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### **Editorial correspondence should be addressed to:**

Hilary.cooper@sky.com and Jon Nichol at Heirnet@gmail.com; IJHLTR@gmail.com

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## EDITORIAL

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The sea change in academia since the 1990s has seen Higher Education's [HE] focus move from pure and applied research as an end in itself to a 'market' orientation which prioritises outcomes linked to the interests of HE's 'clients' and 'customers'. IJHLTR aims to respond [perhaps reluctantly!] to this ethos of 'he who pays the piper calls the tune' through proposing a series of co-ordinated measures to upgrade IJHLTR's effectiveness, impact and academic reputation. They are of seminal importance to its contributors' interest, aspirations and even professional survival. Rationalisation also involves the History Educators International Research Network [HEIRNET], IJHLTR'S umbilically linked twin body.

IJHLTR was first published 15 years ago. For the past 13 years the editors of IJHLTR have run an annual History Education conference through the History Educators International Research Network, HEIRNET. HEIRNET's delegates provide the bulk of articles for IJHLTR. Our first conference was an informal colloquium held in England's Lake District. The number, international composition and enthusiasm of the attenders led to a second and subsequent conferences using the acronym HEIRNET. But, HEIRNET has been a spiritual sobriquet: now is the moment to give the name organisational substance that would include the effective management and strengthening of IJHLTR. Our tentative suggestions are:

**HEIRNET:** To establish HEIRNET as a discrete organisation with a website and formal structure including:

- constitution
- membership and subscriptions – individual and institutional to support HEIRNET and IJHLTR
- management structure including:
  - o HEIRNET conference and other committees,
  - o the annual HEIRNET conference,
  - o HEIRNET publications, newsletters
  - o HEIRNET related activities
  - o IJHLTR editorial team, editorial advisory group, typesetting, copy editing and publication policy
  - o other related IJHLTR and HEIRNET activities

**IJHLTR:** To upgrade and enhance the quality and reputation of IJHLTR as an academic publication

- To promote IJHLTR as an internationally respected source for evidence based policy and practice drawing upon History Education at government and international organisations levels as well as nationally the worlds of education, training, pedagogy/didactics and curriculum development and innovation.
- To continue the *international peer refereeing* procedure for the management of individual submissions through the sequence of peer review, feedback and revision, acceptance, editing, typesetting and copy editing with publication as stand-alone papers each with its own Digital Object Identifier [ODI] before compilation of such articles into separate editions of the journal.

- To ensure IJHLTR is registered with all the relevant international bodies that provide journals with an international provenance that national and international funding bodies/agencies and Higher Education Institutions such as universities accept for the rating of academic publications.
- To create an income stream to support typesetting, copy editing and the effective work of the IJHLTR editorial team and advisory board.
- To maintain the mutually beneficial liaison between IJHLTR and HEIRNET.

Arthur Chapman, Hilary Cooper and Jon Nichol

## EDITORIAL REVIEW

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### IJHLTR Vol. 14.1

IJHLTR 14.1 has three foci: national, regional and local curricula, their implementation and considerations of pedagogy.

#### **National, International, Local And Regional History Curricula – Issues And Considerations**

The first four papers from Australia, Greece, Spain and the USA illuminate the crucial area of the development of history curricula from a number of perspectives.

Tony Taylor's *Resisting The Regime: An Insider's View Of Australian History Education 2006–2014*, pp. 16-27, reviews attempts to create an Australian national history curriculum. It is a marvellous, insider first hand account of factors in 2006–07 and 2014 that enabled academic, professional, Australian states and public opinion to defeat successive federal governments' partisan attempts to politicise an Australian national curriculum for history. What did politicisation in the 2006–07 and 2014 contexts mean? Australian politicisation's multi faceted neo-conservatism has vampire squid like tentacles nurtured from:

an approach to politics that includes an evangelical attitude to spreading the benefits of western-style democracy, a pro-Christian outlook, a realist<sup>1</sup> diplomatic view of the world and a forceful, global defence of perceived Australian and western geopolitical interests. As part of that worldview, a traditionalist outlook on Australian history education is regarded by neoconservatives as a vital component in providing 'balance' against alleged Leftist influences in schools which, it is alleged, are debilitatingly relativistic when it comes to, for example, international relations, cultural and religious differences, gender identity, national identity and national security.' p. 17.

The neo-conservatives relied upon academic historians with little or no knowledge of schools, schooling, teaching and curriculum to create a 'proposed model for a syllabus in Australian history which was factually-based, celebratory, Anglo-centric and abstruse ...'. Through an analytical narrative Tony traces the steps which led he and others in 2006–07 to defeat the proposed neo-con syllabus. It foundered upon three rocky criteria that it could not meet: Was it 'teachable (engage both students and teachers), doable (have a secure place in the school curriculum) and sustainable (taught by specialist teachers).'

A major, if not the major element that the paper reveals in the 2006–07 and 2014 struggles over the curriculum was the intense, intimate, local, personal, familial and 'social' nature of the collations of agents involved in the dialogue, often pursuing their personal and partisan agendas but uniting in the face of a common enemy. Accordingly, the consortium that coalesced to defeat the government's education ministry's proposals remarkably mapped on to the overall and overriding political agenda of the prime minister and his colleagues and not its neo-con educational establishment. The opposition won prime ministerial and government support through being able:

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<sup>1</sup> In diplomatic history, a term that generally means a focus on national self-interest combined with pragmatic cynicism. Henry Kissinger would be a good example of a realist diplomat.



- to present politically appealing arguments to supersede those of the education ministers and his acolytes;
- to mobilise support from powerful interest groups, including the media;
- to produce a full, evidence based case that revealed the weaknesses, shallowness and ignorance of the education ministry's proposal;
- to be flexible;
- to be both strategically and tactically aware.

Tony raises the major point of what frames the thinking of curricula proponents, in his case both neo-cons and their liberal opponents.

George Kokkinos' and Kikki Sakka's *The Traumatic Memory Of The Holocaust. Reflection On Theory And Practice: From European Institutions And Pioneer Practices To The Case Of Greece*, pp. 28-54, illuminate in a European context the national curricular dimension that Tony Taylor's highlighted. Their study is a comprehensive review of the role and nature of Holocaust education in a wider, macro European frame. As such, it provides a fascinating and relatively novel perspective on national and international creation of history curricula. George and Sakka raise the question of what constitutes an international historical consciousness, i.e. what are the common shared knowledge, ethics, beliefs, values and attitudes that give European curricula a European cultural shape and orientation. Their paper focuses on the holocaust as the lightning rod for these factors through what they call 'prosthetic memory':

The generation of Holocaust survivors is dying out: however, their traumatic experiences and memories live on in their descendants' minds, in many even strongly enhanced, reinforced and unquestioningly accepted. A parallel development is the contemporary widening acceptance by others of the holocaust as a unique, sacrosanct, unquestioned taboo that is an element of their personal and collective identity, a prosthetic memory. More generally, the holocaust is an element in the public consciousness of West European countries: as such its teaching is a significant element in History Education. Indeed, without the Holocaust as a central element the European Union can have no meaningful historical roots, identity, awareness and meaning. And, axiomatically, this requires the holocaust to have a central role in the historical curricula and education of all pupils and students in the European Union. A major concern is that many European Union countries have communities with entrenched values and attitudes that tolerate and support anti-semitism. Dealing with these is problematic, posing as they do a threat to the libertarian values, policies and laws of the liberal democracies of the European Union. In 2005 the European Council supported Holocaust education as a central element of History Education to combat anti-semitism throughout the European Union. p. 28.

At the other parochial and provincial end of the curricula spectrum Andres Dominguez-Almansa's and Ramon López Facal's *Invisible Landscapes – Heritage In Conflict: Memories Of The Spanish Civil War: Elementary Education And Teacher Training* is a fascinating, revelatory piece both in its own right and when set against the bigger picture of what should be the form and nature of history curricula from the national to the local level. Andres and Ramon deal with contemporary history through a local community lens, a perspective that affects us all in our own personal, familial and community historical identity. The context is Spain and school history that presents an anodyne, uncontested and sanitised view of Spain's traumatic past from the mid 1930s with specific reference to the Spanish Civil war. Here are echoes of the Australian neo-conservative wish to impose a politicised curriculum proselytising unquestioned sectarian views.



In *Invisible Landscapes – Heritage In Conflict* Andres and Ramon explain how they encouraged trainee primary school teachers to discover hidden memories of executions carried out during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) in the neighbourhood of their university department. Their paper analyses both the educational value of the activity with its collective construction of historical knowledge and how it changed these future teachers' historical awareness. *Invisible Landscapes – Heritage in Conflict* strongly suggests that a curriculum that ignores the vernacular roots and origins of contemporary society, both locally and nationally, can be both impoverished and misleading, i.e. propagandistic. A crucial aspect of social memory is the canon of vernacular, folk history. Its stories, legends, myths and beliefs are transmitted and shared from generation to generation, usually orally, both through the family and socially through bodies such churches/mosques, schools, sporting and social clubs, societies, museums, cultural organisations and musical groups, bands and orchestras. These often hidden vernacular histories parallel the national, governmentally approved narratives transmitted through national curricula and their official textbooks and pedagogy. *Invisible Landscapes – Heritage In Conflict* suggests how teachers can unlock these hidden folk histories and include them in the curriculum.

The authors deal head on with the problem of impoverished national curricula built around a non controversial canon of stories that enshrine a set of nationalistic values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. While their relates to Spain, its underlying structure and methodology is universally appropriate, particularly in countries, states and regions with a traumatic past. Here dealing with controversial issues is a crucial element in education for citizenship.

### **Implementation Of Curricula And The Role Of Text Books**

The second set of IJHLTR 14.1 papers address the teaching of history curricula, with a focus on textbooks.

Tim Huijgen and his colleagues in *Toward A Global Past? The Presence Of World History In Dutch History Textbooks And History Teaching*, pp. 67-80, ask what should be taught to develop students' consciousness of the contemporary world. They compared and analysed Dutch secondary school text books to see their relative proportions of Dutch, European and World history. They found that the predominant elements were Dutch and then European history, with little World history. This led them to question whether it is possible to develop useful, multi-perspectival thinking with limited exposure to and knowledge of World History.

