proper balance between community outreach and a retention of scientific standards.

Digital Games as Sites for Learning in History Classrooms

Concerning the use of historical digital games in formal history education, several of the observations made above retain their relevance. Also in history classrooms, the added value of historical digital games lies in, for example, their potential to evoke a sense of historical revelation. However, as formal education is characterized by unique possibilities and constraints, it is relevant to discuss what educators should take into account when integrating digital games into their teaching. In what follows, I will highlight a number of general prerequisites for the use of digital games in the (history) classroom, based on the available literature. I will also elaborate on how to discuss historical digital games in the history classroom in a deconstructionist manner, by highlighting a number of 'mediating layers' that inherently shape a commercial digital game's historical referentiality.

When reflecting on how to integrate digital games in the history classroom, several essential contextual factors need to be taken into account. Firstly, it is important to emphasize the central position taken up by individual teachers, as they, within the confines of (nationally) determined history school curricula, are considered to be key agents of change in formal education (Teo, 2008). In light of this observation, digital games need to be identified as only one possible tool in a teacher's instructional toolkit. When engaging in instructional design, teachers need to determine for themselves whether or not the use of digital games fits their teaching style. This observation is based on studies into the perceptions of students in secondary education about the 'authenticity' of teachers. As demonstrated by De Bruyckere and Kirschner (2016), secondary school students consider it to be significant that teachers put a personal stamp on their teaching practice while staying true to their personality. Secondly, it is important to discuss the perceptions of students regarding the usefulness of digital games in education. Bourgonjon et al. (2010) demonstrate how students can be rather sceptical about the use of digital games in class, as they consider gaming to be a leisure activity. The preference of secondary school students to use digital games in classroom settings depends on several factors: (1) the perceived usefulness of digital games, i.e. whether or not digital games can provide clear opportunities for learning; (2) the perceived ease of use of digital games, i.e. whether or not students believe they are capable of successfully interacting with a digital game; and (3) the

extent to which students have prior experiences with playing games. Taking these factors into account, it becomes important for teachers who want to use digital games in history classes to: (1) render explicit the added value of the adopted digital game in the context of the instructional design; (2) schedule in sufficient time during the instruction for students to learn how to play the game; and (3) take into account the varying levels of experience students have with playing games, and modify the instruction accordingly. A final contextual factor that teachers need to take into account is whether or not they can access the necessary technological infrastructure to properly integrate digital games into their teaching.

In light of these prior observations, several general strategies can be recommended when integrating digital games into the history classroom (McCall, 2016; Schrier, 2014). Firstly, teachers are advised to develop a broader lesson plan, in which the use of a digital game supports the achievement of a set of clearly defined learning outcomes, for example concerning the advancement of historical thinking skills. Secondly, teachers are advised to let players adopt a reflective approach while playing a historical digital game in class. It is very easy for students to become engrossed in the activity of playing the game itself, without making further observations. McCall (2016) recommends adopting a reflective play style, where students are asked to actively reflect on their activities and make notes, for example when experiencing moments of historical revelation. This requires the teacher to act as a coach and organize a moment of debriefing at the end of the instruction to establish explicit connections with the learning goals. Thirdly, teachers are encouraged to discuss historical digital games as distinct interpretations of the past, like other forms of historical representation. Here, I want to refer back to the notions of 'procedural rhetoric' (Bogost, 2007) and semiotic contextualization (Sicart, 2013) discussed above. Digital games can be characterized as ideologically underpinned, mediated and performative representations of (fictionalized and/or presupposed) aspects of the past that aim to render the past meaningful through form-specific means (Elliott & Kapell, 2013; Uricchio, 2005). In the case of entertainment-oriented digital games, this is done to achieve commercial success, which means that historical accuracy often only plays a secondary role. I will further illustrate this below.

In the context of the history classroom, the potential of historical digital games to allow for moments of historical revelation can be seized to achieve several goals. On the one hand, it can be adopted to shed light into past events. For example, if teachers want to teach about the Iranian Revolution of 1979, they can let students reflexively play the aforementioned game *1979 Revolution: Black Friday*, and let them learn more about the specific actors and events that led up to the revolution, as this is depicted both in-game and through forms of integrated historical contextualization (Fig. 2). However, on the other hand, digital games can also be used to render explicit various methodological and theoretical considerations that are central to history as a discipline (e.g. Schrier, 2014). To accommodate the latter approach, I will illustrate how historical digital games can be discussed as representations that are inevitably shaped by, for example, game design and marketing considerations as 'mediating layers', in a deconstructionist manner (Munslow, 2007). I will do so

by briefly discussing the games from the *Assassin's Creed*-, *Medal of Honor*- and *Battlefield*-series (Electronic Arts, 2002—present).

As highlighted above, the games from the *Assassin's Creed*-series allow players to freely explore virtual recreations of historical locations, which, at least according to the marketing of these games, have been rendered in great detail. However, when the developers of *Assassin's Creed* create a new virtual historical environment, they also actively adapt it to accommodate various play activities. For example, a central activity in *Assassin's Creed*-games revolves around climbing famous buildings and other structures. Especially in the earlier games in the series, climbing to the top of these buildings or structures required players to solve spatial puzzles, as they needed to find the proper trajectory to reach the top of the structure. Therefore, the architecture of famous buildings would be actively modified to integrate these spatial puzzles. More generally, the in-game environments of every *Assassin's Creed*-game are actively adapted to accommodate combat-centred gameplay, resulting in buildings that are often more spacious than they were in reality. In history classrooms, it can be very productive to discuss how these, and other game design considerations actively impact the historical dimension of the game. This can for example be done by letting students explore the virtual world of an *Assassin's Creed*-game in groups and letting them take screenshots of the monuments and other buildings in it. The students can then compare these screenshots with other primary and secondary visual sources, to let the students observe in what ways the original architecture has been modified in the game.

Similar critical assessments can also be made about the marketing accompanying commercial digital games. For example, when game publisher Electronic Arts released the FPS-game *Battlefield V*, Electronic Arts, 2018 set during the World War II, in November 2018, a heated online discussion erupted over how the game represented 'Operation Gunnerside', an operation in Norway in 1943 during which a team of Norwegian commandos sabotaged a German-controlled production facility for heavy water, an important component for the production of nuclear weapons, near the Norwegian town of Rjukan (Wieviorka, 2017, p. 136–138). The online backlash resulted from the fact that in *Battlefield V*, players can sabotage the heavy water plant while playing as a female Norwegian resistance fighter, whereas the historical operation was carried out by a group of male operatives. Teachers can engage with this observation and the subsequent backlash in several ways. Firstly, they can use the scenes from *Battlefield V* depicting 'Operation Gunnerside' as a starting point to further discuss the role played by women in the resistance across occupied Europe, and in society more generally, during World War II (e.g. Buchheim & Futselaar, 2014; Campbell, 2013). On the other hand, they can use these scenes to critically reflect on why the creators of the game made the choice for a female protagonist in the first place. Here, it becomes apparent that, apart from efforts on behalf of Electronic Arts and game developer DICE to contribute to inclusivity and diversity (Chalk, 2018), this decision was made for marketing reasons, to make the game, which belongs to a genre traditionally purchased by male players (i.e. the FPS), more appealing to female players. *Battlefield V* was released following the success of other online FPS-games such as *Overwatch*, Blizzard Entertainment, 2016 which was able to attract

significantly more female players than its competitors (McKeand, 2017). Similar changes can be observed when looking at other historical digital games that have represented 'Operation Gunnerside'. In *Medal of Honor* (Electronic Arts, 1999), players can equally destroy the heavy water plant near Rjukan. However, they do not do so while playing as a male Norwegian resistance fighter either, since they carry out the mission as a male US American secret operative. This change was equally made for marketing purposes, to appeal to US American consumers. More generally, when discussing historical digital games that were made for entertainment purposes, it is significant to reflect on how marketing considerations impact how history is ludically represented. Teachers can do so by letting students compare scenes from games such as *Medal of Honor* and *Battlefield V* with other primary and secondary sources about the historical events that are depicted in both games.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored three ways in which historical digital games, also in particular the ones that are made for entertainment purposes, can contribute to meaningful engagements with the past and the advancement of historical thinking skills. Firstly, concerning digital games as standalone cultural artefacts, I highlighted how they have the potential to evoke a sense of historical revelation, or captivate the historical fascination of players indirectly. I also discussed how this potential can be further enriched by adding various contextualizing primary and secondary sources to a game. Secondly, I highlighted how digital games can be viewed as a single cultural form in a broader contemporary ecosphere of digitized expression, and how historical learning can be promoted in this ecosphere. Even though further research on this topic is required, I argued that this can be achieved by either setting up institutionally anchored, cross-platform digital infrastructures that allow for sustained and productive historical engagement online, or by organizing singular historically-themed events, in active collaboration with players and game creators. Thirdly, I discussed some general conditions for the successful use of digital entertainment games in the classroom, as well as specific ways in which this can be done, for example in light of a deconstructionist approach to history teaching.

Based on these observations, a number of recommendations can be formulated, in particular for game developers, (public) historians and history educators. For game developers, a primary venue for further exploration lies in creating digital games that allow for innovative forms of historical revelation and contextualization, especially in light of the advancement of historical thinking skills. Here, (public) historians can play a role too, since they can contribute to designing historically meaningful gameplay experiences or providing context to what is depicted in a game. Secondly, for (public) historians, an important venue for further research lies in studying existing cross-platform online game communities, as well as in exploring how to set up new ones or organize historical events in collaboration with game

creators and players. Finally, for history educators, the challenge lies in designing forms of instruction that leverage the potential of digital games to foster historical learning. Here, the discussion above provides important starting points.

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Informal Strategies for Learning History in Japanese Mass Media Visual Culture: A Case Study of the Mobile Game *Fate/Grand Order*

Federico Peñate Domínguez

Abstract This article examines the potentials of learning history through the consumption of the Japanese mobile game *Fate/Grand Order*. The nature of historical representation in the Japanese videogame industry tends to differ significantly from the logics found in Western digital entertainment products. The former constitutes an integral part of the Japanese media mix, typified by the spread of franchises and narratives through multiple visual commodities that include manga and anime. First, we examine the role they play in the social and cultural specificities of contemporary Japan. Furthermore, these commodities are specifically targeted at a body of highly engaged fans generally known as *otaku*, who become affectionate with the characters that populate these products. *Fate/Grand Order* features legendary figures drawn from history, folklore, and myth that are reshaped under the aesthetic patterns of the *media mix*. Players actively engage with these characters, constantly reproducing them through illustrations, comic strips, original stories, and discussion. This also opens a gateway for independent research about the historical figures they embody. Finally, we examine the digital community dedicated to *Fate/Grand Order* on Reddit, a website that encourages the sharing of content of specific topics and fanbases, to comprehend how historical discourses are shared, shaped, and developed by the online interaction of the videogame's enthusiasts. Results show that, despite the content mainly addresses the franchise's fictional universe and the playful interaction with its characters, there is room for the active discussion of history and the further knowledge of the past.

Keywords Japanese video games · Media mix · Otaku · Moe · History learning

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Introduction

Fate/Grand Order is a Japanese mobile game released in Japan in 2015 for Android and iOS, later released globally in 2017. The game, developed by Delightworks and produced by Aniplex, is the most successful iteration of the *Fate* franchise (Nasu & Takeuchi, 2004), a trademark that includes a myriad of spin-offs featured in a range of media that include manga, anime, trading cards, action figures, and a plethora of merchandise. *Grand Order*'s popularity in Japan is only surpassed by its profitability, reporting more than $4 billion in revenues by the end of 2019. Worldwide, it has been downloaded to approximately 32 million devices (Chapple, 2020). Players assume the role of a young magician embarked on a time-traveling quest in search of "singularities": alterations in the natural course of history that, unless fixed, will result in the extinction of humanity. As magicians, players summon "servants", powerful spirits that embody the essence of heroes drawn from history, literature, and myth. In terms of game structure, *Fate/Grand Order* combines two of the quintessential Japanese game genres: the story is told using the visual novel style of static images and text, while the turn-based combat system and the leveling up mechanics are drawn from Japanese role-playing games. These traits, with the addition of manga and anime-like characters, give the game a clearly recognizable Japanese identity (Navarro-Remesal & Loriguillo-López, 2013).

Servants are the main appeal of the game, adding up to more than two hundred in the current Japanese version. Some examples of historical figures included in the game are Alexander the Great, Joan of Arc, Oda Nobunaga, and Florence Nightingale. These characters are designed to look cool and charming, and their historical authenticity is limited to easily recognizable elements. Japanese artists and developers tend to turn national and foreign culture and tradition into successful media franchises that appeal to contemporary interests (Wai-Ming Ng, 2013, p. 234). While some of these characters are unlocked as the player advances through the game's storyline, the vast majority become available through a random lottery mechanic known as "*gacha*". Users must spend an in-game resource (named 'saint-quartz') that can be obtained either by completing a series of quests or by purchasing it with real-world money, to roll the lottery and obtain random servants. Many players are willing to pay real money to obtain their favorite characters, especially in the rare occasions their drop rate is slightly increased (Cabrera, 2018). An extreme case is a Japanese man called Daigo who spent roughly $70,000 on saint-quartz. When interviewed, he claimed that he felt a strong connection with *Grand Order*'s characters, spends almost all his waking time playing, and is deeply moved by the game (Epstein & Inada, 2018). This attitude toward *gacha* is not limited to Japanese audiences, as Western ones are willing to spend their hard-earned money for the tiniest chance to draw their favorite characters, sometimes reaching borderline cases of gambling (Cabrera, 2018).