The *Toward A Global Past?* chapter relates to the widespread problem of European history curricula built around a parochial nationalistic and patriotic interpretation of the past. The authors argue that such curricula are not only deficient in equipping students with both knowledge and understanding of World History but also of the wide range of thinking skills, procedures and protocols drawn from history as an academic discipline. Such cognition empowers students to better understand contemporary world issues and problems, cultural diversity, democratic citizenship and to participate positively in multicultural societies. It may also promote global citizenship with understanding and support 'for people in distant places' and develop an appreciation of 'the interconnectedness of peoples'

Christian Mathis's complementary paper '*The Revolution Is Not Over Yet*' – *German Speaking Ninth Graders' Conceptions Of The French Revolution*, pp. 81-92, raises major concerns about the nature of historical teaching and learning; issues reflected in the English seminal research project of Peter Lee and Ros Ashby CHATA [Concepts in History and Teaching Approaches]. A focus of Christian's research is the prior knowledge of pupils; both in relation to subject

content as well as disciplinary understanding that they develop through ‘Doing History’s’ skills, processes and conceptual framework. A useful table juxtaposes everyday knowledge with thinking historically knowledge:

<i>Everyday knowledge</i>	<i>Academic, scientific historical knowledge</i>
– biographical (experience)	– constructed (reflective)
– mix of believing-wondering-knowing	– knowledge based on evidence
– authenticity	– logic
– rules of the interacting persons	– institutionalised rules
– routine actions	– reflective actions
– knowledge badly organised	– knowledge systematically organised
– appropriateness	– search for truth
– assurance	– discourse
– avoid doubt and incertitude	– make doubt and incertitude visible
– intentional understanding	– theoretical understanding

When the research mapped the learning of pupils on to the table’s categories, it revealed a fundamental problem: their most common patterns of explanation were ‘constructed in an everyday sense and not according to academic history. A super-pattern called ‘presentism’ could be isolated which interferes with all other patterns, thus obstructing the students’ academic historical thinking.’ The students’ anachronistic interpretations of the past were constructed through the lens of the present. The paper’s conclusion is both simple and stark: the pupils had not been taught to think historically about the topic – they assimilated their information within an existing, a-historical pattern of thinking. Accordingly, the professional training of history teachers should equip them to teach pupils to think historically.

In terms of the teachers’ action, it is significant to emphasise that the teacher has to take an active role. The teacher has to act as a model for historical thinking, e.g. the model of cognitive apprenticeship (Collins, Brown & Holum 1991). He or she has to moderate and to model cognitively the change of the contexts of knowledge. They have to be able to reflect and to give a feedback to the students’ interpretations. For this purpose, teachers should make obvious what they think, in regard to context the students are referring in a given case. There has to be an explicit acquisition of the second-order concepts, strategic knowledge, and epistemologies of history.’

The final sentence raises three fundamental aspects of pupils thinking historically: the holistic, strategic process of ‘doing history, an understanding of the what history is, i.e. the nature of the discipline, and its underpinning, intermeshed framework of disciplinary historical concepts.

Adam Burns *My Empire Is Of The Imagination: History Student Perceptions Of The British Empire In Secondary School*, pp. 93-112, analyses the understanding of three groups of 16-19 year old students when asked to interpret a single, unseen source on a key aspect of British Imperialism; the emancipation of slavery in 1833, with specific reference to the West Indies. Unlike the pupils in Christian Mathis’s research these students had been studying imperialism

for an examination course, i.e. they had an overall detailed immersion in the subject, both content knowledge and the historical thinking involved. However, they had minimal or no contextual historical knowledge of the sources they were asked to respond to. The research findings suggest two major factors that affected and shaped student's learning: Crucial was the teacher's role in developing the students' historical thinking, i.e. informed scepticism, 'empowered awareness' that enabled them to analyse and interpret the sources. While the groups' interpretations were markedly different they all drew upon a common, sophisticated historical methodology detailed in the right hand column of Christian Mathis's table.

Secondly, the predominantly cultural framing of their historical interpretations. The members of the three groups drew upon what they generally knew and understood to interpret the decontextualized image they were studying and not their national curriculum school history. Accordingly:

when the students were presented with source material outside the precise subject matter they had studied, their ideas and opinions on the British Empire diverged. p. 104.

A good number of students who completed the questionnaires drew conclusions or inferences that went far beyond what one could actually tell from the image, which is a skill that is encouraged in both GCSE and A Level History exam papers. Although the students were almost certainly drawing on that which they had learned in school during their A Level studies to an extent, the sheer diversity of their responses suggests that a multitude of external variables were of equal, if not more, importance. Indeed, media, literature, family, friends – a whole range of factors – all seem likely to come into play for students when forming their ideas about empire. p. 104.

Adam's research strikingly questions the influence of central, imposed curricula upon student's historical knowledge, understanding and consciousness. His insights, when taken with the Tony Taylor's paper, should be compulsory reading for those who demand a central, politicised curriculum. And, they raise the key point that thinking historically requires an approach which is a nonsense, i.e. a-historical, without the historical contextualisation of sources, primary or secondary.

### **Considerations of Pedagogy**

The final four papers relate to classroom teaching and related pupil learning, i.e. pedagogy/ didactics. Debra Donnelly writes about effective history education using feature films; Christine Smith museums; Gloria Sole, Diana Reis and Andreia Machado fiction and William Russell and Stewart Waters on the pedagogic challenge of teaching Social Studies to unengaged students. The authors focus on effective ways of engaging, challenging and interesting students to deepen both syntactic knowledge – the skills, processes, procedures and disciplinary concepts which underpin how they learn about the topic – and the ensuing substantive factual knowledge including historical situations, individuals, societies, groups, movements, developments, philosophies, beliefs, values, ideals, accounts, narratives, themes, trends and their semantic, factual concepts: the stuff of history.

Debra Donnelly in *Filmic Pedagogies In The Teaching Of History: Research On And Recommendations For Using Historical Feature Films In The Classroom*, pp. 113-23, explores how students can link their personal cultures – social, oral, digital and multi-modal with that of school culture rooted in the printed and written word. *Filmic Pedagogies* argues that feature

films can provide a bridge between what affectively interests and appeals to students and conventional, print focused educational books and materials and its related passive, monologic transmission model of teaching.

Debra's research project highlighted concerns raised elsewhere that teachers treat feature film differently from historical sources as they embed the feature film into an overall narrative that pupils passively assimilate, i.e. the film's role is to provide a stepping off point. An extensive survey of teachers showed there was minimal use of the feature film as an historical source to actively stimulate and engage pupils. The passive approach fails to recognise that feature films are a commercially produced genre that aim to entertain and so reflect the interests, values and attitudes of the audience. As such, feature films are 'presentist', fictionalised interpretations of the past. Debra argues that teachers should treat feature films as an historical source like all others. Crucial here is pedagogy built around teaching strategies and their activities that challenge pupils and engage them in high-level thinking that ranges from the logical and inductive to the evidentially based creative, empathetic and imaginative.

On pages 117-19 the paper presents two case-studies that demonstrate and illuminate clearly and fully what such teaching might involve. As such, they are invaluable for colleagues involved in professional development, providing exemplars, models, for trainees and experienced teachers to draw upon and implement. The first case study, Mrs Warner's, 'was an example of a pedagogy that stresses the role of historical imagination and the affective in connecting students to history, while the second, Mrs Drew's, used a much more cognitive approach which aimed to train students in historical literacy and understanding.' Analysis of the case-studies suggested key strategies that were used to embed effectively historical feature film in the taught secondary history curriculum.

**1 Establishment and application of a conceptual framework before seeing the film,** using historical terms and setting focus questions to encourage application of the established framework. These allowed the feature film to be integrated into the course and so connected with and compared to the other historical sources. This provided a context for the unit as well as drawing on any prior knowledge of the class.

**2 Addressing the values or ethics dimension in their teaching.** Both teachers explicitly identified and defined particular values, attitudes and beliefs closely linked to students' personal concerns and issues.

**3 Integration of graphic organisers and learning scaffolds.** Both Mrs Drew and Mrs Warner used graphic organisers, such as T charts (columns), spider diagrams and mind maps, as iconic, i.e. visual, communication and summary devices. These tools show the organisation and relationships of information, concepts and ideas. Students used them to capture ideas and observations while viewing the films.

**4 Cognitive apprenticeship learning design.** A constructivist pedagogy that breaks down a complex teaching and learning task into phases from demonstration, modelling, imitation, review, implementation via coaching and collaboration to the final phase – the fading out of support and autonomous learning. Both teachers guided their students in their historical writing, spending time on the essay as a form requiring sophisticated historical writing and organisational skills.

**5 Close, deep, detailed analysis of the feature film** either as an historical source or as stimulus for further investigation.

**6 The performative – creation of a work to give clarity to their historical understandings.** Performative tasks can range from writing argumentative essays and constructing websites to building models or making historical “artefacts” to role plays, speeches and dramatic simulations. This task-orientated focus encourages further exploration and synthesis, relates the films to other historical material and deepens understanding, to apply and re-contextualise the knowledge they have learned.

The *Filmic Pedagogies* case-studies show in a clear, practical way how two different teaching styles based on the teacher’s own attitudes, values, knowledge and pedagogic understanding can transform teaching that incorporates feature films.

Debra Donnelly’s conclusions about effective pedagogy are reflected in Christine Smith’s *The Museum: Learning, Enjoyment and History*, pp. 124-36. Christine examines the historical development of museums as places of learning from their origins in classical Alexandria to the modern day before analysing the links between the current role and purpose of museums and school history curricula. A revolution in museum education means museums are much more accessible to schools and pupils than in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century both through on-line provision and visits that actively involve students in learning. Museums can contribute to both formal and informal learning outside the classroom.

They accentuate the wonder, and awe factor that immersion in an artifactual and visual/pictorial environment can bring when pupil learning is based upon enactive historical teaching involving questioning, investigation, discussion and debate, speculation, inference and the informed imagination with pupils working collaboratively as pairs and small teams under teacher guidance. Christine argues that questioning is the essential ingredient, giving force and direction to historical learning. This develops in a real life context with objects and visual, pictorial representations that all pupils can relate to and interact with. Verbal communication and dialogue is vital as it involving thinking about and reflecting upon questions. Teachers can draw upon a wide range of learning activities developed since the 1960s that are similar to those that Debra Donnelly graphically presented in her *Filmic Pedagogies* case studies.

Glória Solé, Diana Reis and Andreia Machado in *The Potentialities Of Using Historical Fiction And Legends In History Teaching: A Study With Primary Portuguese Students*, pp. 137-54, builds upon an extensive body of literature about the use of fictitious historical narrative in the teaching of history and social studies – narrative that includes historical stories, myths and legends. As a major dimension of history teaching fiction provides a springboard to develop deeper, fuller and more accurate historical knowledge and understanding. Here the teacher draws upon a pedagogic repertoire that involves questioning, discussion, debate and exposition linked to the investigation of a related range of historical sources that illuminate the narrative’s historical context and its validity. Approaches can include the imaginative and creative; drama, role-play, music, art, sculpture, literary composition and ICT using multi-modal genres to represent students’ historical understanding.

Through two action research studies the authors investigated the knowledge and understanding that Portuguese primary school children developed from studying a fictitious historical narrative or a legend about the Christian Reconquest during the formation of Portugal. The research questions were:



- What are the potentialities of using historical fiction and legends in History teaching?
- What is the impact of these specific sources on students' narratives?
- What is the relative impact of historiography and iconic sources on students' narratives?
- What does it contribute to the understanding of multi-perspectivity in the process of Christian Reconquest in the formation of Portugal?

The action research involved two trainee teachers and their classes of c. 20 nine and ten year old pupils. The teachers used either the fictitious narrative or the legend with their classes. The teaching involved a range of activities that drew upon a range of primary and historiographical sources. The final pupil task was for them to create two complementary fictitious historical narratives, drawing upon what they had learned from studying the fictitious narratives from the Reconquista period. The researchers used a four level taxonomy to classify pupil compositions:

1. *Fragmented* that are
  - without logical structure, consisting of loose and / or incomplete sentences;
  - little historical accuracy – the fictional dominates the historical;
  - they include material disconnected from the historical subject matter.
2. *Copy-paste*,
  - Incoherent and incomplete naratives;
  - little coherent structure with unrelated phrases;
  - some loose/incomplete sections;
  - limited historical detail;
  - copying from the provided historical documents, information or legend
3. *Descriptive* texts without links between the events with
  - a visible logical structure;
  - some incomplete expressions
  - little organized information;
4. *Complete-Explanatory* with
  - an internal logic structure;
  - historical information well organised;
  - a coherent sequence;
  - good historical understanding of the event, with visible distinction between the real and the fictional.

Analysis of both sets of pupil responses reveals a complex pattern of pupil thinking, within only a few responding at the third and fourth levels. As the action research was carried out with 9-10 year olds the results are encouraging, bearing in mind that the approach is appropriate at all stages of pupils' education. The paper argues that teachers have the crucial, central role in creating the environment in which such learning can occur. This again raises the importance of effective teacher education and training to equip teachers with the attitudes, aptitudes, pedagogic and curricular expertise, knowledge and understanding essential for successful teaching, reflecting Shulman's rationalisation of teacher education in the mid 1980s that has had a profound, transformative impact. The authors conclude:

Historical fiction, with its strong historiographical component integrates and enhances students' understanding of the past, restores the landscape of history; informs students about the interpretive nature of history; shows how authors and artists [illustrators] deal with historical issues. Presenting multiple perspectives through the narrator's point of view or

the characters, introduces children to the notion of multi perspective historical knowledge. It shows that history is not flat or uni-dimensional that in a single narrative integrates various interpretations. It also promotes historical significance and historical empathy as it highlights what the author of historical fictions considers to be most significant and important. This can be contrasted with the historiography of the historical topic as fiction can more easily represent other times, actions and thorough of protagonists for students to assimilate and understand.

The final paper in this edition, William Russell and Stewart Water *Elementary Social Studies: A Survey Of What 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> And 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Students' Like And Dislike About Social Studies/ Instruction*, pp. 155-62 reviews the nature, effectiveness and overall value of Social Studies/ Humanities/History curricula and the ways in which they are taught. The authors draw together many of the themes in this volume of IJHLTR. Their paper is a model of how History Education research should inform policy and practice through providing objective, evidence based findings that should lead to changes in teacher education, training, curricular and pedagogy.

William and Stewart's analysis of their research data indicates clearly that the passive, transmission model of pedagogy overwhelmingly used to teach *Social Studies* and is highly ineffective. As such, its endemic passivity is a barrier to active pupil engagement and quid pro quo, understanding. The hallmark of transmission teaching is the teacher-as-expert transmitting and facilitating learning through lectures, guided reading from text books and note-taking. Conversely, the active learning that the research shows students prefer forces them to engage mentally with the topic – both affectively and cognitively. Active learning that they rate positively include visits, debates, dialogue and cooperative learning that involves joint decision making, problem solving and resolution of enquiries. Such learning relates closely to the digital age, with its multi-modal sources of information transmitted through visual and aural channels about current issues, presidential/government elections, local social and political issues that directly relate to their own lives and cultural orientation. In a genuine senses, the programme's title *Social Studies* suggests, it moves responsibility for learning to the learner, with the teacher as director, manager and facilitator who lays down a framework, a programme that can include a necessary element of transmission pedagogy. While the transmission model can develop data processing skills such as recording, extracting, organizing and synthesizing active learning not only covers these but a wide range of inter-personal, social and presentational skills that involve oracy, numeracy and ICT.

### Correspondence

Jon Nichol, Hilary Cooper and Arthur Chapman  
[ijhltr@gmail.com](mailto:ijhltr@gmail.com)



**NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL, LOCAL AND REGIONAL HISTORY CURRICULA –  
ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

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**RESISTING THE REGIME: AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORY EDUCATION  
2006–2014**

**Tony Taylor**, University of Technology Sydney/Federation University Australia, Ultimo,  
Sydney/Churchill, Victoria, Australia

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**Abstract:**

*The author will discuss his experiences as an academic who was closely involved in the political practicalities of history curriculum implementation in Australia during three successive periods of federal government; a neoconservative Liberal-National coalition in 1996–2007, an Australian Labor Party government in 2007–2012 and a Liberal-National coalition in 2013–2015.*

*This article will focus on the latter period with special reference to the importance of the Magna Carta, the English Civil War and the 'Judeo-Christian tradition' to an Anglo-centric Australian neo-conservative mindset. The author will also outline and discuss how resistance to the attempted insertion of this kind of ideologically-framed historical worldview into the new Australian national curriculum resulted in a defeat for its proponents.*

**Keywords:**

Anglo-centricity – Magna Carta, English Civil War and 'Judeo-Christian tradition',  
Australia – modern, Australia – national history curriculum implementation 1996–2015,  
History education curriculum, Neo-conservative Australian mindset, Political intervention

**Introduction and Background**

Customarily, accounts of recent attempts at political interference in History Education focus mainly on the activities of the agents of politicisation. Over recent time, these agents have ranged from Margaret Thatcher in the late 1980s through to Vladimir Putin in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a deviation from that rule, this article, which is part overview and part narrative memoir, will examine and comment on the roles and activities of those who resisted, rather than those who instigated, two failed attempts by neoconservative regimes to politicise Australian history education, endeavours that foundered in part on the rocks of professional resistance.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The author's viewpoint is that of a committed history educator with no partisan political affiliation who advocates for an *au courant*, evidence-grounded approach to inquiry-based history education. Indeed in the period 1999–2005 the author was widely regarded as the archenemy of the Left-progressive SOSE curriculum (see below p. 6), hence his role in the events of 2006.

The first attempt, which lasted but a single day, came with the convening of Liberal prime minister John Howard's Australian History Summit in August 2006<sup>2</sup>. The second attempt, which lasted nine months, came in the form of the Liberal prime minister Tony Abbott's 2014 federal review of the Australian national curriculum (AC) established in 2010.

In writing this article, the term 'regime' has been framed as a political entity that acts coercively and with partisan intent to gain its ideological aims. In this case the ideology is an Australian variation of Irving Kristoll's 'persuasion' (as opposed to a distinct and discrete) form of conservatism. This is an approach to politics that includes an evangelical attitude to spreading the benefits of western-style democracy, a pro-Christian outlook, a realist<sup>3</sup> diplomatic view of the world and a forceful, global defence of perceived Australian and western geopolitical interests.

As part of that worldview, a traditionalist outlook on Australian history education is regarded by neoconservatives as a vital component in providing 'balance' against alleged Leftist influences in schools which, it is alleged, are debilitatingly relativistic when it comes to, for example, international relations, cultural and religious differences, gender identity, national identity and national security.

### **The Regime**

The regime under consideration had three elements.

First, we have Liberal-led federal coalition governments involved in these two case studies. The 2006 federal government was led by a confident and powerful Liberal prime minister John Howard, a politician in his third successive term of office who had a longstanding, sentimentalised interest in, and strong personal views about, Australian history. Indeed, in 2004 as leader of the government, he had commented, 'I would like to see [Australians] comfortable and relaxed about their history'<sup>4</sup>. In that context, Howard convened a 2006 Summit which was to be part of a personal campaign to impose his views about Australia's past on the nation's schools, more especially on the final two years of compulsory schooling Years 9 and 10 (ages 15-16).

The 2014 national curriculum review on the other hand, was instigated by prime minister Tony Abbott's abrasive and hard-nosed education minister Christopher Pyne who, generally regarded as being hazy about the details of education issues<sup>5</sup>, all but took his marching orders from the second element in the regime, the Institute for Public Affairs or IPA. The IPA, funded mainly by oil, mining, tobacco and News Corp (Murdoch) money, was at that time a neoconservative (now more libertarian) think tank and policy provider for the Liberal Party as well as a leading culture wars campaigner. Of the IPA, Tony Abbott, as opposition leader, half-jokingly and colourfully remarked to its director John Roskam in an April 2013 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner, 'John, you've

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2 Liberals in Australian politics are conservatives. Nationals are a small conservative rural/regional protectionist party in a very uneasy (but necessary for both sides) coalition with the Liberals. The Nationals do not involve themselves in culture wars.

3 In diplomatic history, a term that generally means a focus on national self-interest combined with pragmatic cynicism. Henry Kissinger would be a good example of a realist diplomat.

4 Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *Four Corners*, 5 October 2004.

5 Pyne had been appointed primarily as manager of government affairs in the House of Representatives, a politically important, time-consuming and distracting position.

done very well with just 20 staff-remember what Jesus of Nazareth did with 12. And one of them turned out to be a rat.<sup>6</sup>

The third element was *The Australian* newspaper, a News Corp (Murdoch) broadsheet run (2003–2015) by crusading editor-in-chief Chris Mitchell, a man on an anti-Marxist mission. 'The Oz' as it is generally known, is widely regarded as being very close to the Liberal party leadership. Indeed Mitchell was viewed (by himself and others) as an editor who aspired to be an unofficial arm of Coalition governments. Mitchell relentlessly pursued his own reds-under-the-beds agenda and uses his newspaper's columns to stalk his critics as well as critics of the Liberal party. He had an obsession with history, particularly with school history<sup>7</sup>.

The ideological approach of this three-part regime both in 2006 and in 2014 was to push for an emphasis on school history as an instrument of cultural assimilation. History, the argument went, should be used to maintain an Anglo-centric form of social cohesion through acquaintanceship with essential facts and their memorisation. Further, as a school subject, history should be based on a traditionalist approach to the past as an exceptionalist and celebratory chronicle of Australian progress framed within the greater narratives of the evolution and righteous expansion of British imperialism and Western Christian civilisation. Unfortunate and embarrassing incidents in the past were minor blemishes, are seen to be of their time and are to be passed over quickly if mentioned at all.

### **Why the 2006 Summit?**

The Summit was convened in Parliament House, Canberra on Thursday 17th August 2006 by Prime Minister Howard as a response to December 2005 territorial inter-ethnic disturbances (Muslim youths versus Anglo/Celtic/Mediterranean youths) at Cronulla, a beachside suburb of Sydney.

In January 2006, Howard, appalled at the events in Cronulla, had promised what amounted to a curative, assimilationist 'root and branch renewal' of Australian history in schools. The consequent August event in Canberra was jointly organised by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO, a political bureau) and by the federal education department. The occasion, which received huge advance national publicity, especially in the News Corp media, was to be completed between the hours of 9am and 5pm.

The Summit comprised 22 'Summiteers' and a chair. The Summiteers were a PMO-approved 'sensible centre' (Howard's term) mix of ten historians, three teachers, two history educators (one identifiably conservative and the other was the author) a New South Wales curriculum official, two Indigenous representatives, two conservative journalists, one conservative freelance author and one former ALP state premier who was a social and educational conservative. The states and territories were deliberately not invited.

Howard's idea was this: what right-minded person (or state or territory) could stand in the way of such an eminent collection of 'sensible centre' historians and other informed professionals? As it happened, the 'sensible centre' Summit leaned well to the right.

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6 Knott, M. 'Tony Abbott talks God and Western values behind closed doors' 5 April 2013, *Crikey.com*. [http://www.crikey.com.au/2013/04/05/tony-abbott-talks-god-and-western-values-behind-closed-doors/?wpmw\\_switcher=mobile](http://www.crikey.com.au/2013/04/05/tony-abbott-talks-god-and-western-values-behind-closed-doors/?wpmw_switcher=mobile).