In this article we will examine the dynamics established between *Fate/Grand Order* and its fan community to shed light on the role certain types of Japanese digital games play in the independent process of history learning. First, we will address the problematics of history education in current Japan. Next, we discuss

how video games share narrative traits and aesthetic elements with manga and anime, especially in their inclusion of eye-catching characters. We move on to examine the relationships established between fans and characters, in order to understand the motivations for learning history. Finally, an internet-based fan community will serve as an example of how users engage in exchanges of information that often involve the independent research and creative interpretation of the past.

The History Problem in Japanese Education and Collective Memory

Contemporary manifestations of popular memory in Japan are intrinsically linked to the end of World War II. The triumph of fascism and the wars of imperial expansion have shaken the core of the nation and its identity. These two subjects have been explored and revisited during the American occupation, the postwar years, and the last decades of the millennium (Conrad, 2010, p. 49–74). Currently, Japan's historical consciousness is governed by the logics of the selective historical gaze, a set of strategies that determine how different groups "are adept at focusing on the events and interpretations of war history that are most compatible with their contemporary identities and political priorities" (Seaton, 2007, p. 135). This is not limited to the relative recent events of the twentieth century, both the imperialistic turn of the Japanese state and the reconstruction of the Japanese institutions and society during the Cold War. The revision of the nation's past was extended to encompass the Meiji Restoration, the revolutionary process by which Japan became a modern nation, and the pre-Modern Edo period. In the postwar decades, Japanese historiography embarked on the journey to revise the nation's history that often led to discourses about the uniqueness of the Japanese culture and self-identity (Conrad, 2010, p. 67–69).

In Japan, current debates on history, polarized in the decade of the 1990s, revolve around Japan's wartime atrocities and events such as the Nanjing Massacre, the human experiments performed by Unit 731 in Manchuria, and the forced prostitution of Korean comfort women (Conrad, 2010, p. 256–257). Leftist academics and activists claim that Japan indeed performed those atrocities and its government has still not fully apologized to the victims. On the other hand, die-hard neo-nationalists deny those accusations and interpret Japan's expansion as an effort to liberate its Asian neighbors from Western colonization. However, the most widespread conception is that, although Japan fought a war of aggression, most of its citizens were victims of both a military dictatorship and the Allies' indiscriminate attacks against civilians, as exemplified in the dropping of the A-bombs (Seaton, 2007, p. 18–22). Lastly, a conservative view widespread among bureaucrats and government officials stresses the tragic martyrdom of Japanese civilians and soldiers as a way of promoting a proud and "healthy" nationalism to overcome the masochistic view of the past imposed by the international community and the Japanese left (Conrad, 2010, p. 248–251).

These controversies have a noteworthy impact in high school history education, that became the battleground between progressive-leaning and leftist teachers, and the conservative Ministry of Education (*Mombushō*). The latter has had control over the planification of history education curricula since the postwar, promoting a positivist and empiricist narrative based on the chronological enumeration of data without explanation or interpretation (Dierkes, 2010, p. 102–156). Furthermore, *Mombushō* exerts its control over the content of history textbooks through a screening and certification system that prevents the publication of content that deviates from the official interpretations of Japanese history (Arai, 2010; Dierkes, 2010, p. 108–120). In other words, "the screening system is a government device for educating people about national memory and creating national identity" (Oshiba, 2006, p. 286). On the other hand, the oversimplified understanding of historical processes is further encouraged by an education culture that focuses on memorization and the instrumental acquisition of knowledge. This system of evaluation, built around multiple-choice questions and very short responses, plays a decisive role in the academic future of students. A study of the reception of textbooks and the history education curricula among college students in Japan has shown that, as a result, most of the high school students prioritize the memorization of information over the understanding of historical processes. Therefore, they articulate their historically situated identities through other channels that include sharing experiences and ideas with family and friends, building relationships with foreigners, and consuming historical content through a variety of media that include newspapers, magazines, blogs, documentaries, TV dramas, and films (Fukuoka, 2011).

The Past as a Mass-Consumption Commodity

The problematics that cross current Japanese identities, divergent in their evaluation of history, stem from their inability to successfully come into terms with pre-1945 realities. Popular media has played a key role in this process of redesigning the past, informed by political trends and the audience's interests (Shimazu, 2003). As Rachael Hutchinson (2019) argues, Japan's inclination for transmedia storytelling produces a kind of fragmentary narrative, that comes together through the combination of media and artistic forms and that is representative of how contemporary Japanese society views their past and, therefore, their identity (p. 1–6). Moreover, media discourses on history have a strong impact on younger generations, since the vacuum left by their poor formal education can be filled with easily packaged and ideologically charged discourses (Shimazu, 2003, p. 113–115). The role of manga in the creation of historically situated identities has been exhaustively examined because of its widespread readership. The division of manga in genres that appeal to defined gendered and demographic target audiences further shapes the way history is represented and interpreted, therefore conveying a specific sense of history (Rosenbaum, 2013, p. 3). On the other hand, manga stories set in the past are shaped by the author's opinion and experiences, who selects which historical

elements and details to include and uses combinations of text and images to create a personalized narrative. Artistic licenses are not only allowed but also encouraged and offer gateways for exploring the past alternative from official sources, challenging mainstream conservative discourses (Nakar, 2008; Penney, 2007). Finally, the collective effort established between authors and audiences in mapping Japan's controversial past allows us to interpret manga as a form of banal memory, this is, "the unnoticed dynamics of the involvement of social agents in producing and reproducing remembrances" (Otmazgin, 2016, p. 12).

What role do video games play in the configuration of Japan's banal memory? Digital entertainment products are part of a wider ecology of media that includes manga, anime, arcade machines, light novels, and a plethora of collectibles and toys. The Japanese *media mix*, as this phenomenon has been labeled, represents a specific cultural instance of Henry Jenkin's theory of convergence culture (Consalvo, 2016, p. 92–93). Moreover, the development of the Japanese video game industry in the 1980s, a period that includes its expansion to foreign markets, was heavily influenced by the narrative and aesthetic traits of manga an anime, especially in the design of colorful and eye-catching characters (Picard, 2013). Contemporary Japanese video games still present a unique cultural imprint that not only responds to the tastes of the local market but is perceived as cool and interesting by Western players that are also avid consumers of manga and anime. The influence of the *media mix* in their narrative structures, game design, cultural references, and aesthetic trends play a key role in how history is presented, received, and learned through the consumption of its contents (Navarro-Remesal & Loriguillo-López, 2013).

Nonetheless, manga, anime, and video games constitute different platforms with specific methods and strategies in the process of meaning-making of the past. For example, since the end of the American occupation, war-themed manga has experimented a series of transformations, from sanitized adventures aimed at young boys to personal recollections of the conflict's tragic consequences for Japanese common soldiers and the civil population (Berndt, 2008; Nakar, 2008; Penney, 2007). Ideological approaches to history in manga also became polarized, with authors denouncing the atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese army in occupied territories (O'Dwyer, 2013; Ropers, 2013), while others took revisionist approaches that negated Japan's guilt and tried to promote a proud nationalism among their readers (Shields, 2013). In gaming, on the other hand, the player's direct agency made it more difficult to address the highly controversial topic of the Pacific War. Instead, developers tend to place the action in conflicts that have become part of the mythical origins of the Japanese nation, with a special emphasis on the glorified *Sengoku* period (Hutchinson, 2019, p. 185–189). Other idealized periods that have been translated to the video game medium are China's period of the Warring States (Wai-Ming Ng, 2013) and the convulsing times that ended with the modernization of Japan and culminated in the Meiji Restoration (Hasegawa, 2013). The few instances of games set in World War II use strategies to avoid or blurry the more distasteful aspects of the conflict. *Kantai Collection,* a game that reimagines the Imperial Japanese Navy ships as young girls, adopts two of the most common strategies: placing the action in an alternative reality and sexualizing the characters (Hutchinson, 2019, p. 189–202). The latter reflects a

trend that has been on the rise in Japan since the last decade of the millennium, this is, the widespread and centrality of *moe-kyara.*

Moe-Kyara, Otaku, and an Emotional Approach to History

In recent years, there has been a paradigm shift in the content of the *media mix*, "from dramatic stories to that of a game-like settings and cute characters, so-called *kyara*" (Berndt, 2008, p. 297). Characters have been an integral part of the Japanese visual popular culture since the success of the TV anime *Tetsuwan Atomu* in 1964, a phenomenon that proved the ability of static images of 2D characters to spread among different media and even populate the material world (Steinberg, 2012). The popularization of young and beautiful female figures of manga and anime among hardcore fans dates to the decade of the 1980s (Kinsella, 1998), but it reached major audiences during the closing years of the millennium. The economic stagnation and following recession of the Japanese economy, combined with the gradual erosion of the postwar social order, left the Japanese with a sentiment of social malaise (Yoda, 2006). Furthermore, an increasing disregard for traditional family values and the rising dissolution of gender roles left many Japanese lacking emotional solaces. In a society where communication between individuals has become more difficult than ever, cute and sexy characters have filled the vacuum of real relationships, acting as shadow families and imaginary romantic partners (Allison, 2006, p. 66–92; Galbraith, 2009). Among *otaku*, a term that describes hardcore fans of the *media mix*, intimate affection is sought in *moe-kyara.*

The concept of *kyara*, a contraction of *kyarakutaa* (the Japanese translation of the English word 'character'), "suggest archetypes not tied to identifiable historical or political contexts that can be easily transferred from one marketable backdrop, genre, or medium to another" (Penney, 2013, p. 146). *Kyara* predates the design of specific characters, this is, serves as a blueprint of different aesthetic elements and personality traits that are combined in almost unlimited ways to create new characters (Condry, 2013, p. 63–65). When a character gains popularity among *otaku* it is disassembled into its constitutive components, which are integrated in an abstract database of elements that have been proven to be remarkably attractive to the audience. These elements are systematically recycled in the creation on new characters, the latter becoming simulacra (Azuma, 2009, p. 39–47). At the same time, *kyara*-based characters become the quintessential commodity in a mass-consumption driven society with emotional needs since they "serve as screens for projections (or various desires) rather than as representation, offering symptoms instead of symbols and, thus, furthering easy consumption while resisting intellectual information" (Berndt, 2008, p. 297). Due to the limited nature of the high-context media of manga, anime, and video games, the character personalities tend to be extreme and unbalanced in order to transmit its narrative messages in a direct and effective way (Saito, 2011, p. 135–146). Under these circumstances, historical figures adapted to the *media mix* environment become personifications of limited archetypes, populating stories that

selectively use historical elements to add flavor to fantasy landscapes and supernatural environments (Napier, 2005, p. 275–278; Ruh, 2014).

In the 1990s, *moe* became a buzzword used in early Internet *otaku* chatrooms and forums to communicate their preference for cute characters. This term derives from the verb *moeru* (that loosely translates as 'to get fired up') and was used to express the intense emotional attachment between the viewer and their fictional object of desire (Galbraith, 2014, p. 5). It points out to an "affectionate longing for 2D characters or, more accurately, a reference to an internalized emotional response to something, generally with no hope for a reciprocal emotional payback" (Condry, 2013, p. 187). Sexuality has been described as the key factor of the *otaku* identity, who become aroused by fictional characters and can use them as sexual aids. The constant production of derivative works is fueled by the unresolved trauma of being excited by a drawing and the inability to physically consumate the sexual act with the object of desire. Therefore, *otaku* needs to create images that themselves lead to new images. This repetition, and the expression of longing for these characters, is the core of the *otaku* identity (Saito, 2011). It is important to point out that the majority of *otaku* tend to move between a normative intimate life grounded in reality and the *queer* expression of sexuality in the realm of the imaginary represented by these fictions, and only a few completely disregard human sexual partners in what is called a complex for 2D characters (Morinaga Takuro, as cited in Galbraith, 2014, p. 126–135). Some have been very vocal about these practices and consider them a revolutionary form of love (*ren'ai kakumei*) against the backdrop on unbalanced relationships that leave unsuccessful men outside the love market (Honda Toru, as cited in Galbraith, 2014, p. 116–125).

Community-Based History Learning: *Fate/Grand Order*'s Online Fan Networks

The phenomenon surrounding *Fate/Grand Order* presents a perfect case study of the realities addressed in this article. It is a Japanese fantasy game that selectively appropriates elements from the past, in this case historical figures from all around the world, while avoiding controversial topics of the nation's past. In addition, these individuals are imagined as handsome and beautiful characters using *kyara* archetypes as their blueprint. Third, a globalized fanbase constituted by both male and female players has established strong relationships of affection with the game's servants, demonstrating that the logics of *moe* affect not only Japanese *otaku*, but also foreign ones. Lastly, each character's profile includes a short explanation of their historical context and their deeds, resembling the historist and positivist approach in history education taken by Japanese high schools.