7 Mitchell retired in late 2015 after twelve years at *The Australian*.

The PMO's plan was to have the author<sup>8</sup> give a ten-minute verbal preface to a paper based on research by the author and by Anna Clark (Taylor & Clark, 2006) which showed how and why Australian history had declined in schools during the generic primary and secondary level Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) period 1990s–2006. This presentation was to be followed by general discussion of the iniquities of SOSE until a midday lunch.

After lunch, Greg Melleuish, a relatively obscure economic historian who had long held, publicly-expressed, neoconservative opinions about almost everything and who was a frequent contributor to *The Australian* as well as neoconservative periodicals and journals was scheduled to present a paper (Melleuish, 2006) outlining a specimen Australian History syllabus<sup>9</sup>. Both the author's and Melleuish's papers had been made available to the Summiteers prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> August meeting.

From a history educator's point of view, the Melleuish syllabus was beyond being merely problematic. There was a very sketchy primary section and the secondary school section (Years 9-10 only) consisted of 49 major topics to be covered in two years. One of the topics was the Great Depression whose classroom time allocation would have been three lessons at best. A smattering of 60 000 years of Australian Indigenous prehistory and recorded history came *after* the Enlightenment. In essence, the proposed model for a syllabus in Australian history was factually based, celebratory, Anglo-centric and abstruse.

#### **Who might resist the imposed syllabus?**

The states and territories, resentful of federal interference in curriculum delivery, their customary field of operations, were positioned to resist. However they had been sidelined from the Summit and had been publicly strongarmed prior (funding reductions threatened by the federal government) over non-acceptance of the Summit's findings.

The more powerful individual subject associations in New South Wales and Victoria could resist as could the History Teachers Association Australia (HTAA), the subject associations' national umbrella organisation. The subject associations were individually torn because of their need to get history back into the curriculum after the lost decade and a half of SOSE.

Academic historians could have resisted as well, but several had been damaged by a vicious 2003–4 bout of history wars and the majority rarely ventured outside historiographical controversies. Those who did go into print were cautious about Howard's motives but they were pleased to see a proposal that Australian history should be back in school again. Stuart Macintyre, an eminent labour historian and a major figure in the 2003–2004 history wars who had clashed with Melleuish over other matters, might have been a key resistant but was out of the country as Chair of Australian Studies at Harvard.

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) could resist but traditionally they kept out of participation in culture wars. The ALP saw these kinds of conflicts as diversionary Liberal frolics aimed at drawing the electors away from the main games of improving health, education, social services and employment opportunities.

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<sup>8</sup> Via the PMO) the author was described by an anxious Howard to an education department official as possibly 'politically unreliable'.

<sup>9</sup> A syllabus, as in a narrow summary of teaching content.

The Fairfax Press (centre-left rivals to News Corp) could have resisted too but their editorial policy was, naively, to regard the Summit as a good idea.

In addition, the Australian Education Union (AEU) could have resisted but their main remit was working conditions, salaries and their members' health and welfare. The AEU rarely intervened in single subject curriculum issues and anyway were progressive Left in their approach to history.

Prior to the 2006 Summit therefore, it seemed to the author that Howard's ideologically-motivated plan, wrapped-up and sold by News Corp media as a common sense Australian national cultural priority, might meet with little opposition.

### **An Impromptu Resistance**

As it happened, resistance came in the form of six Summiteers meeting in an impromptu caucus in Canberra hotel lobby on the very eve of the Summit. The caucus comprised three teachers including Nick Ewbank (HTAA president and representative, not a delegate), Andrew Barnett (private school representative), Jenny Lawless (the senior New South Wales history curriculum official), David Boon (a last minute recruit from the primary school sector) plus the author. There were additional suggestions later on from former HTAA president Kate Cameron who, entirely coincidentally, was in Canberra for an examiner's meeting.

The overwhelming view of the caucus was that, if it were introduced into schools, the Summit's syllabus would act as aversion therapy and kill off any interest in Australian history, a subject already bedevilled by student accusations that it was boring and repetitive. The caucus having decided that the Summit's contentious, complex and lacklustre syllabus had to be stopped, discussed possible tactics and decided to use the author's 10-minute presentation to reframe the day's agenda.

The author's job was not to rehash the Taylor-Clark paper, since the Summiteers had been able to read that document for at least a week. The plan instead was to insist at the outset of the Summit that any program in Australian history should be teachable (engage both students and teachers), doable (have a secure place in the school curriculum) and sustainable (taught by specialist teachers). After lunch, the caucus members (author excepted for tactical reasons) planned to lead the discussion, using teachability as the key measure by which they could then thwart the imposition of a Melleuish-style syllabus. This would act as a cue for academic historians, who, as a rule, deferred to teachers' professional expertise in these matters to join in with a scholarly chorus of disapproval. Other Summiteers, apart from the PMO's placemen (they were all men), would then be free to join the critical refrain.

The plan worked. By lunchtime, the 'teachable, doable and sustainable' rule of three was the slogan of the day. After-lunch discussion was dominated by the adverse comments of the history education professionals, particularly of a persuasive Nick Ewbank and a forthright Jenny Lawless. Most academic historian followed on and agreed with the history educators, with one even announcing that he would have difficulty teaching the syllabus to his fourth-year honours students. Consequently, the majority view was that the Melleuish program was thoroughly impractical and by 2 pm, the syllabus paper had been rejected by a most of the Summiteers. Howard's initiative had no Plan B and the Summit ground to a halt.



At that stage, the late John Hirst (he died in 2016) a conservatively inclined, independently-minded historian and an almost universally respected scholar, intervened. Hirst, seeing how events were turning out, had compiled an improvised list of (open to debate) Milestones and Questions about Australian history that could form the basis of any new program. With nothing else on the table, the Hirst list was accepted as a starting point for a new curriculum design. A workshop panel was recruited there and then, with a visibly discontented Melleuish opting out. The Summit ended at 5 pm. Since the Summit was all about politics, federal education minister Julie Bishop then issued a communiqué announcing that the Summit had been a great success. On the following Saturday, *The Australian* published a two-page spread, clearly pre-planned, extolling the virtues of the Melleuish draft as if nothing had happened on the preceding Thursday.

Following the botched Summit the author was asked by Julie Bishop to design a Milestones/ Questions K-10 syllabus in Australian history. This was done as an inquiry-based and gender-balanced curriculum framework that recognised the Indigenous contribution to Australian history. The author then took this new draft program to each state and territory where it was accepted. The program was then sent to education minister Julie Bishop who signed off on it early in 2007 and sent it on to the Prime Minister's Office. Once there, it was immediately buried without remark.

In June 2007 Prime Minister Howard then convened a small panel (mini-summit) of four that included his favourite conservative historian Geoffrey Blainey, Howard's former chief of staff Gerard Henderson, a retired private girls' school principal and a historian/biographer. Not without some internal controversy, the panel produced a list of 77 compulsory facts (three of which were to do with cricket) as well as over 100 supplementary biographies, all published in late October 2007 as the official federal *Guide to the Teaching of Australian History in Years 9 and 10*. This was an Australian canon.

The timing of the canon's launch was not good however. The Guide was released during a federal election campaign which the Coalition lost to the ALP in November 2007. One consequence of the ALP victory was that Howard's lost his own seat, the first sitting prime minister to do so since 1929. Not only that but the 2007 Howard Australian canonical history program was also lost, in this case, thanks to the delay caused by professional resistance in 2006 and thanks to the 2007 democratic process.

In summary, the 2006 Summit provided an example of how, in the absence of any other forms of institutional opposition, a small group of teachers and history educators banded together to block the politicisation of the history curriculum, They did this by identifying and exploiting a weak point in the PMO's presumptuous and over-confident organisational arrangements which included choosing a culture warrior with no school teaching experience to develop a sample history syllabus and recruiting neutral historians and other Liberal-leaning Summiteers to discuss and approve that syllabus in just one day.

Curiously, but not unexpectedly, in Howard's 2010 autobiography there was no reference to the History Summit, regarded in 2006 as one of Howard's more important initiatives. There are however 17 references to cricket in the volume: Howard is well known as a self described 'cricket tragic'.

### Professionalism Returns to Curriculum Design 2007–2013

During the fractious Rudd/Gillard/Rudd ALP era 2007–2013<sup>10</sup> a national curriculum was designed and slowly introduced by stages from 2010 onward by a newly established and standalone statutory agency the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA). The history curriculum was inquiry-based with a world history perspective and was founded in part on the pedagogy of the UK's Schools History Project (Overviews and Depth Studies) and on the Australian National Centre for History Education's 2003 historical literacy framework (see Taylor & Young, 2003).

### The 2014 Review of the National Curriculum

From early 2010, Liberal party shadow minister for education Christopher Pyne, the IPA and *The Australian* attacked the history curriculum as subversive leftist propaganda, arguing, amongst other matters that it did not pay enough attention to the achievements of Christianity, it failed to include key events that had direct relevance to the forming of Australia's federation such as the 1215 Magna Carta and it ignored the crucial constitutional importance to Australia of the English Civil War 1642–1649. The curriculum had also omitted the contribution of the 'Judeo-Christian tradition' to Australia's past, and it spent far too much time on trade unions.

These inaccurate claims, based on an IPA-led combination of ideological paranoia and poor research, can be dealt with quickly. Christianity did appear in the curriculum as an historical phenomenon, not as a beneficial transcendental ideology. The Magna Carta, used by the US founding fathers as a precedent for breaking their ties with the Hanoverian monarchy, was in a topic that could be dealt with in the post-compulsory curriculum in Year 11. The Magna Carta had also been important for its promulgation of the rule of law, particularly the right of habeus corpus and could be also be dealt with in a Year 8 Depth Study on Medieval Europe<sup>11</sup>. The English Civil War, now known by its more scholarly name of 'The War of Three Kingdoms' was a series of disconnected religious, civil and territorial squabbles that have little if anything to do with Australian history, but they were 'the English' Civil War. The most recent variation of the phrase 'Judeo-Christian', originally a theological label is a Cold War fiction now turned into an anti-Islamic slogan by Tea Party politicians in the United States. As for trade unions, there was no specific mention of them in the framework but they were included as a possible topic in the ACARA supporting suggestions or 'Elaborations' (Taylor, 2013).

Even so this kind of ill-informed IPA-inspired sloganeering resonated with Christian conservative opinion and with News Corp media. Accordingly, education minister Pyne set up a review early in 2014 at a time when the newly installed Tony Abbott government (2013–2015) was at the peak of its triumphalist powers.

History education was now in a tight spot. The review was to be led by the *The Australian's* commentator on education matters, part-time academic and 'consultant' Kevin Donnelly as well as by business studies academic and back-to-basics News Corp columnist Ken Wiltshire. Neither had any experience in curriculum design nor in curriculum evaluation but both were very

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<sup>10</sup> ALP tensions led to prime minister Kevin Rudd (2007–2010) being ousted in favour of Julia Gillard (2010–2013) who was in turn replaced by Kevin Rudd (2013).