It has been stated that *otaku* privilege an encyclopedic approach to knowledge. These fans, driven by their obsessive interests, gather a large amount of information to expand their knowledge on a very specific subject (Tsuji, 2012, p. 18–19). However,

for *otaku* data has no intrinsic value. Any information's worth is closely linked to its availability: the scarcer the information is, the higher its value. As Lawrence Eng (2012) puts it, "their focus on information value means that otaku care about trivia that others would ignore, and they create value where it did not previously exist" (p. 98). Additionally, highly valuable knowledge is traded between otaku in exchange of other obscure information, material rewards and/or prestige and reputation among their peers. These types of relationships based on the exchange requires the creation of networks, and the popularization of the internet has therefore spawned multiple *otaku* online communities (Eng, 2012, p. 97–101). Many members of the *otaku* community use this information creatively by engaging in activities that reproduce or modify the content of their favorite franchises. Some of the most widespread engagements are cosplay (Okabe, 2012) and *dōjinshi* (written and illustrated derivative works), which are displayed, shared, and sold in dedicated conventions or through digital networks (Kinsella, 1998; Tamagawa, 2012).

What implications do these dynamics have in a digital game with selective historical elements? Content featured in the Japanese *media mix* is not isolated but is linked to a wider set of landscapes that also address the past. Nissin Otmazgin (2016) argues that the intertextual resonances established by these commodities and other cultural forms are "an important starting point for the later contextualization of historical events and to the level of involvement and interest of the students toward certain historical events" (p. 11). In gaming, Stephanie Fisher (2011) has pointed out the potential of digital entertainment for tangential history learning. Players tend to perceive the historical content presented in games as cool and entertaining in contrast with the dry explanations given by their teachers or featured in textbooks. This positive encounter familiarizes players with past events and encouraged them to pursue independent learning (Fisher, 2011, p. 77–78). Pieter Van der Heede further explores these dynamics to establish the concept of ludic titillation, "where existing game conventions (…) are used to attract players, who are subsequently invited to explore the historical lexical layer of the game through forms of integrated contextualization" (this volume).

For the purposes of this article, we have explored the strategies of informal history learning in *Fate/Grand Order*'s dedicated forum on Reddit: r/grandorder. This is not the only place for uploading and discussing original content, since there are other communities such as r/FGOfanart and r/FGOcomics. However, r/grandorder has the highest number of subscribers, a total of 197,740.[1] Furthermore, while other communities focus on the exchange of illustrations and comic strips, r/grandorder is organized in different categories according to the nature of the content: news, strategy and lore discussion, guides and tips for players, comic strips, official and fan-made illustrations, and cosplay. Here we can see an example of *otaku* sharing information, channeled through the common interest and affection for characters, and how it serves as a gateway for learning history. In a series of posts, user "Shiro_Kuroki" expresses his love for Joan of Arc by drawing comic strips in which his avatar engages in a romantic relationship with the historical figure, now turned a servant. One picture

[1] As for September 9, 2020. https://www.reddit.com/r/grandorder/.

shows him reading a book to the Maiden, and after another user asked for the title of the book "Shiro_Kuroki" answered the following: "Well..I'm reading Personal Recollection of Joan of Arc by Mark Twain right now. But I think she would definitely be super embarassed/awkward if we read a biography of her" (Shiro_Kuroki, 2020).

The fact that this player started gathering information about Joan of Arc after spending hundreds of gaming hours with her digital alter-ego shows the importance of the ludic titillation and *moe* affection as a motivation for learning history. Furthermore, we can see how this community engages in acts that can be read as a form of collective historical memory. On May 30, 2020, user "removedquasar" made a post to commemorate the date when Joan of Arc was executed, accompanied with a picture of the adaptation of said event in one of the many *Fate*'s TV shows (2020). This act of remembrance spawned a discussion between several users around the morals and social customs of the Late Middle Ages, touching topics like the age of maturity in the fifteenth century, the power of the Church, and the political intricacies of the Hundred Year's War. Another post encourages users to imagine new servants based on historical characters from their home countries (The_Kebe, 2019). The entry spawned interesting exchanges of information between users of different nationalities. Proposals always followed the rules of *Fate*'s fictional universe, conditioning the nature of the characters chosen. For a character to manifest as a servant, their legend must be widespread enough and their physical manifestation would be closely linked to their fame. Therefore, most of the historical proposals were well-known leaders, warriors, scientists, writers, and intellectuals. For example, many Filipino users suggested José Rizal, who became the father and martyr of the Filipino nationalism. By discussing and posting in online forums with other fans all around the world, players learn about historical processes and prominent figures of countries and regions that don't show up in their schools' curricula.

The curiosity and the thirst for expanding their encyclopedic knowledge among the *otaku* can also be detected in r/grandorder. For example, one post asks for interesting facts about servants, which led to debates about history and mythology (Fatire, 2020). Most of this thread is comprised of users commenting bizarre, curious, or funny anecdotes drawn from literary and historical sources. Although most users do not cite their sources, some comments feature links to Wikipedia and even digitalized primary sources, for example, fragments of the Arthurian cycles or the Epic of Gilgamesh. Discussion about the different interpretations and versions of myths is frequent and serves as an indicator of fans researching exhaustively *Fate/Grand Order*'s historical references. For example, on a comment explaining the importance of Quetzalcoatl in the development of Mesoamerican societies over the centuries, one user states the following:

> I never really had much of an interest in Aztec/Mayan/Mesoamerican culture or history or mythology before (…) But I absolutely loved Quetz's character in FGO and that got me to read a lot about it and I'm glad that was the case, because like I said I personally find it fascinating. (NuclearPasta, as cited in Fatire, 2020)

Willing to go deeper on these practices, we asked r/grandorder users two questions: first, if players got into the game because they had a previous interest in history and, second, if the game made them learn history on their own (Machangofio, 2019). The thread was answered by 27 users with a total of 74 comments. Some participants were already interested in works like King Arthur's legends, Hinduism's Mahabharata, and Norse mythology. In most cases, research was motivated by certain characters that players found cool or attractive. Most of the research was done by browsing Wikipedia articles and watching YouTube documentaries, but many users claimed that they often browsed other websites and consulted books to contrast information. One user acknowledged using search engines like Google Scholar and JSTOR and consulted peer-reviewed articles. They also liked servants whose design and characterization were consistent with their real counterparts. As a certain user put it, "all you can really do is keep researching until a narrative shines through that you can believe" (Ars-Tomato, as cited in Machangofio, 2019). Fan-based research also modifies the view players have of the game developer's narrative choices. One user stated that "The more I read, I can be either impressed or absolutely pissed over the Type-Moon portrayals" (SubconsciousLove, as cited in Machangofio, 2019), a statement that indicates a certain level of critical approach to the game's version of the past based on independent research. Furthermore, two users responded that their love for *Fate* characters partially influenced their career choices and are using undergraduate courses to learn more about their beloved servants.

Conclusions

Fate/Grand Order offers a perfect example on the increasing trends of history representation and storytelling in current Japanese visual mass media. Furthermore, it raises questions on how Japan, since the closing years of the last millennium, has dealt with its historical consciousness and how public debates about the nature of its past have shaped the way history is taught and learned at a high school education level. Although Japanese videogames share many traits with manga and anime, the central position of the player takes in relationship with the content makes it difficult to address controversial historical events. *Fate/Grand Order* thus follows a trend established in mass-consumption media by sanitizing the past and transforming history into a romanticized commodity. It is an example of how fantasy, science-fiction, and history collide in current entertainment, in which contemporary hopes and anxieties are channeled into a fictionalized and selective past. Moreover, the game's focus on visually compelling characters with attractive personality traits and the devotion showed to them by established fans has proven the role that affection to fictional characters plays in the motivation for learning history. These fans do not keep these emotions to themselves. On the contrary, the tendency to express their love and desire and share their interest with their peers has contributed to the formation of communities both offline and online.

The analysis of *Fate/Grand Order* and the fan community it has spawned in the five years since its launch sheds light to the dynamics of history learning in videogames, entangled with identity issues linked to fictional love and affection. The electronic entertainment industry is a global one, and it has been like that since its popularization in the last quarter of the twentieth century. International trends have shaped the form and the content of its products; however, specific cultural trends have defined videogame genres that are consumed because of their familiarity or foreignness. This is the case of Japanese games that rose in a domestic market that privileged specific gaming platforms, creative practices, entertainment trends, and aesthetic tastes drawn from deeply established media such as manga and anime. These inherent traits also served games to be consumed abroad by carrying a sense of exotic Japaneseness that many Western players find appealing. In representing the past, these commodities also differ from their Western counterparts. If American and European games tend to seek authenticity in their construction of historical narratives, Japanese games disregard accuracy and reshape the past under the logic of postmodernity. *Fate/Grand Order* draws from historical figures to configure a complex and fantastic universe populated by recognizable, yet original characters designed to establish a deep emotional connection with users.

Servants play a central role both in community building, as seen by the endless process of creating, sharing, and consuming illustrations and comic strips, and in the sexual and romantic identity of users, who constantly express their love and affection to characters (represented on Reddit by comments, upvotes, and trophies). Although the focus of the game is to create an interesting and complex fictional universe populated by attractive characters, constantly updating the ludic features and including more servants to make profit of them, fan activities show us that there is potential for learning history. At a first glance, most of the knowledge is drawn from easy to access sources and dissemination websites, blogs, podcasts, and videos. *Fate/Grand Order*, as many *media mix* franchises who make use of the past as background, flavor, or ambience, promotes an encyclopedic approach to history. This resonates with *otaku* obsession with data and trivia that does not reach beyond the accumulation of information to a critical use of it. However, by engaging in endless communication with their peers, committed players have the potential to develop skills that allow them to go beyond the historical master narratives included in the game. In their quest for acquiring more knowledge about their favorite servants, they develop a creative vision built from hours of reading, cross-examining, and discussing historical discourses. This process of information gathering may lead to a deeper understanding of former cultures and societies, but its goal is the accumulation of knowledge about the servants. Here we can see how historical facts, myths, and folklore are remembered by players and repurposed to fit the logics of the game by a process of epistemological resignification and commodification.

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Films and Theatre as Tools of Historical Dialogue

Historical Films in History Classrooms: Documentaries or Fiction Films? Teachers' Views and Practices

Maria Repoussi and Maria Mavrommati

Abstract Visual culture evolves as the dominant platform for our encounter with the past. Moreover, the impact of movies on shaping our historical culture is considered powerful. History Education in theory recognizes the outstanding position of movies as chief carriers of historical messages. But what are the practices employed in history classrooms? What are teachers' conceptions, attitudes and instructional practices towards films? Have they inherited traditional positivist skepticism about movies' historical veracity and accuracy? If they use films in their history classrooms, what kind of movies do they prefer, fiction or nonfiction, and why? These are the leading questions of the research presented in this chapter. We used a mixed methods approach to collect data from a large number of teachers in Greece. Results show that the general disciplinary conceptions and ideas on history as well as on history education have a considerable impact on instructional practices toward movies. Teachers who prefer historical documentaries for objectivity and validity reasons, considering these reasons central for history teaching and learning, use documentaries as an objective medium to support the textbooks 'one truth' content. On the contrary, teachers who criticize the content-based history teaching and the alleged objective representation of the past use historical documentaries as any other historical sources and narratives taking into consideration their subjective nature. In this second case, not only the content of history textbooks is questioned, but also the idea of a sole historical truth and objectivity in historical interpretation. Research data are rich and meaningful, connecting closely teachers' epistemological beliefs with instructional practices of digital media, which movies are included in.

Keywords Cinematic history · Teachers' conceptions · Movies in history education · Historical films and history classrooms · Epistemological beliefs and instructional practices

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Introduction

Movies as a cultural force of representing the past and shaping historical identities require a new space in history and social studies classrooms. This space deals with major shifts, both epistemological and cultural. At the epistemological level, it concerns the turn of history education toward matters of historical interpretation, the social construction of history, and the formation of collective memory (Levstik & Tyson, 2008; Metzger & Harris, 2018; Stearns et al., 2000) following significant changes in historians' conceptions about their discipline (Munslow, 2007; Ankersmit, 2005; Passerini, 2015; Scott & Keates, 2001). At the cultural level, it primarily concerns the growing importance of visual culture as the dominant cultural platform for our encounter with the past (Davis, 2000; Metzger & Paxton, 2016). Our understanding is linked to images fraught with textuality and discourse. Students live in societies saturated by media, in which historical media occupy a central place. The "Disney effect"—the tenacity of Disney's cartoon narrative of Pocahontas upon students' historical representations—summarizes the powerful impact of visual culture on shaping our ideas about the past (Afflerbach & VanSledright, 2001, pp. 703–704). Visual culture is now considered constitutive of our historical culture, a significant concept (Carretero et al., 2017) for understanding the multiple modalities of our relation with the past, the experience of the past, and the way the past acquires new meanings in the present (Grever & Adriaansen, 2017). In the frame of the plethora of public uses of history, more and more people encounter history through popular genres like cinema, television, and the internet. Korte and Paletschek (2017) use the term "historical edutainment" to describe the phenomenon of the prominence of popular history as a distinct growing sphere of knowledge production about the past.