<sup>11</sup> So uncomprehending were Coalition critics of the Australian curriculum that they failed to observe the irony implicit in their vaguely-formulated support for habeus corpus at the same time as the Coalition government had, without any charges, indefinitely locked up asylum seekers and refugees on Manus Island and in Nauru.



closely tied to the Liberal party<sup>12</sup>. The reviewers were scheduled to report in October 2014.

The joint appointments of Donnelly and Wiltshire turned out to be the review's first mistake and an example of the kind of ideological over-reach that had already blighted the 2006 Summit, but of a much more blatant and overweening kind. The reviewers were unashamedly partisan and had a track record of attacking the curriculum, suggesting that the review's conclusions, especially about history, had been written even before the mid-year consultation period commenced.

Resistance began almost immediately as the ALP (uncharacteristically), teacher unions, a small number of historians and history educators as well as the subject associations expressed their protests<sup>13</sup>.

At that time the author wrote a late 2013 and early 2014 series of strategically-placed opinion editorials in Fairfax masthead press (*The Age/Sydney Morning Herald*), *Guardian Australia*, *Crikey.com*, *The Conversation* and the ABC's *The Drum* in an effort to emphasise the political nature of the review to both the public and to state/territory government officials and ministers, not that the latter would need much persuading<sup>14</sup>. The character of these opinion editorials was satirical/polemical and informative pointing out the foolishness of the selection of Donnelly and Wiltshire, the ideological intent behind the appointments and the inaccuracy of IPA-instigated criticism of the curriculum. Nevertheless, the review went on in the face of other sporadic media articles pointing out the politicised nature of the Donnelly-Wiltshire pairing.

Review mistake number two came in July 2014 when the ill-appointed Donnelly let slip during a radio interview that he was in favour of corporal punishment 'if it's done properly', citing a personal experience of the benefits of corporal punishment, which, as it turned out was a confabulation. Corporal punishment is banned in Australian government schools and it is rarely if ever used in private schools<sup>15</sup>. Outrage ensued and education minister Pyne was forced to disown Donnelly's views while clinging to him as a reviewer. The credibility of the curriculum review, already trending downwards, was by now on a steep decline.

It was at that stage that the author's 2013 pre-emptive refereed article 'Neoconservative progressivism, knowledgeable ignorance and the origins of the next history war', (Taylor, 2013) in August's *History Australia* (the highly-respected journal of the Australian Historical Association) came into play. This evidence-based article, written at a time when the review was

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12 Donnelly was a failed Liberal candidate and Wiltshire had been a very public supporter of Tony Abbott in late 2010.

13 See 'Educators baffled by Christopher Pyne's plan to review new national curriculum' *The Age*, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2014; 'Labor, unions attack Pyne's national schools curriculum review', *The Australian* 10 January 2014; Response to Minister for Education Christopher Pyne's Announcement of a Review of the Australian Curriculum. HTAA open letter 21 January 2014.

14 In 2016, Fairfax's Melbourne and Sydney mastheads *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, generally regarded as the most influential newspapers in Australia, have a combined print and digital weekday readership of 220 000. *The Australian's* equivalent readership is 98 000 but many (numbers unknown) of these are hotel and airport print copy giveaways. *Crikey.com* is an influential political blog whose 17 000 subscription readers consist mainly of federal and state politicians, their advisers and media professionals. *The Conversation* and *The Drum* are established online forums with a combined readership figures of 3-9 million monthly readers. (Also, see Catsaras, 21015).

15 Journalists tracked down one Christian fundamentalist school in Central Queensland where corporal punishment was apparently still in use.

being threatened, had explained how the Coalition's pre-review claims about Magna Carta, the English Civil War and the supposed 'Judeo-Christian tradition' were politically framed. The purpose of this piece had been to support the author's early 2014 and future anti-review opinion editorials with 6000 words of scholarship. This publication would also provide the education department officials of the states and territories, many of whom were known to the author, with some solid evidence for their ministers about the bogus nature of the review's calls for major revisions to the nature of the history curriculum. By this time (late 2013 and early 2014) an infuriated IPA had been reduced to florid and bitter personal attacks against the author as the supposedly leftist 'architect of the history curriculum'<sup>16</sup> (it had been a team effort).

After all that, the Donnelly-Wiltshire review report, published on 10th October 2014, made thirty recommendations overall that doggedly included a demand for a greater focus on Western civilisation and Australia's Judeo-Christian heritage in the history curriculum. The review also demanded reducing content in an overcrowded history curriculum, improving parental engagement generally, dealing with students with a disability and 'rebalancing the curriculum' which meant recommended reducing Indigenous and Asian content.

At that stage, in late October 2014, the author received an email from a very senior ACARA official asking him to get into print as soon as possible. And so it was. Bracketing the review's findings, in late October 2014 the author published an article in *Crikey.com*, 'Pyne's curriculum review should have learnt from history', in *The Conversation*, 'Pyne curriculum review prefers analysis-free myth to history' and in the *Fairfax Age/Sydney Morning Herald* 'Curriculum Review a Ho-Hum effort on History'.

In late October and in farcical circumstances, the review's downhill progress suddenly changed into a vertical plunge, but not because of any resistance to the process. Just over a week after the review's report was released, the office emails of Barry Spurr, Sydney University's poetry professor as well as review team member were leaked to the media.

Spurr, something of a literary oddity and a longtime opponent of anything theoretical, had been appointed by Donnelly and Wiltshire to investigate the English literature component of the review's work. The emails in question, sent to colleagues and friends, were a grossly offensive mix of homophobic, sexist and racist rants. Controversy ensued and Spurr was suspended by his university. He then left the curriculum review team, resigning from his university in December 2014. Once again, in the face of a media storm and public ridicule, education minister Pyne was forced to disown the views of a senior member of his hand picked review team.

Nevertheless, Pyne steadfastly pressed on (he had little choice in the matter) and was ready to present the by now discredited review's findings to the education ministers' council meeting in December 2014. This being about politics, Pyne cheerfully announced that the review's report was, 'a valuable, well researched, and well considered piece of work.'<sup>17</sup>

At that time, the Abbott government was in deep trouble, with its credibility shot to pieces by a series of policy gaffes going back to an almost universally panned May 2014 budget, all

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16 'Architect of Gillard's National Curriculum attacks IPA over English Civil War', Institute of Public Affairs, 30 August 2013.

17 Department of Education and Training Media Centre, 'Curriculum review and initial Government response released' 12<sup>th</sup> October 2014. <https://ministers.education.gov.au/pyne/curriculum-review-and-initial-government-response-released>

leading to a crisis in Abbott's personal unpopularity<sup>18</sup>. In characteristically bullish New South Wales fashion, the state's Liberal minister of education Adrian Piccoli, taking advantage of the weakness of a thoroughly disliked Abbott government and having absorbed the import of the sources of resistance to the catastrophic review, announced that his state would not necessarily implement any Pyne-supported changes to the national curriculum. This was not so much a slap in the face for Donnelly, Wiltshire, *The Australian*, the IPA and Pyne as a fist to their collective jaws. If New South Wales, Australia's most populous and most politically powerful state was not going to accept the review's findings, the other states and territories would almost certainly follow suit.

In any event, the federal Education Council met with Pyne in December 2014, discussed possible changes and referred them to ACARA. The curriculum authority then referred them back to a small number of their own specialist experts, absorbed their feedback and plumped for an anodyne response. ACARA recommended reducing some content, improving parental engagement and dealing with students with disabilities. The states and territories thought they might get round to the changes in content sometime in the future, or perhaps not.

As for the Magna Carta, the English Civil War and the Judeo-Christian tradition, they were nowhere to be seen.

### Summary

In summary, the review's advocacy of an Anglo-centric and Christian character to the history curriculum framework had been blocked by a combination of factors.

The first of these was widespread professional astonishment at the review's partisan provenance, character and purpose. This created a general public climate of scepticism.

Second, the review featured a stunningly incompetent performance by the blundering reviewers and by their hapless minister which spectacularly undermined the credibility of its report.

Third, the review encountered strong resistance in the form of persuasive academic and professional commentary published by a small and knowledgeable band of history education resisters who worked hard to foil the efforts of hubristic ideologues.

Fourth, the states and territories, exasperated at the idea that the integrity of their education systems and their curriculum implementation measures were again under threat by loudmouthed Canberra politicians, flagged their intentions, biding their time until that December 2014 meeting of the Education Council where a politically-wounded Pyne was outnumbered eight to one. That being the case, not even *The Australian* nor the IPA could save Donnelly, Wiltshire and Pyne's quest for the neoconservative politicisation of the Australian history curriculum.

The neoconservatives will be back, of course since the modern conservative mindset, by definition, sees history education as a propaganda opportunity over which they must exercise control. Further, a traditionalist master narrative remains by definition an essential part of older, Burkean conservative thinking. That being the case, constant vigilance for any sign of politicisation of the history curriculum by teachers, history educators and academic historians is the *sine qua non* of authentic curriculum construction in school history.

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<sup>18</sup> In September 2015, Tony Abbott was removed from office by his own party.

- \* This is a revised version of a paper 'Resisting the Regime' delivered at the 'Coming of Age: Life/Time/History Symposium: A celebration of Peter Seixas' career, in anticipation of his retirement' at the Peter Wall Institute, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, March 12<sup>th</sup> 2016.
- \*\* Tony Taylor is Adjunct Research Professor at the Centre for Public History, University of Technology Sydney and Adjunct Research Professor at Federation University Australia, Victoria. Previously he worked at Monash University before retiring in 2014. At Monash he was director of the 1999–2001 federal investigation into history in Australian schools, director of the federal National Centre for History Education 2001–2007 and history education consultant 2008–2012 to the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. He has researched, written and published with reference to the politics of education, higher education policy, the politics of history education, history education pedagogy, historiography as well as history. He is currently writing a book for Monash University Press on the politics of education in modern Australian society.

### Correspondence

Professor Tony Taylor  
[tony.taylor@uts.edu.au](mailto:tony.taylor@uts.edu.au)  
[tony.taylor@federation.edu.au](mailto:tony.taylor@federation.edu.au)

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**THE TRAUMATIC MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST. REFLECTION ON THEORY AND PRACTICE: FROM EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND PIONEER PRACTICES TO THE CASE OF GREECE**

**George Kokkinos**, Aegean University, Rhodes, Greece  
**Vassiliki Sakka**, School Consultant / Researcher, University of Peoponese, Greece

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**Abstract:**

*The generation of Holocaust survivors is dying out: however, their traumatic experiences and memories live on in their descendants' minds, in many even strongly enhanced, reinforced and unquestioningly accepted. A parallel development is the contemporary widening acceptance by others of the holocaust as a unique, sacrosanct, unquestioned taboo that is an element their personal and collective identity, a prosthetic memory. More generally, the holocaust is an element in the public consciousness of West European countries: as such its teaching is a significant element in History Education. Indeed, without the Holocaust as a central element the European Union can have no meaningful historical roots, identity, awareness and meaning. And, axiomatically, this requires the holocaust to have a central role in the historical education of all pupils and students in the European Union. A major concern is that many European Union countries have communities with entrenched values and attitudes that tolerate and support anti-semitism. Dealing with these is problematic, posing as it does a threat to the libertarian values, policies and laws of the liberal democracies of the European Union. In 2005 the European Council supported Holocaust education as a central element of History Education to combat anti-semitism throughout the European Union.*

**Keywords:**

European Union & The Holocaust – memory, Greece, Historical consciousness – European, Holocaust education, Holocaust, Identity, Memory – prosthetic, Memory, Nazi, Trauma

**Introduction**

The generation of the Holocaust survivors tends to become extinct. Verbal testimonies start losing their organic relationship with their creators since their “directness” is essentially drained from their exuberant experiential burden. Therefore, traumatic memory and its multiple dimensions become, by principle but not exclusively, the responsibility of the direct or indirect inheritors. According to many psychoanalysts, psychiatrists and social psychologists, trans generational transmission of the Holocaust trauma from the surviving parents (who anyway suffer from the “survivor syndrome”) to their children, does not only compose the so-called post-memory, a term coined by Marianne Hirsch, in her fundamental book *Family Frames* (1997). In addition, this trans generational transmission reproduces – culturally and psychologically, the same trauma as a form of social pathology to the descendants, especially the second generation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Franklin, *A Thousand Darkneses. Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction*, Oxford University Press, New York 2011, 219.