History education cannot ignore the outstanding position of films as chief carriers of historical messages in our societies. Movies could be powerful tools (Russell, 2012) to bring the past in the classrooms alive through visualization. Films could also be approached as unique documents combining picture, sound, and music (Bernard et al., 1995, p. 25; Poirier, 1993), as "filmic texts" (Briley, 1990; Poiriel, 1993) or "moving image documents" (O'Connor, 1987, 1990) serving as sources for learning history, as evidence to be interpreted, or as historical artifacts to be analyzed (Stoddard, 2012, p. 272). Films in history and social studies classrooms are also suggested as visual media that help students develop empathy, especially for marginalized groups, as well as excellent tools for raising controversial topics and introducing multiple perspectives in history classrooms (Kansteiner, 2017, pp. 179–180; Marcus et al., 2010; Stoddard, 2009; Stoddard & Marcus, 2017). Films are finally an ideal tool for developing visual historical literacy (Brinley, 1990; Mavrommati & Repoussi, 2020).

The new space required by films in history and social studies classrooms faces several barriers. Research points out the problem that the use of films without clear instructional purposes, and non-optimal uses (Hobbs, 2009) or even the misuses of films in history and social studies classrooms (Paxton & Marcus, 2018) can be

attributed to many factors: teachers' suspicion toward films' historical veracity and accuracy; the sense of helplessness (Kansteiner, 2017, p. 173); traditionalist attitudes that regard movies only as entertainment (Donelly, 2014, 2016); practical and technical matters like time or availability and in general the school's conventions or even teachers' competences. Even in cases in which films are used as a thoughtful medium for engaging students in historical thinking procedures, the "filmic language"—the specific cinematic system of transmitting messages and creating feelings—is ignored (Mavrommati & Repoussi, 2020). All the above explanations highlight the gaps in history education regarding the use of films.

In this article, we aim to shed light on teachers' conceptions, attitudes, and instructional practices toward historical films by presenting data—both quantitative and qualitative—of research conducted in Greece with 498 participants, primary and secondary school history teachers.

Movies and History: A Passionate Relationship

Cinema loves history. The past is one of the favorite subjects of cinematographic narratives. From the beginning, the cinema industry (Mintz & Roberts, 2001) has realized the importance of historical reconstruction in two forms: documentary and fiction. To this classical distinction, Rosenstone (2006) has added a third form: the experimental historical film. The American film *The Birth of a Nation*, made in 1915 was the significant sign of the cinematographic inclination to write history (Carter, 1983, pp. 9–19). Thenceforth, statistics testify to the continuing power and prestige of the past as source material in the movie business (Niemi, 2006). And as other versions of history, cinematic history, although it seems to reproduce and reflect a certain vision of the past world through the behaviors and the values that the movie selects as framework, reconstitutes the past in its own way, using its modalities and adapting its narrative to the specific cinema genre—fiction or non-fiction—the audience, the epoch, and the producers' ideas among others (Chansel, 2001; Sorlin, 2004). Spectators tend also to receive the cinematographic representation of the past according to their history conceptions and identities. Research reveals the significance of the students' cultural, societal, ethnic, or religious context in the reading of the filmic text (Dimitriadis, 2000; Epstein, 1998) and positionality has emerged as a vital component for understanding "how one engages in thinking about the past" (Peck, 2018, p. 311). Production, representation of the past, and reception by the viewers constitute three major aspects of understanding historical films (O'Connor, 1990, pp. 10–26). In other words, historical films refer to three temporalities: the time of production, the time of representation, and the time of their reception by the public and/or their analysis in history classrooms. Films contain three stories to be explored.

Cinema loves history but the feeling is not mutual. History, especially academic history, was indifferent, skeptical if not hostile to the filmic uses of history. For a long period of time, most historians considered cinema an institution of "systematic

falsification of the historical record" (Kansteiner, 2017, p. 169). But since the late 1960s the ongoing questioning of the calls for objective history, the major shifts in the ways in which attention to the past was directed and applied, and the multiplication of history languages forced historians to reconsider their relationship with cinema (Burrow, 2009, pp. 468–485; Dosse, 1987; Passerini, 2015; Rosenstone, 1995, 2000, 2006). Historians started to study the entertainment industry and to understand the role of films as an instrument in the formation of public opinion and/or propaganda (Grindon, 1996). Other scholars influenced by different epistemologies—film studies, semiology, psychoanalysis, feminist theory, Marxism—approached cinema as a sign system and/or examined ideological influences on the film industry. Cinema as an interpreter of the past followed (Toplin, 1996) and new questions emerged to renew dialogue among scholars concerning the modalities of the representability of history in films (Ernst, 1983, p. 397). Historians, even if they accept films' prominent tendency toward fictionalization, questioned the most unsettling fact that many films tend to compress the multifaceted past into a closed world by telling a single, linear story with essentially a single interpretation (Rosenstone, 2009, p. 31). But it is not a given in the film. Linear narrative or monolithic truth is a choice of the film maker. Davis (2000) showed the countless possibilities for the film to bring more than one story to the surface at once and for taking multiple perspectives. There is also doubt over whether a film can capture the complexity of history and render anything more than a descriptive narrative of the past, and accusations of the "discursive weakness" of films (Aaltonen and Kortti, 2015; Jarvie, 1978). Critical historians also maintain that historical films emphasize human conflict and tend to highlight individuals rather than movements or the impersonal process and therefore ascertain a thinning of data (Grinton, 1996). These objections strengthen the dialogue between historians skeptical of cinema and historians writing history in moving images. The supporters of the filmic representation of the past (Walkowitz, 1985) argued that any discrepancies between history from textbooks—or books, in general—and history from movies may usually seem to arise from content but, in reality, they come from the nature of the visual medium itself. Advocates of filmic history (Raack, 1983) add that movies contain other kinds of data which cannot be included in written history, such as sounds, landscapes, and strong emotions expressed through the body and face. The fact that a movie cannot include traditional historical data such as written words does not mean that it cannot render the past. It actually does it in a way which is unfamiliar and totally different from that of historiography (Rosenstone, 1995). All these contributions urged for greater openness to cinematographic work, arguing for the medium's possibilities beyond the conventional suspicions of traditional history and supporting the imaginative ways in which films can explore the past.

Thenceforth, many scholars agree (Metzger, 2010; Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998; Wineburg et al., 2000, 2007), that filmic representation of the past is a kind of historical narrative which in fact greatly impacts citizens' thinking about history, even if research on how people read the historical films they watch are rare (Seixas, 1993). The development of public history discourses and practices, the multiplication of the paths and stimuli through which we encounter the past and the revolution in digital technology that has dramatically changed historical communication and practices have contributed to new links between the present and the past. These links concern

not only the content of history and its democratization in order to include those forgotten by mainstream traditional history but also its practices breaking the barriers between professionals and audiences, and between producers and users of history. In all these popular history versions, fact and fiction, representation, performance, experience, instruction, and entertainment are mixed (Korte & Paletschek, 2017, pp. 191–198). Rosenzweig and Thelen (1998) correlate the beginning of this turn to the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s and the use of the past as "a source of empowerment and political mobilization". They date it from the 1970s and 1980s when academic historians "had begun collaborating with new audiences through museums, films, community oral history, programs" (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998, p. 4).

The Historical Documentary and Its Use in History Classrooms

There is a long-standing debate about the definition of the documentary in general and historical documentary in particular. Not paradoxically, the debate has concerned its relation with fiction and actuality as "documentary is a film genre in which a pledge is made to the viewer that what we will see and hear is about something real and true—and, frequently, important for us to understand" (Aufderheide, 2007, p. 56).

First defined as a non-fiction film, the historical documentary had to prove its reliability in the representation of the past, its re-enactment of the past real world. Not only content but also techniques of representation were determinant for characterizing which film was documentary and which was not. Intrinsic textual features were often determinant for characterizing a film as documentary. Film's *indexing*, the way a movie is labeled in announcements and press releases, informing viewers to read the text as non-fiction, creating expectations, and prompting specific viewer behavior, is considered to be an identifier of the historical documentary film (Ludvigsson, 2003, pp. 64–65).

Rosenstone (2006) argues that historical documentary is a problematic filmic form that pretends to be a direct reflection of the reality of the world while it constitutes facts "by selecting traces of the past and enfolding them into a narrative" (Rosenstone, 2006, p. 70). In that sense, Rosenstone considers drama film more honest because it is overtly a fictional construction. "With drama, you know—or you should know—that what you see is a construction of the past" (Rosenstone, 2006, pp. 70–71).

As documentary has evolved and since notions about what is fitting for a documentary and what is not changed over time, some films spark debate about the boundaries of fiction and non-fiction films. As a consequence, in direct relation with epistemological debates on history as socially constructed and contextually situated, the traditional distinction between fiction and non-fiction film has been relativized. Nichols (2001) distinguishes two kinds of films, both telling a story but of different

sorts: "documentaries of wish-fulfillment and documentaries of social representation". In the first category, he includes what we call fiction films as conveying truths if we decide to see them as truths and lies if we decide to reject them. In the second category of documentaries, he includes what we call non-fiction films as giving "a sense of what we understand reality itself to have been, of what it is now or what it may become". They also convey truths if we consider them as truths (Nichols, 2001, p. 2). Both types of films, he argues, call on us to interpret them as well as to believe them. Scholars from the field of film studies agree that we can see any fiction film in a non-fictional way (Branigan, 1992, pp. 192–193) or any historical documentary in a fictional way according to our beliefs and conceptions about the events narrated in it.

Even though the distinction between fiction and non-fiction cinema concerning reliability was questioned by prominent scholars who argue that both genres reconstruct the past in their ways (Ferro, 1977; Sorlin, 1980), history and social studies classrooms have inherited all historians' skepticism on the relationship between films and history. Even supporters of the use of films in history classrooms begin their suggestions warning their audience about the dangers of using them as a medium for teaching history. Taking a distance from the filmic medium, highlighting the seductiveness versus trustworthiness of the movies, and emphasizing their critical uses have tended to be the common features of the relevant literature (Kansteiner, 2017, pp. 173–175). Many teachers, overcome their distrust by choosing documentaries as reliable and objective, bypassing the modern approaches that view documentaries as another genre of historical film without special praises of accuracy and trustworthiness (Bernard et al., 1995; Poirier, 1993; Warmington et al., 2011). In addition, students, according to Stoddard's (2007) findings, are unable to recognize the director's perspective in documentary films, and consider them accurate and objective, failing to see in them the interpretation process that uses historical evidence in order to fulfill a certain portrayal of past events. But, relevant empirical research on how teachers use historical documentaries in the classroom as well as data on teachers' perceptions on the uses of historical documentaries and the implications of these perceptions on teaching practices is very rare and not recent (Marcus & Stoddard, 2009). It is also infrequent to correlate teachers' practices with historical documentaries with their epistemological beliefs about history, even though it is known that teachers' disciplinary background impacts the uses of teaching methods and resources (Voet & De Wever, 2016).

Films' different perspective taking is what makes them a great tool for history education, and historical documentaries should ideally be used in order to help students understand multiperspectivity. This, according to Hess (2007), would be one method to foster critical historical thinking, namely understanding the past through the use of evidence, and to undermine non-rigorous explanations, such as conspiracy theories. After all, analyzing sources is one of the main core historical thinking concepts (Seixas, 2017), along with establishing historical significance, identifying continuity and change, analyzing causes and consequences of historical events, taking historical perspectives, and discussing the ethical dimensions of

history. Such an aspiration is common in other efforts to use historical documentary in the classroom too (Martin, 2007; Neuhaus, 2016). Buchanan (2015) suggests that the start of developing such historical thinking skills should be made in the preservice history teacher training context, where preservice teachers are trained to critically reflect on historical documentaries and their own ideas on controversial historical topics. Moreover, her research found that a combination of viewing films with classroom discussion, written reflections, and historical analysis can be a powerful teaching strategy. Stoddard (2007) suggests that historical documentaries in the history classroom can develop empathy and create a framework where difficult subjects are discussed. Methods for the implementation of documentaries in the history classroom vary slightly in the relevant literature, including combining the screening of a documentary with interviews with people who have direct experience of the relevant historical facts, analysis of primary sources, and discussion (Martin, 2007). A common aim of all the existing approaches to using documentary is the development of a historical thinking process about events that makes use of evidence and solid arguments to reach a logical conclusion (Hess, 2007; Martin, 2007; Neuhaus, 2016; Mavrommati, 2019). Another way of incorporating historical documentary in the history classroom is by students creating their own documentaries (Fehn & Schul, 2011; Krahenbuhl, 2016).