The trans generational transmission of the trauma does not only take place directly via the socialization of traumatic experience, but also indirectly, via the excessive protection the survivor parents provide to the descendants or, the other way round, that is, via their exaggerated supervision or criticism.<sup>2</sup> Thus the descendants form a parallel, austere and authoritative superego, a type of memory duty for constantly remembering and reminding the historical uniqueness of the traumatic experience, which they themselves feel like they are its carriers, successors and agents. In the heart of this memory duty, where the identity of the second generation is being formed, we can find the asymmetrical comparison between the descendants and the survivor parents-witnesses and, evidently, the self-devaluation of the first, which is accompanied by the almost unconscious identification with the idealized parents.<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes, however, as Serge Tisseron informs us, the direct descendants (children) are totally absorbed by the traumatic experiences of their parents, either when they know them explicitly or they just feel them repetitively through body language, facial expressions or changes in respiration, experiencing a situation of suggestion or empathic identification, like they have “really” lived the traumatic experience themselves, but not “in reality”.<sup>4</sup>

The elemental danger that lurks in the post-memory is to completely adopt the “survivor’s rhetoric”, to identify with the historical testimonies as if they are the only accurate and undeviated representations of the traumatic experience: in other words, to approach the Holocaust as a sacrosanct topic or as a taboo, unique, incomparable, and non-representational.<sup>5</sup> However, Gary Weissmann, in his book *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to experience the Holocaust* (Cornell University Press, 2004) points out yet another, equally severe danger: he shows that a new road opens up, which in the beginning is invisible, but is gradually widening, leading from the traumatic memory of the victims and the post-memory of their descendants to a prosthetic memory, that becomes property of a continually wider group of people. A memory that involves people who, even though they have absolutely no relation with the Holocaust victims, form their identity with reference to the wide scale extermination. In the epicentre of this prosthetic memory, which is “colonised” by the sanctified post-memory of the heir, we locate the obsession of the repetitive imagined experience, which is basically the simulated traumatic memory of Nazi camps.

This borderline traumatic experience is almost lived “somatically”, as if the imagined experience was identified with the experience of the real victims themselves. This imagined experience, which has the same characteristics with passive empathy, is achieved by the obsessive use of testimonies, photographic material, documentaries, films, websites, etc. which focus on the terror-mongering reality of extermination and genocide, depriving the victims of their historical and cultural habitat. This behaviour is obviously, according to our opinion, a form of sadomasochistic fascination of the Nazi terror: it is an indicator of the social pathology of western postmodern metropolises as well as a latent secondary historical trauma. At the same time, the fascination with the Root of all Evil, that is the Holocaust, as the Western civilization

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2 Cited by Ruth Franklin, o.p., 219.

3 Ruth Franklin, o.p., 220, 221 and 225. All evidence mentioned by the author is based on the research by Helen Epstein, presented in her book *Children of the Holocaust. Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors* (1979).

4 Serge Tisseron, *Oikogeneiaka Mistika* [Les secrets de famille (Family secrets)], prologue by Katerina Matsa, translated by Matina Vasileiou, Agra Publications, Athens 2014, 60-62.

5 Ruth Franklin, o.p., 225.



believes, or rather its ambivalent attraction and repulsion is nothing more than a sign and barrier to a smirk and ethological regime of historicity, which is organically related to the postmodern presentism.

Since though the memory of the Holocaust has an ecumenical significance, without being sanctified, fragmented or becoming saturated and cliché, the way it should be inherited to the future generations is very important. For this reason the role of academic historiography and the established historical education as well as the general historical culture and Public History, is now more confluent and imperative than ever. It is variable of the fact that the prosthetic memory is essentially more crucial.<sup>6</sup>

The text that follows accepts as an axiom the approach that European historical consciousness, which is the foundation of the identity of the United Europe, is nothing but an empty shell if there is no awareness of the disaster in its core. We are talking about the disaster caused by nationalisms, ethnic cleansing, imperialist rivalries and colonization, the two world wars, genocides, authoritarianisms and mostly National Socialism and the Holocaust, as an unhealed European trauma and as an unbridgeable “cultural rift”.

The Holocaust is the historical intersection that cuts across the thought of European unification itself, either as a historical reality or as a political ideal in progress, according to Jorge Semprún, a witness to the horror of Buchenwald concentration camp.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the Holocaust is the event that disrupted historical continuity and, as Peter Fritzsche points out successfully, “it destroyed every certainty about how the world functions”.<sup>8</sup> One of the inmates of a Nazi camp, in the first pages of the classic novel “*Life and fate*” by Vasily Grossman, the Russian Ikonnikov, an ex faithful orthodox Christian who is convinced about the superiority of the Tolstoyan ethic, connects the mass and wide scale extermination of innocent Jews not with the coincidental or perpetual prevalence of Evil over Good in the historical course of the human species, but with the death of God, the extinction of the idea of divinity.<sup>9</sup> In Ikonnikov’s literary testimony, God’s death comes as a consequence of genocide, reversing this time Nietzsche’s most prominent discovery, where the death of God leads to “everything is allowed”. Anyway, according to what Enzo Traverso points out, following the Frankfurt School way of thinking in analysing the Nazi phenomenon, “[...] Auschwitz cannot be understood neither as a “regression” or a parenthesis [in the “winning course” of Reason and progress], but rather as an authentic western product, the emergence of its catastrophic version, as “a symbol of a self-destruction of Reason”, which

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6 Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory. The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*, Columbia University Press, New York 2004.

7 Jorge Semprun, *Patrida mou einai o logos. Sizitiseis me ton Frank Aprenteris [My country is Logos. Discussions with Frank Aprenteris]*, introduction by Bernad Pivot, translated by Eugenia Grammatokopoulou, Exantas Publications, Athens, 2013, 123. Generally, Semprun, o.p., 143, supports that the foundations of the European Union are three: a) the dystopia of national socialism and fascism and the knowledge of their catastrophic consequences, b) the French-German reconciliation and c) the statutory difference with real socialism.

8 Peter Fritzsche, *Zoi kai Thanatos sto Trito Reich [Life and death in the Third Reich]*, translated by Vasileia Avramidou- Kostas Despiniadis, edited by Yiannis Avramidis, Thyrathen Publications – Harvard University Press, Thessaloniki 2012, 299.

9 Vassily Grossman, *Zoi kai Pepromeno [Life and Fate]*, translated by Yorgos Blanas, Govosti Publications, Athens, 2013, 34.

has lost its freeing factor due to an unorthodox technical functionality that aims at the crude domination of biological-ethnic mysticism".<sup>10</sup>

Either way, the multidimensional historical understanding of the "Age of Extremes", the experience and the individual and collective process of extreme in history, has to be placed in the heart of the concept of European citizenship,<sup>11</sup> against the widespread, politically correct and flabby liberal and humanist ethology of our era; an ethology that generally and vaguely demonises and de-historicizes violence, by approaching ethical universality and the commitments arising from it fragmentally, selectively and as desired. This is an ethology that at the same time colonises, with the language and its rhetoric, "the wide spectrum of human relationships"<sup>12</sup> and transforms the horror of authoritarianisms and the repetitive human crises in a commoditised "media event of apathetic empathy" and an "ethological cliché".<sup>13</sup> At the same time the Western world tolerates material and symbolic violence which is incessantly distributed within the post-democratic state of economic crisis and generally within lawless capitalism.

Such a historical and ethical realisation with reference to the Holocaust has to be of special significance:

- a) for the societies-persecutors (Germany, Austria, Italy, Bulgaria, etc.), and
- b) for the ones "charmed" by the "sorcery" of the racist Nazi dystopia and eagerly co-operated with the Axis, as well as
- c) "neutral" countries (Sweden Switzerland), which actually turned into economic arms of the destructive war machine of the German genocidal state. However, this does not mean that the awareness of destruction, with Nazism and the Holocaust as its epicentre, is of no concern to all European peoples and more specifically the need to formulate a common historical consciousness. This is necessary, especially during the transitory period when progress, or as Traverso suggests, "the radical turn towards a federal Europe" seems as the most appropriate solution for the existing fragmentation and decomposition of the European Union, the destabilising procedures caused by the domination of neo-liberalism and the emergence of nationalist expediency using the European ideals as an opportunity or a smokescreen.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, suppression, oblivion and/or selective and possibly operative reference to the Holocaust are definitely a consequence of activating conscious as well as unconscious defence mechanisms. Such mechanisms are usually activated in order to keep national pride out of harm and aim either towards lessening collective pain or towards deactivating the guilt or the responsibilities of both the perpetrators (whether states or groups) for all the horrors they

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10 Enzo Traverso, *Dia Pyros kai Sidirou. Peri tou Evropoikou emfyliou polemou 1914–1945 [By Fire and Sword. About the European Civil War 1914–1945]*, translated by Yiannis Evangelou, Edited by Nikos Kourkoulos, Twentieth Century Publications, Athens 2013, 360.

11 Tzvetan Todorov, *Apenanti sto akraio [Facing the Extreme]* translated by vasilis Tomanas, Nisides Publications, Skopelos 2002.

12 Alexandros Nehamas, "Can the art of life be taught?" *The Athens Review of Books*, 43 (September 2013), 28.

13 Athina Athanasiou, "Epiteleseis tis trototitas kai tou koinonikou travmatos [Prosecution of Vulnerability and Social Trauma]", in: Athina Athanasiou (editor- introduction), *Viokinonikotites. Theoriseis stin anthropologia tis Ygeias [Bio-socialities. Outlook on the anthropology of health]*. Nisos Publications, Athens 2011, 76.

14 Interview of Enzo Traverso to Tasos Tsakiroglou titled "The fight against fascism is not won with political murders", *I Efimerida ton Syntakton [Newspaper of Editors]*, 9-10 November 2013, 13.

committed, as well as of the Western Allies and the ex-Soviets for the non-existing will to avoid or at least stop the large scale genocide.<sup>15</sup>

Within this framework, we estimate that critical historical education for the European civil society, mainly for the young students, plays a crucial role at the level of European institutions as well as within the European countries themselves, especially during the last two decades. Despite the historical, judicious and supposedly biological connotations and regardless of its ethological generalisation, it would worth to mention the all-time relevant figurative conception of historical education for the Holocaust as “vaccination”, which “boosts resistance against Evil”.<sup>16</sup> But this vaccination cannot give us substantial results, if we do not place at the centre of attention the understanding and acceptance of the organic relationship that the European identity ought to have with the concepts of historical truth, ethical universality, historical justice, objective memory and historical self-awareness, as well as with the values and practices of democratic dialogue, humanist cosmopolitanism and the moral code of solidarity and solving problems in peace<sup>17</sup>.