Empirical Study

Objectives

Our research aims to investigate teachers' conceptions about the use of historical films in the history classroom and their relevant instructional practices in order first to find out what kind of historical films teachers prefer and why, and second to determine possible different approaches to using them as instructional tools in relation to teacher stances toward the nature and characteristics of historical films they prefer.

Methods

We used a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2014) to collect data from a large number of participants nationwide. The first stage of the research consisted of an online survey with both closed and open-ended questions, which was initially answered by a total of 498 participants, primary and secondary school history teachers. For the second stage of the research our aim was to collect richer, qualitative data, which was achieved through conducting online interviews with 5 volunteers from the pool of the 498 survey respondents. The survey was comprised of three parts: in the first part, the participants answered demographic questions. They also

answered a question on whether they use historical films in the classroom. Depending on their answer (yes or no), the survey bifurcated into two separate sets of questions, one that included questions on the uses of films in the classroom and the other which focused on reasons why teachers do not use movies in the history classroom and their relevant training needs. Therefore, the initial 498 survey respondents were scaled down to 387 who answered the part of the survey relating to the uses of film in the classroom, while the remaining were directed to a set of questions that focused on the reasons for not using films as instructional tools. Of those 387 respondents, 210 answered open-ended questions relating to the ways teachers introduce films in their history classrooms, their best practices, and the opportunities and difficulties they experience relating to the use of historical films.

The qualitative data from the questionnaire, i.e. the open-ended question responses, were analyzed through a coding procedure, as were the interview responses (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The codes that emerged from the survey responses were synthesized into categories and themes, and the themes that emerged served as the backbone of our semi-structured interview protocol. The survey responses indicated that Greek teachers prefer to introduce documentary films more than fiction films in their classrooms, and gave an initial picture regarding their specific uses.

What interested us most in the interview part of the research was the theme "objectivity and validity" which featured as the most common reason why teachers consider historical documentaries an effective instructional tool for history in the survey responses. This understanding of documentary films as the objective is found in relevant research too (Marcus & Stoddard, 2007; Stoddard, 2009; Wagner, 2018). Therefore, in the interview stage of our research we asked teachers specifically to elaborate on their ideas on the nature of historical documentaries and the ways they use them in the classroom. The questions were open ended, and the core lynchpin of the interview protocol was made up of the following questions:

1. What do you think about the relation of historical documentaries to historical truth and objectivity?
2. What are the reasons/ considerations for using historical documentary films in the classroom?
3. How do you use them in the classroom? Can you give us an example of a best practice for using historical documentary films in the classroom?
4. What are the reasons for not choosing to use a historical documentary in the classroom?

The link to the SurveyMonkey survey was sent to all primary and secondary schools in Greece, and was distributed to the history teachers of each school by the school's director. Anonymity was accomplished throughout all stages of the research, as the online survey did not request any identification information, such as name or school district. The interviewees were protected through the use of pseudonyms.

The interviews lasted from 45 min to 1 h with each participant, and were transcribed. For each participant, a transcript of the interview, of roughly 2000–3000 words, was analyzed thematically.

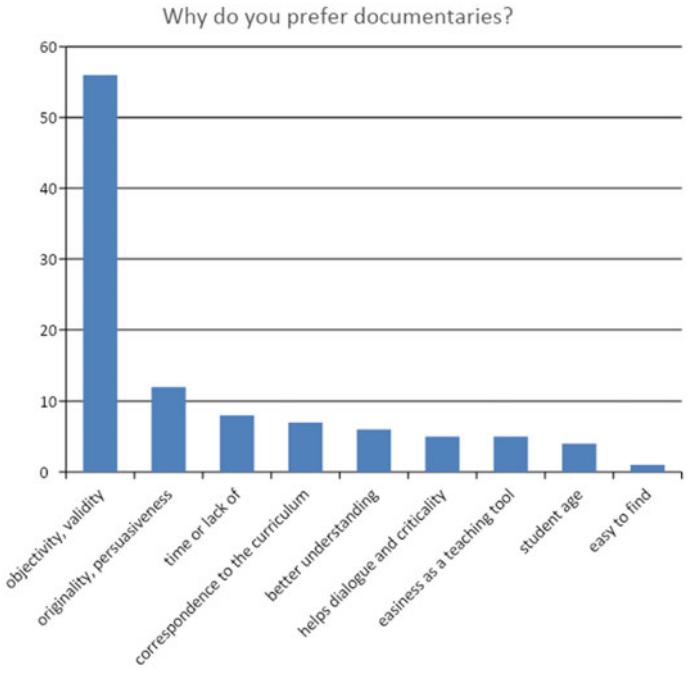
Results

Teachers' Film Preferences

Although our questionnaire aimed at finding out about teachers' use of historical movies in the classroom, both fiction and documentaries, even from the first survey responses it was evident that Greek teachers prefer to use mainly historical documentaries as history teaching tools, as opposed to historical fiction films. After the first questions of the survey, which asked for the respondents' demographic data, teachers were asked to respond to a question asking whether they use historical films (both documentaries and fiction) for instructional purposes. Out of 494 respondents, 387 (73.84%) answered that they use historical films, and 107 (21.66%) responded that they do not.

Consequently, we asked teachers to specify the kind of historical films they use, namely documentary, historical fiction, both, or none. The number of teachers that use solely documentaries is nearly 10 times the number of teachers that use only historical fiction films (34.57% as opposed to 3.70% respectively). However, more than half of the teachers said they use both documentary films and historical fiction movies (60.49%), while only a very limited number of teachers answered they do not prefer either of the two for teaching purposes (1.23%). Next, we asked teachers to describe the reasons why they prefer documentaries over fiction movies by responding to an open-ended question. The reasons for this preference are depicted in the graph below, with the most common answer being that they use documentaries because they consider them objective and valid (Graph 1).

Teachers reported a number of reasons for using documentaries. Data from the answers to this open-ended question revealed that the majority of respondents prefer documentaries over fiction historical movies due to their perceived objectivity and validity (54%). A second reason for using history documentaries is their originality and persuasiveness (11%), while the third most common reason (7%) for using them is their short duration combined with the short teaching periods (45 min, twice a week) and their immediate correspondence to the Greek history curriculum (7%). Teachers also reported that screening history documentaries advances students' understanding (6%), that it helps dialogue and the development of critical thinking (5%), that it is an easy-to-use teaching tool due to its format (5%), and that it is best used with older rather than younger students (4%). It is interesting to note, regarding this last category relating to the use of history documentaries depending on student age, that for primary teachers it is considered best to use it with students in the final year of primary education (12 years old), but for teachers of secondary education students in the first years of secondary education (13–14 years old) are considered too young to understand historical documentaries, so they tend to use it with older students (15 + years old). Last, only a very small percentage answered that they use historical documentaries because they are easy to find (1%).



Graph 1 Reasons for using documentaries

Documentaries as Objective Representations of the Past

For more than half of the teachers that answered our survey (54%), historical documentaries provide students with an objective, reliable account of past events. For these teachers, the value of historical documentaries as objective constructs of past reality is unquestionable. This objectivity is a product of historical research, which, according to the teachers, is the methodology followed by documentary makers. Namely, they see documentaries as historical work that uses historical research methods as well as historical terminology. For these history teachers, historical documentaries are social scientific works whose content can be taken at face value. For example, teachers claimed that they use documentaries because:

"…they come closer to the truth or show it…"

"…they present facts as they happened without the director's opinion interposed…", or.

"…they give students documented knowledge…".

But how do teacher views on historical documentaries' objectivity and reliability affect their classroom practice? In order to answer this question, we compared the answers teachers gave to two questions: the answers of those who answered that they prefer documentaries due to their objectivity were crosschecked with the answers of the same respondents to the next question in the questionnaire, which asked them

to describe their best practices and provide examples of their teaching strategies when historical documentaries are included in teaching. Two trends were identified in these answers. According to the first trend, no further research or analysis is necessary in the history classroom when documentaries are used, and documentaries can replace teaching. This way, documentaries can accompany the schoolbook as confirmations of the schoolbook's content, which often (at least in the Greek education context) provides students with the one sole truth about their historical past (Repoussi, 2011). The second trend identified in the survey responses included discussion of the contents of the documentaries in comparison to those of the school book, analyzing the documentary as any other historical source rather than just using it as a way to visualize the past and confirm the school book's narrative.

Documentary Films as Support of the Official School History

Teachers who answered that they consider documentaries to be a valid resource for teaching due to their objectivity and historical truth often included a variety of constructive teaching methods to frame their teaching. For example, a large number of teachers answered that they use film creation, dialogue, and role-playing as activities and methods to help students understand the contents of the movies after screening them. A number of teachers use more traditional tools like worksheets which are completed after the screening in order to evaluate student learning. It is interesting to learn that many history teachers who answered that they consider history documentaries an objective medium stated that they use them in order to support the content of the schoolbook. This is an important finding as it shows one specific way documentaries are used for history education, which involves not questioning the content of the schoolbook in their teaching and only using the historical documentary as a way to support the official historical knowledge offered by the National Curriculum. Some of the teachers' answers capture this very clearly. For example, a teacher who answered that she uses history documentaries because they present real historical facts gave us the following description of her best practice when using documentaries:

> *"we examine the historical fact with the students, I inform them about the movie, a few words about the director, we then watch the movie, we discuss, and we connect [the discussion outcome] with the historical facts they have been taught by the book".*

Another teacher that chooses documentaries over fiction because they are more accurate stated that they use them.

> *"in a supportive manner during teaching, as synopsis of the chapter and as an additional source".*

Documentary Films as Sources for Analysis and Interpretation

Some of the teachers who consider historical documentaries objective accounts of the past, however, use them in the classroom not as visual reinforcements of the school

book's contents and narrative, but as a source to be analyzed and interpreted. Activities for this category of teachers included a comparison to the school book's contents and discussion of the different views provided in the documentary. For example, a teacher who believes that documentaries have a more dispassionate approach to the historical past described her best practice when using them as follows:

> *"watching the movie, classroom discussion, comparison to the schoolbook, in some cases a worksheet, relation with fieldtrips".*

While another stated that she uses historical documentaries in the following manner:

> *"initial reference to the textbook, screening, disrupting many times and exploratory questions in all-important points so that initial knowledge is consolidated and possible questions from the movie are clarified and then discussion and conclusions".*

In these two examples we see a trend emerging, that of collaborative construction of the movie's meaning and historical past as an outcome of comparison to the schoolbook's "official" historical knowledge.

Documentaries as Subjective Representations of the Past

The data from the interviews gave us a more analytical view on the use of documentaries as sources for analysis. All five teachers who responded to our call for an extensive interview believed that history documentaries are not an objective means of representation of history and treated them as an opportunity to question the official presentation of school history. This also had an impact on the way they teach using history documentaries.

The teachers that participated in the interview phase of our research stated that they mainly choose documentaries instead of fiction when they use movies in the history classroom. The main reason for this are time limitations, as documentaries are usually shorter than fiction films and can be edited as an instructional tool more easily in order to fit in a lesson design and the history curriculum standards. Those teachers considered historical documentaries an instructional tool that can be used separately from the school book and can provide the basis for a discussion on the selected historical topic. None of them claimed that the reason they use it is because it shows the truth about the past or because it is an objective account of history. We considered this an excellent opportunity to dig a little deeper on the views and ideas of teachers who did not consider documentary films a mirror of reality. For the five teachers in the interview group, historical documentaries are a source that allows for historical interpretation, development of arguments, and analysis of evidence. For example, one of them stated:

> *"On the Web, there are many kinds of documentary films. They are all subjective, in history. I may disagree, believe something else, objectivity in my teaching is related to me not taking advantage of my educational authority to impose my ideas, but I will say 'kids, watch out, there is a sequence of events here, come to your own conclusions'".*

For all teachers in the interview group, connection to the curriculum was not the main reason for using documentaries but they all exhibited skills of moving away from the textbook and the aims of the curriculum and considered the history lesson as a medium for either civic, moral or arts education. For example, a teacher suggested ways to connect the past with the present, in the context of the current refugee crisis also affecting Greece, with the purpose to develop civic engagement:

> *"I may ask students to comment how people in Constantinople were dressed, how monks and nuns were dressed, and ask them what do Muslims wear today? What did people in Byzantine times wear? I bring the discussion to the present day, of course. […] everything happens in order to make this connection with the present, to take history out of the book and place it in front of the students linked to the present day, [and explain] that this can affect the present practically but can also define the future, so you can learn how to act meaningfully".*

Moreover, all of them stated that they analyze historical documentaries just like any other primary or secondary source, taking into consideration their subjective nature:

> *"… by explaining that each one of us carries their own experiences, their ideas, their influences, the left-wing or the right-wing journalist… Just like in all our lives there is subjectivity, there is subjectivity in movies, even in documentaries, even if they are masterpieces, they still have their weaknesses".*
>
> *"I deal with the movie just like any other source, primary or secondary, namely each time we read a source and ask questions concerning the author, the purpose for its creation, who it is addressed to, the purpose of its message, so we follow the exact same process with the movie".*

For this group of teachers who see history documentaries as yet another source to analyze, teaching history in a more creative way, independent from the National Curriculum, and in an interdisciplinary manner, is a norm rather than the exception. For example, when she was asked how she designs a lesson that utilizes documentaries in the classroom, a teacher who considers documentaries as subjective artifacts responded the following, clearly moving away from the foci of the National Curriculum and the school book:

> *Well, so far we have achieved a degree of pedagogical freedom in a way that we can handle the curriculum and daily schedule with some flexibility. […] I mean, it is commonly accepted that many things that are included in the books or the teaching objectives of the curriculum are not "necessary". […] I am interested in economic, social, and political history. Namely, not just the facts. Facts only make up the context, i.e. know where we are, and after that we seek causes, connection of events, sequence, how we go from one period to the next, and we set a number of questions, i.e. why did this happen? What would happen if? We also ask hypothetical questions. So when you structure the lesson this way you also make a choice of the course content, i.e. we choose the important parts of the book, so it's easy for me to handle the curriculum.*

For these teachers, the fact that documentaries are only one source among many others they analyze in their classes goes so far as to see the textbook too as a very basic source of historical knowledge and understanding, as far as rejecting it:

> "*[…] what students don't know is that the textbook presents reality in a certain way. If we go to movies or documentaries they will see that for the same thing, different people present historical truth in a different manner, or, anyway, that they have different opinions.*

So, there's a confusion there. Because we see it [a fact] in one way in the schoolbook, while in the documentary in another. […] So this is one of their basic questions and they end up rejecting the schoolbook [because] it doesn't mention everything, "you are not telling us everything, miss…" And you surely can't answer all their questions so you end up [saying] "see, kids, in order to really learn history you will start from the schoolbook and you will make an effort for the rest of your life to learn from every source, e.g. from a museum visit, newspapers, various books you should start buying from a young age. History is not the schoolbook, it's a million other things".

Discussion

Social studies teachers' beliefs have been found to profoundly shape their classroom practices, especially in the field of history education (Peck & Herriot, 2015). Our findings from the survey correspond with existing literature (Marcus & Stoddard, 2007, 2009; Wagner, 2018) on the use of historical documentary films in the classroom, according to which teachers have a clear preference for documentaries mainly because they consider them objective accounts of the past. The teachers that tend to regard historical documentaries as pieces of work that realize forms of academic historical inquiry and research trust them as reliable and objective. More specifically, they use historical documentaries, which they consider products of historical research, as visual aids that corroborate the textbooks' dominant historical narrative which is based on a single historical truth. They use documentaries as tools that validate the official, sole historical narrative and treat them as an authority, and their history lessons utilize traditional methods of instruction. This is one way in which teachers use historical documentaries, as identified by Stoddard (2010) who, observing two teachers for a long period of time, found that they use documentaries with historical themes either to support the historical narrative offered by the schoolbook and make sure students have a solid factual basis or as a way to engage students with difficult historical topics and start a relevant classroom discussion. We could assume that, for those teachers, both the documentary and the history textbook emerge from historical research that supposedly seeks the historical truth. As happens with other media, disciplines, and teaching strategies (Voet & De Wever, 2016; Yilmaz, 2010), teachers' beliefs about the nature of historical documentaries are reflected in their instructional decisions.

As evidenced also from our interview data, whether teachers conceive visual history as the objective representation of the past or as a reconstruction determined by many parameters shapes their teaching preferences. The teachers that participated in our survey and interviews agreed that historical documentaries are just another source to be analyzed. They challenged the idea that documentaries reveal the sole historical truth and are objective creations. For these teachers, the historical past is not absolute but it is open to interpretation and negotiation both inside and outside the classroom. We therefore see a different stance toward visual representations of history, following which the role of the teacher emerges as one that fosters criticality and analytical thinking rather than one that validates the official narrative

commonly provided through the schoolbook. In this case, not only is the content of the schoolbook questioned, but also the idea of a sole historical truth and objectivity in historical interpretation, and the teacher emerges as a facilitator in the process of historical understanding development in the history classroom through the classroom dialogic interrogation of sources and the deconstruction of given historical "truths". These teachers seem to treat the process of development of historical knowledge as a combination of interpretation, arguments, and analysis of evidence. Seeing themselves as mediators who enable the process of historical knowledge construction, in accordance with recent relevant studies (Boadu, 2020), the teachers who were interviewed in our study seem to hold a constructionist, interpretative approach to history as a discipline which forms their practice as history teachers and use of visual media in the classroom. For these teachers, teaching and learning history is a process rather than an objective; their attitude toward the visual historical accounts, especially historical documentaries, forms their teaching strategies which treat history not as fixed but as open to interpretation and reconstruction.

This research on teachers' beliefs and their implications for their teaching practices is of great importance since there is a bidirectional relationship between the two and teachers' experience as well as training can alter beliefs and practices (Buehl & Beck, 2015). To this end, Fallace (2007) recommends that history teachers should be trained with more focus on historiography and historical research methods, and philosophy of history in order to understand how to use inquiry in the history classroom. We suggest that teacher training on history teaching should also include training on visual material and its relationship with historical construction and the historical discipline. A further step forward in the current research would be to investigate how specific media that shape historical consciousness such as films, computer games, or other forms of popular culture with historical content are used in the classroom, in relation to teachers' epistemological beliefs, and how students learn history and develop historical thinking skills depending on teachers' views about the nature of history and subsequent usage of various media.

Our research does have its limitations. The small sample of teachers who responded to our call for an in-depth interview is the first limitation. Moreover, the findings of these interviews suggest that participants teachers hold an open-to-interpretation stance toward history as a discipline, a stance which is not frequent among Greek history teachers. However, exactly this focus on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers who actually use alternative media in the history classroom, such as movies, provides an idea about infrequent but important trends in the use of these resources.

Our research indicated that historical documentaries are a preferred filmic teaching resource for Greek history teachers, in accordance with relevant trends found in other parts of the world, and the reason behind this use is their perceived objectivity and truthfulness. It also revealed that their attitudes toward historical movies shape their classroom practice and instructional choices. We find the present research in accordance with literature that supports that teachers' beliefs have an effect on their classroom practices. Especially regarding popular uses of history, such as in film, teachers' conceptions form their instructional strategies, resource choices, and practices.

An hypothesis resulting from our research is that there is a clear connection between teachers' epistemological ideas about history as a discipline and if, what type, why, and how they use historical films in history classrooms. Supporters of positivist history avoid historical fiction as subjective and prefer documentaries as objective and reliable. Further research could focus on the relationship between teachers' conceptions about history and their teaching practices, including the use of visual media such as historical films. Maggioni et al. (2009) scheme about teachers' epistemological conceptions on history as a discipline provides a basis to correlate these conceptions with teaching practices.

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Theatre of War: Lola Arias' Documentary Theatre as Innovative Tool for Historical Dialogue

María Cantabrana and Mario Carretero

Abstract The work of internationally renowned playwright Lola Arias explores the limits of historical representation working on the idea of "remaking" troubled pasts with the participation of their real protagonists. In her film *Theatre of War* former soldiers from Argentina and UK who participated in the Falkland-Malvinas war (1982) represent their past experience in the war and interpret their own roles in that violent conflict through a fascinating and intriguing dialogical experience. In line with the latest studies on historical culture, conflict, and history education, this chapter will analyse the potential of this cultural production in promoting multiperspectivity, historical dialogue and social understanding through its key aspects: (a) Substantive contestation of official narratives about historical events, usually nationalist and/or imperialist, by contrasting them with historically silenced voices; (b) a fundamentally dialogical approach to these new narratives, that provides a space for empathy which does not simplify existing conflicts; and (c) the mediation of a wide variety of historical resources that reinforce the denaturalization of historical accounts, making possible a horizon of new critical elaborations on the past.

Keywords Documentary theatre · Historical dialogue · Multiperspectivity

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Documentary Theatre as a Promising Tool for History Education

Recent research in the context of studies on cultural memory has highlighted the privileged position of the media in the configuration of imaginaries and narratives for the representation of the past (Erll & Nünning, 2008; Rigney, 2018). The circulation of these representations and their relationship with the formal and informal learning of history is today a central issue in the field of history education (Kansteiner, 2017), as this volume shows. Series, video games, films, novels, reenactments, and experiences of living history are some of the objects of study that have garnered growing interest among researchers, but there are less explored fields. This is the case for documentary theatre, whose quest to represent "the real" leads to a staging starring the remembrance and reenactment of episodes of the past carried out by people who actually lived through the events, strongly supported by different types of historical documentation. The origins of this genre date back to the 1930s, and its way of interrogating reality and questioning modes of representation has frequently led to a comparison of its praxis with historiographic methodology (Ben-Zvi, 2006). In this chapter, we analyse *Theatre of War*, a film by Lola Arias about the Malvinas/Falklands War that is part of a research process[1] involving this theatrical genre. The works of this director have generated analyses of great interest in the cultural field (Blejmar, 2017; Graham-Jones, 2019; Maguire, 2019). This chapter will explore the promising possibilities that documentary theatre offers to history education when working with a multiperspective approach to the past, both in formal and informal settings, from a dialogic approach. The interesting encounter between dramaturgy and the digital format of film, which make *Theatre of War* a cultural product not easily classifiable, allows us to think about an ease of reproduction and a high possibility of dissemination that is not always possible with a strictly theatrical format. The growing digitisation of content also allows for the promotion of this type of cultural production in the classroom. In fact, an increasing number of studies have addressed the use of different types of film production in history education (Marcus et al., 2018; Peters, 2020; Seixas, 1993; Wineburg et al., 2001).

Both the demand for Argentine sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and the recent war regarding this issue (1982) have been strongly linked to the construction of national identity since the nineteenth century (Lorenz, 2014). The teaching of history had essential importance in the popularisation of this cause. As in other cases, since its inception, linked to the birth of nation-states, history education has been and continues to be (Carretero, 2011) an important engine in the construction of strongly essentialist national identities. As we will discuss in this chapter, for

[1] The film is part of a larger project that the playwright—a world reference in the genre—has been carrying out since 2014. Arias considers this project a "social laboratory", and thus far, it has led to a video installation (Veteranos, 2014, https://lolaarias.com/es/veterans/), a play (Campo Minado, 2016, https://lolaarias.com/es/minefield/) and the film studied herein (Teatro de Guerra, 2018, https://lolaarias.com/es/theatre-of-war), three different productions that share the language of documentary theatre in innovative formats with a strong role played by digital resources.

years, the narrative of these events has been configured as a master narrative that imposes its characteristic univocity of the nation-state and makes invisible both the agency of specific groups and visions different from the official narrative (Carretero & Bermúdez, 2012). In Argentina, on April 2, the *day of the Veteran and of the Fallen in the Malvinas War* is commemorated every year in public spaces and schools through different activities. The Malvinas War is part of the history curriculum,[2] that is, a compulsory subject of formal education.

Theatre of War constructs a novel narrative about the Malvinas experience that manages to break with this trend. The common thread of the film is the encounter between six war veterans, i.e., three Argentines, two British and a Nepalese - *Gurkha*, member of a special unit of the British army - who, under the direction of Arias, put their experiences at the service of a very novel, and undoubtedly surprising, way of recounting the war and its causes and consequences. Although later we will develop in more detail the importance of this initiative for history education, let us acknowledge that understanding the causes and consequences of relevant historical events is precisely a central objective in a meaningful and critical understanding of the past (Seixas & Morton, 2013). Thus, in this chapter, we will try to show how this film achieves this purpose through three of its main characteristics: (a) the substantial questioning of official narratives about historical events, usually of a nationalist and/or imperialist nature, through their contrast with voices traditionally silenced; (b) an essentially dialogical development of these new narratives, which breaks with the univocity of the nation-state; and (c) the denaturalisation of historical accounts through the mediation of a wide variety of historical resources.

The Presence of Malvinas/Falkland in School History

Lola Arias addresses the war experience of the Argentine and British veterans of the Malvinas and, through it, points to the heart of national identities and their process of construction by citizens and societies. The Anglo-Argentine war took place between April 2 and June 14, 1982, after a decision by the Military Junta to break off diplomatic negotiations and establish Argentine sovereignty over the islands by war. It ended with a victory by the British army. However, the sovereignty of the islands is still in dispute today.

It was a short war of 74 days, but the Malvinas cause has occupied an important symbolic place in the collective memory of Argentina as a fundamental milestone in the process of building national identity. The British occupation of the islands began in 1833. However, since 1910, during the first centenary of independence, there has been the notion that Argentina is the undisputed heir of the entire territory of the former Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, including the archipelago (Pineau & Birgin, 2018), despite the lack of coincidence between the territory of the Viceroyalty and that of present-day Argentina. The 1930s were a turning point in the construction

[2] https://www.argentina.gob.ar/educacion/efemerides/2-abril-malvinas.

Fig. 1 Delia Giovanola, mother of Plaza de Mayo, holds up a placard proclaiming "the Malvinas are Argentinean, the disappeared too" (*Photo* Amado Bécquer Casaballe https://journals.openedition.org/orda/3548?lang=es)

of a "national cause", with a strong component of British anti-imperialism (Santos La Rosa, 2019). That British anti-imperialism, in fact, is still present in school teacher narratives. In Argentine schools, it is taught that the most immediate precedent of the independence of 1810 was the rejection of the "English invasions", which are presented as the first experience in the construction of national identity.