Holocaust denial, in combination with racism, xenophobia and intolerance is a crime punishable according to the European law. It is also included in Criminal Code of states such as Germany (1994/2011), Austria (1947/1992), France (1990), Luxembourg (1997), Switzerland (1993), Belgium (1995/2005), Romania (2002) and Portugal (2007).<sup>18</sup> In other words, we are talking

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15 As Evangellos Aretaios mentions in his very interesting article “Skepseis gia ta megala eglimata tis anthropotitas [Thoughts on the Great Crimes of Humanity] in *The books' journal*, 34 (August 2013), 33, where his only weak point is slipping into a uniform attitude against the mass crimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, something that weakens the historical uniqueness of the Holocaust, “the resistance against Evil and injustice and the fight against inaction and indifference do not always require a great amount of heroism [...] [What] is required is a present consciousness and avoiding absorbing oneself with bureaucratic and mechanistic commands and processes as well as the theory and the rhetoric which lead to the demise of human nature [...], and of “otherness”. It is the skill and the duty everyone of us has in his introspection and in preserving and keeping his conscience on guard. It is very hard to be consciously present at an individual level and even harder to function at a collective level, if the collective consciousness of responsibilities and mistakes of the past is not present. The knowledge of the past, despite its darkneses, allows as, as individuals and as a society, to keep our consciousness alive and to listen to the horrible dangers of injustice, xenophobia, racism, dogmatism, extreme nationalism...” Generally, regarding the concepts of good and evil in History, see Edgar Morin, *I Methodos 6: Ithiki [The Method 6: Ethics]* translated by Yiannis Kafkias, Twentieth First Century Publications, Athens 2013, 270-272.

16 Bogdan Michalski, “Let’s Teach All of It from the Start”, in: Jolanta Ambrosewitz-Jacobs and Leszek Hondo (eds), *Why Should We Teach about the Holocaust?*, Judaica Foundation Center for Jewish Culture, Cracow 2004, 29.

17 See indicatively Alexis Irakleidis, *Analysi kai epilysi sygrkouseon. Mia eisagogi [Analysing and Resolving conflicts. An introduction]* I. Sideris Publications, Athens, 2011.

18 A comprehensive and panoramic view about establishing laws for historical memory and the criminalisation of the Holocaust Denial (and only in the case of Belgium and other genocides), at the level of European community institutions, the Council of Europe and specific members, and also an reference to political practices that aim to criminalise communism at the same time by unhistorically levelling it with national socialism, can be offered by Luigi Cajani, “Criminal Laws on History: The Case of the European Union”, *Historiein*, 11 (2011), 19-48. According to the analysis provided by the Italian Historian, the European legal arsenal contains the following: 1) Joint Action [...] to Combat Racism and Xenophobia (1996), 2) Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia (2001/2008), 3) Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, Concerning the Criminalisation of Acts of a Racist and Xenophobic Nature Committed through Computer Systems (2003). However, only the first two are obligatory and require the allocation of penalties for encouraging or instigating violent acts triggered by racist hatred, while the application of the third one is at the discretion of each of the European states. For this reason, there is a huge differentiation about what constitutes genocide and whether the Holocaust Denial and other genocides should be dealt with as crimes against humanity (o.p., 33-34). It is obvious why the first law that criminalised

about countries that decided to establish regulative frames of resistance against the “possibly self-destructive tolerance” of democracy<sup>19</sup> a large number of which have the following common features: firstly, the everlasting powerful centres for creating and disseminating anti-semitic syndromes; secondly, a dynamic presence of Nazi and Neo-fascist cores or populist, xenophobic and racist political parties; and thirdly, they have nothing else to show but only an inadequate catharsis of their recent controversial and traumatic past, and more specifically, they suffer from extended residing shadows in reference to the involvement of politicians, state officials and citizens in assisting and/or committing the Nazi genocide.

On the contrary, in countries with a strong liberal tradition, such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Holland and Sweden, the existence of a strong legal quiver for combating racism and discrimination, in relation with fighting the practices of arousing racial hate, made the adding of regulations about criminalising the Holocaust denial and other genocides unnecessary, especially in order to avoid disrupting the established liberal tradition.<sup>20</sup> Lastly, in states of the ex-“Iron Curtain”, mainly in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and the Baltic Democracies, whether it is established at a national level (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary), or is sought at a hyper-national level, the condemnation of the mass crimes committed by authoritarian regimes has two natures: One that requires the manifoldly problematic, ahistorical and moralistic equation of communism (at least with regard to power practices) with national socialism, and a second that epicentres the double victimization, which, by silencing the historical and moral involvement, removes guilt.<sup>21</sup> Of course, in these countries the modern politico-ideological stakes do not only concern the legacy of WWII and the Soviet sovereign, but also expand back to WWI and the period of the Austro-Hungarian co-existence.

Within this framework, the transnational relations continue to balance dangerously due to the implied unredeemed scopes of the states or due to their negotiating positions which are closely connected to protection claims for the rights of minority or ethnic groups outside of their sovereign. Hungary, since the beginning of the 1990s, and within the framework of the initiatives taken by the Council of Europe, has a leading role in the tug of war between the revival of traumatic memory, which ends up forming specific identity policies, and the resolution of tension within the European Union’s institutional framework – which is usually insincere since it aims at

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Holocaust Denial was established in Israel in 1986 (o.p., 21). In the light of the principle that “freedom of expression is not recognised in any international or national legal text as ‘an absolute’ right”, Elisavet Symeonidou-Kastanidou, professor of Criminal Right at the Aristoteleion University of Thessaloniki, “To antirasistiko nomosxedio kai i eleftheria tou logou [The antirasist Bill and the freedom of speech] in *I Efimerida ton Syntakton [Newspaper of Editors]*, May 31 2013, 9, insists in the comprehensive legal arsenal of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), according to which “[...] freedom of speech not only can but also should be limited, when speech doubts the right of equal participation of a group with specific characteristics or when a hostile social environment is created for the members of such group”. For this reason and having as a starting point the trial of the French denier Roger Garaudy, the ECHR has accepted that “[...] excusing the nazi policies or denying historical facts such as the Holocaust, are not covered by the freedom of speech, neither do they fall into the category of historical research and quest of the truth, since the levelling denial of this kind of historical acts is an important danger of public order, incompatible with democracy and human rights”.

19 As Edgar Morin points out, *Methodos 6: Ithiki [Method 6: Ethics]* o.p. 67, “[when] democracy is in danger, tolerance can be proved to be suicidal”.

20 Luigi Cajani, o.p., 26.

21 Luigi Cajani, o.p., 25 and 31.



obtaining political hyper value.<sup>22</sup> This country, with the far right's intolerance as its voice, was the protagonist in the effort to demonise the established European Community and transnational value system and therefore to regress the "European family" to politics of national entrenchment and self-reference.<sup>23</sup>

Bulgaria also followed a utilitarian ambivalence or rather an unbalanced promotion of selected views of the historical past and at the same time a significant silencing of others when it came to its memory politics. As Rena Molho aptly points out, this country "[...] ... in the post-war era "forgot" the 11,313 Greek and Yugoslav Jews that were dislocated from the Bulgarian zone of occupation and were exterminated by 99%, and [on the contrary], it was proud that the number of Jewish people in its territory was increased instead of declining [...]" since, as one might have expected, did not end up in the extermination camps of Poland.<sup>24</sup>

Despite all that, criminalising historical memory, which certainly provides adequate elements of moral necessity and legal validity, finds itself against powerful and diverse resistance. Both the scientific community of historians and generally academia as well as parts of the political order, the Justice corps and civil society are wavering and hang in balance between two positions. On the one hand, the condemnation of all kinds of ideological instrumentalisation of the historical past, accomplished by establishing memory laws, which, even when the best of intentions are involved, still leads, at least possibly, towards abolishing freedom of speech and research, as well as towards the danger of enslaving historical truth in the dominant ideology<sup>25</sup>. On the other hand, the fear, expressed explicitly by the Secretary General of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, of the possibility to de-criminalise the Holocaust Denial in his country could bring to the surface something otherworldly, that is either dormant in the German society or lurks in it, meaning of course the rising of Neo-Nazi and revisionary practices.<sup>26</sup>

Especially in Germany, which was the cradle of "Radical Evil" or, according to others, the "commonplace of Evil" during the 20th century, they sought to overcome this dilemmatic situation using the balancing Solomon-like decision made by the Federal Constitutional Court on 13th April 1994. According to this ruling, freedom of speech, expression and historical

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22 Dimitris Christopoulos, "Eisagogi: To anomologito zitima ton meionotiton stin Ellada [Introduction: The Untold Issue of Minorities in Greece]" in: Dimitris Christopoulos (ed.), *To anomologito zitima ton meionotiton stin elliniki ennomi taksi [The untold issue of minorities in Greek lawful order]* KEMO- Kritiki, Athens 2008, 20.

23 We agree with Jan Werner- Muller, German professor of politics in the USA, who (*I Efimerida ton Syntakton [Newspaper of Editors]*, 21-22-23 June 2013, 64) supports the following: "If democracy and the rule of law are in danger in any European state, then all Europeans have the duty to be alarmed. An obvious case is Hungary, which could easily become the first state-member to receive heavy penalties from the European Union for their regression to a type of illiberality. Against the harsh criticism of the European Parliament, the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, spoke of a hyper-national conspiracy, led by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, which turns against the values Orban and his allies defend: national pride, Christendom, the traditional concept of family. European intellectuals have the duty to explain why [...] a specific common European definition of the 'rule of law' is not a factional [...] approach, but an ecumenical value, from which we cannot deviate from in the name of 'difference' and 'pluralism' [...]"

24 Rena Molho, "The extermination of Jews in the Bulgarian-held territories", *Athens Review of Books*, 42 (July-August 2013), 27, where there is a presentation and commentary of Natan Greenberg's book *Documenta [Original Documents]* introduction- scientific editing by Vasilis Ritzaleos, translated by Nikoleta Raltseva, Observator of Thrace Publishing, Komitini 2013.

25 Luigi Cajani, o.p., 19-48. The author is radically against the idea of criminalising even the Holocaust, because such criminalisation of opinion forges shackles for the freedom of historical research itself, instrumentalising the relationship between past and present on the basis of specific ideo-political considerations or identity policies.