The claim of sovereignty over the archipelago has functioned since the nineteenth century, in the words of Rosana Guber, as a national metaphor (2001) and collective representation (2012). The Argentine civic-military dictatorship, installed since 1976, played a role in the physical disappearance of tens of thousands of people in a context of generalised repression, the violation of human rights, and the suspension of democratic guarantees (Feierstein, 2011). With General Leopoldo Galtieri at the helm, he tried to capitalise on this national sentiment shared among large sectors of the population and practically the entire political spectrum through military offensives on the islands. He thus intended to overshadow a moment of deep crisis of the regime, which nevertheless received a fatal blow through the disaster that resulted from defeat in this war, precipitating the end of the dictatorship and the recovery of democracy. Support for the war, however, was massive. The nationalist and anti-imperialist cause[3] had more weight than the apparently irreconcilable differences between Argentines in relation to the dictatorship. A very significant visual example can be seen in an image that shows one of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo protesting the disappearance of people and at the same time claiming the sovereignty of the islands (Fig. 1). After the defeat, a silence was imposed in Argentina that did not help in the social processing of this difficult episode. The Malvinas conflict was from that moment linked to the most bloody dictatorship that the country had ever known, adding another layer of complexity to a claim that occurred a long time ago.

[3] In fact, that support also occurred in broad Latin American sectors, as illustrated by this article by Gabriel García Márquez in the Spanish newspaper El País on April 14, 1982: https://elpais.com/diario/1982/04/14/opinion/387583205_850215.html.

Where did the identity of this territorial issue come from? Public education played an important role in extending the discussion of sovereignty from the intellectual sphere to broad sectors of society. The subject became part of the mandatory curriculum in the 1940s under the different Peronist governments, and in the year 1946, it was decreed that all maps included in textbooks would be approved by the Military Geographical Institute to ensure that "national sovereignty" was respected (Pineau & Birgin, 2018). This power of supervision of national maps has continued to this day, and even recently, a new mandatory map has been distributed in all schools that include not only the aforementioned islands but also Antarctic territories (Parellada et al., 2021). Beginning in the 1960s, recognition by the UN of the British occupation reinforced the presence of the claim of sovereignty, constituting an important pillar in massive and transversal support for the cause (Pineau & Birgin, 2018). Education played a decisive role in the promotion of a "love for the nation" essential for the consolidation of a hegemonic national narrative (Carretero, 2011; Zembylas & Schutz, 2009). The promotion of this "national sentimentality" (Berlant, 2012) was one of the primary objectives in the type of citizen construction to which the historical education of a country with a large migratory presence such as Argentina was oriented (Bertoni, 2001).

Between the end of the war and 2006, the approach to the Malvinas conflict was limited mainly to school commemorations, focused mainly on tributes to the fallen and the indisputable rights of Argentina over the archipelago. The date of April 2 continues to be a national holiday and event marked by school, despite curricular renewal in which the Malvinas issue is reincorporated with new conceptualisations that link the origin of the war with the intention of the dictatorship to hide an impending crisis[4] (Pineau & Birgin, 2018).

In Great Britain, on the other hand, the meaning of Malvinas/Falkland is very different. Most likely, a large part of the population did not know exactly where the archipelago was before 1982, and Malvinas/Falkland does not carry relevant weight in their daily lives today (Porto & Yulita, 2016). However, the conflict coincided with a moment of resurgence of British nationalism under the government of Margaret Thatcher (Guber, 2012) and received significant popular support. The electoral gains that the prime minister obtained from the victory by the British troops in the South Atlantic accounted for this: the conservatives went from seeing her re-election in danger in the February 1982 polls to winning the 1983 elections by a wide margin (Porto & Yulita, 2016). A speech by Margaret Thatcher to the Conservative Party in July 1982 focussed on the mobilisation of British nationalism during the war: 'The lesson of the Falklands is that Britain has not changed and that this nation still has those sterling qualities which shine through our history' (in Hewer, 2013, p. 145). The nationalist exacerbation would not be left out of other areas of the Thatcher government. For Kenneth Baker, first Secretary of State for Education and creator

[4] In line with these new conceptualisations, in 2014 the Malvinas and Islands of the South Atlantic Museum was inaugurated, located in the Space for Memory and for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights, on whose premises the former Mechanical School of the Navy (ESMA) worked, a former clandestine centre for detention, torture and extermination.

of the National Curriculum of 1991, "Pupils should be taught about the spread of Britain's influence for good throughout the empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries… These things are matters in which we should take great pride" (in Haydn, 2014).

It has been noted that the collective memory of Malvinas began in 1982 with an Argentine occupation/recovery (Hewer, 2013). The contrast of the Argentine and British cases is very interesting in this regard. Some authors speak of an "imperial amnesia" (Grindel, 2013; Mycock, 2017) and "colonial forgetting" (Hewer, 2013) of students in relation to the British past, at least until the end of the 1980s. As Hewer (2013, p. 145) explains, the Second World War created an imprecise narrative of maritime invasions and "adventures", the day of the Empire was replaced by that of the Commonwealth, and a "state of generalised ignorance" was consolidated. Since then, the question of how to address the colonial past remains far from closed. The absence of an in-depth debate on the way in which school history should be taught seems to be evident in school content that maintains imperialist bias and does not incorporate postcolonial critiques (Mycock, 2017).

Representing the Voice of the Nation

In Argentina, the key role of school institutions in the promotion of national sentiment has been based not only on the teaching of history but also on a particular type of patriotic ritual that involves the reenactment of past events: school events. Within them, the Malvinas conflict, approached from military history and negative sentiment towards the enemy (Flachsland et al., 2010; Lorenz, 2014), in this case, of English nationality, has occupied and continues to occupy a privileged place in achieving this objective. National events began to be celebrated in Argentina, as in most Latin American countries, towards the end of the nineteenth century. Originally, they took place in public spaces, but in 1887, they entered schools (Bertoni, 2001; Carretero, 2011) within the context of a set of public policies aimed at generating national cohesion between ethnically and culturally heterogeneous populations. Child participation was one of the central aspects of festivity programmes on all national dates. In this context, one of the first official measures related to the commemoration of national events was the creation of so-called "school battalions" (Bertoni, 2001). School battalions were composed of children from various schools who, uniformed and armed as soldiers, were instructed by the military and paraded or formed with the army corps. They commemorated, almost a century after the events of independence, a heroic national past, of which the army was not only the mentor but also the guarantor of a future that awaited them as Argentines and defenders of the nation. The national events entered as festivities in Argentine school events and never again left the schoolyard, trying to promote a civic and military identity in the image and likeness of the ideals of the time. In the opinion of some analysts, these events, as models and educational projects, are symbols of the "failure of the Argentine project"

(Escudé, 1990) because instead of favouring a plural vision of the past, they installed an authoritarian and *caudillista* conception of the past nation-state.

These commemorations are cultural tools that aim to forge a sense of community and a national collective and public memory (Wertsch, 2018). Additionally, they function as a meeting place for the educational community (Parellada, 2019). Unlike other forms of reenactment, which receive increasing attention from research (Agnew, 2007; Agnew et al., 2019), reenactments in the framework of school commemorations have been very little studied and, in the few allusions, pose challenges regarding offering a complex view of historical problems (Carretero et al., 2022). In the representations to which we refer here, the students follow a ritual that hardly escapes a univocal narrative of the nation that tends to sediment essentialist views of history. The structure of historical school reenactment is mainly composed of three stages: a) ceremonial, dedicated to the cult of national symbols, such as hymns; b) discursive, during which the teachers or the directive transmit the historical story that is commemorated; and c) expressive, during which the students perform some artistic representations, often theatrical, in reference to the events that are remembered (Carretero, 2011). The Ministry of Education guides the celebrations linked to the Malvinas War: "On November 22, 2000, the national government established April 2 as the Day of the Veteran and of the Fallen in the Falklands War. Remembering this date in school has different objectives: to honour the soldiers killed in that war, to know the historical facts related to the Malvinas, and to inform about the current situation of the islands and about Argentine claims".[5]

The discursive structure that appears most in these school reenactments coincides, in general, with the dimensions of the historical discourse that characterise the national master narratives. Importantly, these dimensions are part of both the cultural and educational production of historical content (Carretero & Bermúdez, 2012) and the consumption of that content by students (Carretero & van Alphen, 2014). Thus, the following can be distinguished:

(a) Historical subject. The historical subject, the main voice of the story, is essentialist and is established in terms of inclusion and exclusion. It is imagined through a logical operation based on the distinction between exclusion and inclusion, i.e., "we", the Argentines, and "them", the English. In addition, all members of this national community are seen as a cohesive, homogeneous part, without considering the possibility of different and heterogeneous groups of nationals.
(b) Identification process. School representation contributes in a fundamental way to this process of linking affections and personal value judgements to the aforementioned unification and opposition. Through these commemorations, a shared identity is reaffirmed from a very early age, with very intense emotional ties generated through music, dramatisations, and parades; that is, embodied experiences that leave indelible affective marks. This is especially true when they are introduced at an early age and are repeated every year of schooling. Nationalism

[5] https://www.argentina.gob.ar/educacion/efemerides/2-abril-malvinas.

is such a powerful cultural tool because it arises from this process of cognitive and affective identification.

(c) Monocausal and simplistic cause. Why did the war occur? Historical events tend to be simplified around "unquestionable" themes such as the search for freedom or territory. Basically, it is a monocausal explanation for which there is no room for contradictions and complex explanations, much less the possibility of alternative views.

(d) Moral dimension. This dimension is particularly important and is closely related to other patriotic representations, such as the Pledge of Allegiance to the national flag. The commemorations linked to the Malvinas War often have a military aroma that clearly connects with the process of building loyal and patriotic citizens. This loyalty implies, by definition, a moral dimension that contributes greatly to the distinction between the ingroup and the outgroup.

(e) History of the heroes. This dimension is closely related to the previous dimensions because the protagonists of school recreations are heroic figures. In the case of school anniversaries marking the Malvinas War, the combatants have long been represented as heroes who defended the nation, attributing to them a voice that, paradoxically, on many occasions makes the soldiers'own extreme experience invisible and obscures the possibility of presenting more complex and structural social and political causes.

Making Possible an Impossible Dialogue

In contrast to the fundamentally univocal narrative structure, whose dimensions we have just described, that has traditionally characterised school events related to the Malvinas War, *Theatre of War* has an essentially dialogic character. Certainly, this gives it not only an innovative character but also a disruptive and deeply critical and reflective character. In the film, two veterans of the war, Lou Armor, British, and Gabriel Sagastume, Argentine, meet in front of a map of the islands and hold the following dialogue, which summarises the central arguments of the dispute between the two countries:

Lou:	But, they were discovered in the 16th century, right? By John Davis?
Gabriel:	No, no. Hernando de Magallanes discovered them before that.
Lou:	Really? OK. Were not the French the first to have a colony there in 1764?
Gabriel [Nods and points to the map]:	And here was the first colony. However, the French recognised Spanish sovereignty.
Lou:	I see. So Spain bought them from the French.
Gabriel:	No, no, they did not buy it. They paid expenses to the French, so they were Spanish, and then, we inherited them, and they're Argentine.

Lou:	But, you told me that Spain bought them from France. Let's admit it: they were no-man's-land until the British settled in 1833. And, since then… Nine. Nine generations. Nine generations of islanders.
Gabriel:	Nine generations because you occupied them by force in 1833, but we never stopped claiming them. Even the UN has recognised that there is a conflict between both countries. And you never want to negotiate.
Lou:	The negotiations… ended. Well, I think you must have stopped negotiations on April 2, 1982, when you attacked right here [points to the map].
Gabriel:	The islands, they are, they were part of what remains of the British Empire. It is a colony.
Lou:	But, there was a referendum. The people who lived here held a popular consultation. They said they wanted to remain an overseas UK territory. So, you ended the negotiations and started the war. They held a popular consultation. They said they wanted to remain an overseas territory. What comes next? Another war?
Gabriel:	Because the inhabitants are the ones who remained from that invasion.

After the dialogue, Lou and Gabriel look at each other with resigned faces. Next, on a black background, two masks of Margaret Thatcher and Leopoldo Galtieri appear, slowly approaching and kissing (Fig. 2). They move away, look at each other, and remove their masks: in reality, the masked individuals are Gabriel and David (another of the British veterans). It seems evident that Lou and Gabriel are not going to agree on the sovereignty of the islands, but in the process of making the film, a very clear point of union emerges between them: both have suffered the consequences of an extreme event - war - which, ultimately, could only bring favourable consequences for the nation-states and eventually for their political leaders at that time. The unfavourable consequences for civil society are shown in detail in each sequence of *Theatre of War*, which provides a lucid possibility after distancing oneself from the conflict that by appealing to national sentiment and the strong emotions that it mobilised, Galtieri and Thatcher set a trap into which both societies fell and whose consequences have effects even today, in a very stark way in war veterans. The film thus shows the contradiction between the logic of the nation-state and that of civil society, which can internalise the arguments of this trap, as seen in the appropriation of the masks of Thatcher and Galtieri that Gabriel and David adorn. According to Bakhtin (1986), the nation-state speaks for people in a ventriloquial way. War is presented by leaders and by political discourse, whether nationalist or imperialist, as a teleologically inevitable and even desirable event when, however, it represents a terrible experience for people

Fig. 2 Lola Arias (2016). *Theatre of War*. Gema Films (Ref https://www.infobae.com/cultura/2018/09/12/lola-arias-y-un-experimento-social-sobre-la-guerra-de-malvinas-pensaba-que-los-ingleses-habian-sufrido-menos/)

and societies. The direct confrontation caused approximately one thousand deaths (655 Argentines and 255 British), and the veterans' associations of both countries have acknowledged the particularly high number of suicides among ex-combatants; notably, it was very difficult to access fully reliable statistics regarding such deaths (Slipczuk & Martínez, 2019). By moving away from the official discourses and the prominence of the states, the film uncovers the perverse lying within the nationalist and imperialist discourse, accounting for the neglect and lack of attention suffered by the combatants during and after the conflict. If in the case of Great Britain the soldiers were professionals, the Argentines were mostly conscripts: replacement soldiers from compulsory military service, sent to war without adequate training and equipment.

The dialogicity and multiperspectivity of Arias's work are of key relevance, therefore, when thinking about alternatives to the master narratives. Multiperspectivity, in the context of historical education, indicates that the subjective and interpretive quality of history must be correlated with the coexistence of a diversity of narratives instead of with a single closed narrative. Although there is an important consensus in the current research field of history education on the suitability of applying this dimension, the research shows that there are difficulties on the part of teachers when working on it in class (Wansink et al., 2018), particularly in postconflict contexts, where it is especially sensitive to controversial topics (McCully, 2012; Psaltis et al., 2017; Tribukait & Stegers, this volume; Tribukait, 2021). In this sense, the multiperspectivity-dialogicity binomial is the central issue (Van Boxtel & Van Drie, 2017).

Theatre of War provides an excellent visualisation of these dimensions in action. The dialogue between opposing visions manages to make different points of view

understandable without renouncing complexity or avoiding conflict: it is assumed as a starting point that historical problems do not have a closed answer but are subject to different interpretations. This presupposes an implicit claim that the contents of history education, especially in regard to recent violent events, have a fully didactic meaning when they are presented as problems to be discussed and solved and not as solutions already found and indisputable. Thus, *Theatre of War* shakes official nationalist narratives by putting in the centre of the debate voices that have been silenced thus far. Although Arias bases her work on the memory of veterans, the scaffolding on which the story is built shares many elements with the methods of historiography in the elaboration of historical knowledge. In addition, it very effectively investigates the way in which the interpretation of past events determines current conflicts and impacts people's lives. Ultimately, it manages to establish a dialogue between people that could well be the basis of a dialogue between societies.

Deconstructing the Master Narrative Through Historical Sources

To interrogate particular events and belief systems through the creation of new versions of events (Martin, 2006), documentary theatre gives an indisputable centrality to primary sources, i.e., both documents and objects, and to personal stories. This centrality of sources is a clear element of union within a historical education concerned with breaking with the essentialist narratives of a national nature.

History has often been defined as a result of the interpretation of evidence, often appealing to a metaphor of a "puzzle" and pieces that must be put together to reconstruct the past (Seixas & Morton, 2013). One of the most significant proposals in the line of teaching history with a focus on how the discipline itself is constructed, that is, teaching how to think historically, is developed by Wineburg (2001). This proposal has undergone important developments in the last two decades (Nokes, 2017) and is based on the promotion in students of three heuristics applied by historians when scrutinising primary sources: corroboration, sourcing and contextualisation. The type of complex reasoning that the management of these three heuristics entails could be, in addition, as has been developed in recent studies, especially convenient for navigating, with a critical spirit, through digital environments characterised by an overabundance of information and a lack of rigour (Wineburg, 2018). Seixas, on the other hand, has placed the focus much more broadly on the importance of the interpretation of sources (Seixas, 2017), breaking down in much more detail the questions involved in their analysis. Strong commitment to the analysis of historical evidence in which the models of historical thought have deepened has been without a doubt fundamental for the renewal of teaching. However, in recent years, it has been pointed out that teaching models tend to assume a certain view of history, as a discipline, as "neutral terrain" that ensures a sort of essential objectivity, once again avoiding cultural differences and negotiations of meaning in the reception (Thorp &

Persson, 2020). Dessingué (2020) insists on the need to relativise this objectivity, taking into account that archives provide very partial access to a past that, ultimately, we will never be able to cover in its entirety and that, therefore, is subject to various interpretations.

Objects and documents are very present in *Theatre of War*. In the work of Lola Arias, reflection on historical evidence is an important theme. The military uniforms, the footwear, and the magazines of the time that the father of one of the Argentine veterans kept are constitutive parts of the narrative. In an important moment of the film, for example, Marcelo Vallejo reads in his own diary what he wrote upon his return to Argentina after the defeat:

> When we arrived at the regiment after three days in the Lemos school, eating and going to the toilet, because they gave us Epsom salts to purge us, the whole town of Mercedes welcomed us. The buses that transported us entered, and no one could stop the family members. Each one in their world was looking for their loved ones. However, there were also the relatives of the fallen [in combat], who asked desperately for their children. When they could not find them, we did not know what to say. We would send them to another bus or say "they are coming on another trip". We were not prepared for this. In addition, we made comments between us: "Che, did you see Sergio's mother asking for him? Echave's mother? And everything like that. We each went to our companies, and they began to give us plastic bags with our civilian clothes. I had jeans, a t-shirt and a pair of trainers. We dressed and went to Plaza de Armas, where they put us into formation. I don't remember anything that was said. And they sent us home. I left the barracks with my dad, and we went to the bus stop. So, the scenario changed without time to process anything.

The document is key to understanding the history of Marcelo, but it also accounts for a historical moment that actively tried to be silenced. In fact, it was. Upon their return, the ex-combatants were forced not to tell anything about what they had experienced on the islands and were condemned to selective oblivion because the very issue of the Malvinas War was associated with the dictatorship. The mothers who in Marcelo's diary ask about their children and the soldiers who maintain uncomfortable silence speak of the dead that no one took care of at the end of the war.

Along with these objects and documents, the type of fundamental historical evidence in documentary theatre is, as we said, the protagonists' stories. In this sense, it has a link with oral history that, within historiography, builds on the reconstruction of the past using testimonies as a source. Theatre of War is not an historiographical work, but it can provide some interesting elements to think about in synergy with history education. In this specific field, working with oral sources is often characterised as promising. In relation to their use in historiography, for the study of contemporary times, oral accounts are a way of approaching stories absent from written documentary sources; that is, they enable the presence of groups largely silenced in hegemonic historical narratives. Faced with the question of whether oral history challenges traditional pedagogy and how, Llewelly and Ng-A-Fook (2017) identify some possibilities that place it in a path oriented to the promotion of historical thought and away from the memorisation of events: direct work with evidence, in a dialogic space, conducive to the collective construction of historical knowledge and the possibility of deconstructing and constructing narratives around conflictive

pasts. Transversally, they highlight the fact that work with oral history casts a critical view on the constructed character of stories about the past.

It is precisely on this idea that the work of Arias pivots. In addition, it does so in a way that allows us to delve into the very nature of the testimony and its context of production. The recourse to documentary theatre operates here by discussing—and inviting the spectator or student to do so—not only the construction of historical narratives but also "epistemic privilege", which ascribes to the ex-combatants the possession of an indisputable "truth" of the events due to having lived them (Tozzi, 2009) and which frequently operates when listening to eyewitness accounts. In working with oral sources, it is essential to take into account that the way in which personal stories are constructed is directly linked to the narratives that circulate in the cultural memory of the societies in which they are inserted (Rigney, 2018). It is possible, then, that invisible groups resort to hegemonic narratives when reconstructing their experience. This is very clear when Lola Arias reflects on the process of writing the work with the veterans:

> Sometimes [the participating men] wanted or needed to be portrayed as heroes, even if they were not so aware of it. However, they wanted to bring back this epic of war in different ways, not because they felt they did something amazing but in a more unconscious way. As men, they were still carrying this idea of transmitting this epic of war. (interviewed by Philip Bither, 2019)

This also allows us to reflect on the complexity of considering these silenced voices, taking care to avoid the danger of victimisation. The agency of veterans is fully recognised in the film, precisely to the extent that their story is not only recovered and enunciated but is also challenged. In the film, this is achieved, once again, through the use of dialogue, contrasting them with an "other" with which one must argue. Despite appearing at times testimonial, the story had a script, required many hours of rehearsal, had staging, and cast six men who, in addition to being veterans, joined the project as performers, that is, as actors without previous experience on stage but actors still. With the recourse to the film under construction, Arias recalls both the constructed character of the story and her own authorship, thus distancing herself from the danger of being trapped in the literalness of which Carol Martin warns in her reflection on the possibilities of documentary theatre (2006). The stories of the veterans are real, but they are not presented as unquestionable ontological entities; however, they are part of a project. It has been put at the service of discussion and consensus on how to represent what unites them and what separates them. The memory of these experiences ultimately becomes a living element subject to change.

Conclusions

"Memory is a minefield".[6] With this powerful metaphor, Lola Arias gives an account of the main theme that has structured her artistic production: the conflictive link between the past and the present and the way in which this affects the lives of people, especially in relation to violent pasts (June 6, 2016). *Theatre of War*, the film that we analyse herein, addresses the Falklands War in an unprecedented way: polyphonic, supranational, radically dialogic, under construction, and in which reenactment plays a central role. In the work of Arias, the dialogue between the real and the fictitious is put at the service of exploring the limits of historical representation, working on the idea of "remaking" conflictive pasts (Arias, 2020). The representation of historical events and their possibility of reconstruction and the place of official narratives and individual and collective memory in the configuration of the present are some of the issues that this project addresses. From them, the playwright unearths those mines hidden in the official narrative of the nation-state that had not been exploited, at least publicly. Her work shifts the focus from the common places of a sedimented historical account to new questions, highlighting some of the traps into which hegemonic memory falls. In doing so, it challenges the master narrative and opens a space for change. Undoubtedly, the construction of the story about the war experience of the six veterans has been affected by their participation in this project (Perera, 2019). Our conclusion, and the great success of these productions seem to account for this conclusion, is that these powerful works are capable of crossing and producing changes in spectators in general, and in educational contexts in particular, based on the following characteristics:

(a) The substantial questioning of official narratives about historical events, usually of a nationalist and/or imperialist nature, through their contrast with traditionally silenced voices. It avoids the dichotomies and simplifications that frequently populate the opposing visions and uncritically reinforce the sense of national belonging to bet on a polyphony that goes beyond these borders. Thus, and returning to the dimensions of the narratives that we have previously analysed, in the work of Lola Arias, we see a plural and heterogeneous historical subject, a critical and reflective identification, a historical contextualisation of supposed heroes, a morality based on the person and not on the state and a complex political causality that does not avoid real conflicts;
(b) An essentially dialogic development of these new narratives—In this way, it breaks with the uniqueness of the nation-state, offering a "neutral territory" (Blejmar, 2017, p. 8) on which the protagonists have the opportunity to speak within the framework of the full recognition of their agency; and
(c) The denaturalisation of historical accounts through the mediation of a wide variety of historical resources such as archives, oral history, personal letters, photographs, uniforms and other types of objects that demonstrate their

[6] Title of the central lecture by Lola Arias at the Royal Central School of the University of London, 6/6/2016.

constructed character and allow a horizon of new critical elaborations about the past.

Through these resources, *Theatre of War* manages to create a space of empathy, both among the performers and between the performers and the public that does not simplify the conflicts present and allows a genuine understanding of visions different from their own (Blejmar, 2017). Empathy has been identified as a key element of historical thinking in the operation of understanding contexts of beliefs and values of the past that can be radically different from our own (Riley in Helmsing, 2014). The empathy among the veterans and between them and the spectators deepens the dialogue, that is, a consideration of visions different from that of others that allow coexistence between non-coincident positions and, in this case, allows us to listen to them without forcing us to identify ourselves with them (Blejmar, 2017). In this sense, the work of Arias allows us to think about the ability that Landsberg (2004, p. 130) attributes to the "prosthetic memories" of producing empathy and social responsibility through, among other factors, the recognition of memories different from hegemonic, and the consideration of the need to "experience" history in novel formats, without renouncing the methods of historiography.

Documentary theatre in general, and the works of Arias in particular, represent a novel opportunity to deepen the discussion on new educational proposals that integrate both the processes of collective memory and historical thought, offering new and complex representations of the past. It allows us to think about the possibilities of imagining a construction of both history and memory overcoming national prominence and the univocity of the nation-state. The construction of a powerful dialogue between former enemies of war, that is, about an almost extreme idea of otherness, points to interesting clues when navigating the challenges faced by the multiplicity of narratives in the digital world.

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