26 Wolfgang Benz, "Holocaust Denial: Anti-Semitism as a Refusal to Accept Reality", *Historein*, 11 (2011), special edition titled "Politics and History: How to Deal with Tormented Pasts", 70.

research, abused by the Deniers and far-right revisionists, can be contained or/and abolished altogether if there are justifiable grounds for two cases: firstly, when individual rights are violated and secondly, when there is not enough documenting evidence for verifying the alleged factual basis of a historical claim, which opposes common sense, the victims' testimonies or the rule of truth established by the scientific community of historians.<sup>27</sup> Generally, it is worth underlining that re-united Germany, having established its dominant role within the European Union (even though the price they paid for that was the disguised fear and the increasing insecurity of their counterparts), is considered today one of the most tolerant, rational and socially fair countries in Europe. At the same time and despite the sporadic ambivalence or regressions in the balance between memory and oblivion, many regard this courageous and effective way to dominate its terrifying past as an exemplary model.<sup>28</sup>

### **European institutions and the memory of the Holocaust: Focusing on the historical education of the new generation**

In 2005 the ministers of Education of the states that were part of the European Council signed an important declaration. This declaration mainly focused on the issue of a systematic education for children and young people of the European continent about the Holocaust, its causes, its development and its consequences, for everything that signals its horrifying memory, especially with regard to the European and the Western civilization and generally with regard to the whole of humanity.<sup>29</sup>

They took coordinated initiatives and actions to raise awareness to European students and to contribute in the cultivation of a commonly accepted historical culture. Such culture should be founded on the values of peace, freedom, democracy, justice, and solidarity. The obvious aim of the European Council was to deconstruct and fight the revived racism and the creeping anti-Semitism, the neo-Nazism, the rising historical revisionism, xenophobia and intolerance,<sup>30</sup>

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27 Wolfgang Benz, o.p., 70.

28 Albert S. Lindemann, *A History of Modern Europe. From 1815 to the Present*, Willey-Blackwell, 2013, 405.

29 According to Philippe Burrin, *Ressentiment et Apocalypse. Essai sur l'antisemitisme nazi*, Seuil, Paris 2004, it is necessary to distinguish between racist ideology on the one hand, the backbone of which is the idea that there is a biological determination of culture, a rigid racial hierarchy and a perpetual struggle of the races for domination, and, on the other hand, nazi anti-semitism. The second one, despite its organic references to traditional anti-semitism (religious, ethnic and mainly in social classes), has transformed into a scientific dogma and ended up with the following characteristics a) the necessity to radically oppose the 'decadent' past (Apocalypse) and b) the 'redemptive catharsis' from the 'miasma', resulting in the vicious, emetic practices of the Holocaust.

30 For the modern far-right wing, neo-fascism and neo-Nazism, see Pierre Milza, *Oi melanohitones tis Evropis. I evropoaiiki akrodeksia apo to 1945 mehri simera [The Black Shirts of Europe. The European far-right from 1945 to today]*, translated by Yiannis Kafkias, edited by Nikolas Voulelis, Scripta, Athens 2004 and Paul Hainsworth (ed) *I Akrodeksia. Ideologia- politiki-kommata [The Far-Right. Ideology-politics-parties]*, introduced- edited by Vasiliki Georgiadou, Vivliothiki tis Politikis Koinoniologias, Papazisis Publications, Athens 2004. Henry Giroux, one of the rapporteurs of Critical Pedagogy, speaks about a 'hybrid neofascism', born in the USA, which, while on the one hand, abandons the ideology of racial superiority, the radical controversy against parliamentary institutions and the genocidal intent of his predecessors, Nazism and fascism, on the other, it gains the following characteristics: 1) worship of tradition and radical modernism, 2) trends towards limiting the fields of democratic dialogue, undermining of the public space and terrorizing, controlling and reducing the Mass Media, 3) spreading a culture of fear, uncontrolled nationalism, patriotic correctness and selective populism, 4) criminalization of the freedom of speech, disagreement, and intellectual work, 5) increased usage of religious rhetoric, 6) invocation of hierarchy and discipline as the dominant values. See also Panayiota Gounari & Yorgos Grollios "Introduction" in their book (eds) *Critiki Pedagogiki. Mia syllogi Keimenon [Critical Pedagogy. A Selection of Texts]*, Gutenberg, Athens 2010, 47-48.



as well as the attitudes and ideological orientations that take advantage of the economical and political crisis and are based on violence, on the concept of “existential enemy” on the unprocessed collective traumas, the repulsion of the necessary mourning for the losses of the two World Wars, in other words, against a complex socio-political and individual cancellations, or, with a final analysis, against syndromes that carry heavy burdens of humiliation, rage and resentment.

That is of course, without omitting the differences between historical fascism and its contemporary aspects. In their text, the ministers of Education of the European Council supported the opinion that “only the systematic education and constant learning can halt such or similar monstrous events, such as the Holocaust, in the future. Education that has such an aim is a mission that unites people with good will and becomes universally accepted as a priority of the European Council and all the European states”.<sup>31</sup> However, good intentions and generalised good will usually hide dilemmas (= duty and memory or taboo inflation, silencing, generalized morality and subcutaneous trans generational post-memory that can extract into secondary trauma), about which Stanislas Tomkiewicz warns us, knowing that they can become dangerous since they can react against the necessary historical self-awareness: “Despite all that, a question remains: can we reconcile a duty of memory with a duty of protection of our children? Here lies a narrow road between two extreme attitudes: the first is the one of the old veterans of the 1914–1918 war who, in order not to forget, have poisoned their children’s lives. Or the one by some camp survivors, who would not stop talking about their pain of the past, as if they want to turn their children into psychotherapists and healers, forgetting their own existence. On the other extreme, something that cannot be told and is very well sealed, a very heavy silence that reaches even towards denying our identity also seems dangerous. Children that are protected in such way, by changing names, religion, by actually murdering memory have almost always paid a heavy tax to this family secret”.<sup>32</sup>

We cannot override the at least noisy finding, that, despite the noble intentions and sporadic, circumstantial or systemic initiatives taking place for decades, reality continues to be painful and shameful for the European civilization and the modern idea of Europe. With the countries of East and Central Europe as locomotive, lately Greece as well, and using internet, actions within movements, causing moral panic in public opinion and “witch hunting” against academics, activists of human rights and immigrants as the main channel of action, in other words, the criminalisation of both the freedom of thought and diversity, the Holocaust and its bleeding memory continue to be “a big abscess”, the “black hole” of European civilisation. At the same time, some circles attempt to “normalize” and relativise the “parallel universe” of extreme camp experience, whatever the Nazis, in their disturbing, euphemistic and cryptic dialect called “the anus of humanity” (= Auschwitz), in order for its negative memory and awareness of the European catastrophe to become the canonising significance acquired since the 1960s in the Western imaginary and even the dominant ideology.

According to our opinion, the strategic choice of the European Council is actually also a signal of warning and clustering against the augmenting indifference, discomfort or ambivalence of European youth about fascism, Nazism and the Holocaust. Some try to mechanistically interpret

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31 Alicja Bialecka et al. (eds.), *European Pack for Visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. Guidelines for Teachers and Educators*, Council of Europe, 2010, 139.

32 Stanislas Tomkiewicz, *I klemmeni efivia [Stolen Adolescence]*, o.p., 236.

indifference, discomfort or ambivalence of young people as a consequence of the saturation created by the canonical significance of the Holocaust's negative memory in the Western World as well as of the increasing competition of groups – victims of History – for appropriate public visibility and recognition of equivalent memory status regarding the persecutions and the exterminating practices that suffered in the past.

Unfortunately, the truth is more complex. Children and young people “wear” this “salvation” veil of awkwardness, indifference or ambivalence when they come in contact with the unprecedented traumatic memory of the Holocaust, mainly due to the following reasons: firstly, because they do not recognise the historical links between them and the uniquely exemplary and gruesome historical event or because they deny its heavy negative trans generational legacy. Besides, its acceptance and usage presupposes historical awareness, historical imagination, historical empathy and the ability to emotionally manage an extreme and unprecedented traumatic memory (wide scale extermination), the core of which should consist of the “identifying function of sympathy”.<sup>33</sup>

Secondly, because the Holocaust itself continues, for the larger part of European societies, to be an almost unthinkable historical event and an unprocessed collective trauma, which haunts the historical consciousness, functioning as a “crypt” or as a “phantasm” – in psychoanalytic terms – and which motivates, almost unconsciously, intense emotions of shame, fear, guilt as well as aggressiveness. These emotions, which are released in order to balance the ethically unbearable denial of the painful memory of the historical reality,<sup>34</sup> which, in turns, as Tomkiewicz points out, is a consequence of a “feeling of weakness”, meaning that someone feels exceptionally weak to “receive, to absorb the vastness of pain [...]”.<sup>35</sup> The denial of the painful historical reality is exacerbated by two factors: the dominion of the egopathic and hedonistic culture of self-realization in postmodern societies, as well as the historical status of temporality, which self-confirms and expands excessively the significance of the present, shrinking at the same time, the references to the dark past.

Simultaneously it tones down the power of the dynamic charge included in the fight for historical change, “fleeing to the future”. Inevitably, within the framework of this individualised and self-referential conception and experience of time, as Gilles Lipovetsky critically observes, “the historical drama” ends up “empty of meaning”,<sup>36</sup> as it happens with the eternal struggle between freedom and compulsion, desire and reality.

### **Reflecting on Holocaust Education in a Global Context**

Moving from the post war narratives and national myths of victimization and heroism to a more self-critical vision of history<sup>37</sup>, western European countries have developed, at least a

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33 Myriam Revault d' Allonnes, *O symponetikos Anthropos [The compassionate man]*, translated by Michalis Pangelos, Estia Publications, Athens 2013, 44.

34 Katerina Matsa, *To adynato penthos kai i crypti. O toxikomanis kai o thanatos [The impossible grief and the crypt. The drug addict and death]*, Agra Publications, Athens 2012.

35 Stanislas Tomkiewicz, *I Klemeni Efivia [Stolen Adolescence]*, o.p., 215.

36 Gilles Lipovetsky, *Pagkosmiopoiisi kai hyper-neoterikotita. Kosmopolitismos kai Dytiki couloura [Globalisation and hyper modernism. Cosmopolitanism and Western Culture]*, translated by Vasilis Tomanas, Nisides Publications, Thessaloniki 2012, 21.

37 Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II*, St. Martin's Press, New York 2012, xiv.

consensus<sup>38</sup> on how to approach the Holocaust<sup>39</sup>, though the former socialist countries of Central and East Europe followed a different path<sup>40</sup>. Despite the fact that national or regional contexts raise specific questions and thus call for different answers<sup>41</sup>, most educators are aware of some general guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust, displaying a variety of approaches and exploring diverse methodologies and experiences. Holocaust education was adopted officially rather recently<sup>42</sup> by most of Western countries, nevertheless, reflection on practices, curricula, perceptions, misuse, controversy and difficulties are of utmost interest. A number of problems, raised by conflicting national narratives bearing traumas and controversy as well as conflicting memories and interests, concealments and half-truths, resistance and suspicion, along with certain educational aims, play an important role on Holocaust Education. The main question on teaching Holocaust still remains: “Can Mass Atrocities be prevented?”. Yehuda Bauer gives a straightforward answer to this: “Yes, but with great difficulty”<sup>43</sup> Preventive steps, among which education bears the dominant role, have to be taken.

As rapid and unprecedented change characterizes our societies – our time as a ‘liquid modernity’ according to the definition of Zygmunt Bauman<sup>44</sup>, describing the risk, fear, and uncertainty of current global actions and confrontations – the challenges that Holocaust education (also changing rapidly<sup>45</sup>) sets, meet the need for more research and reflection on the field, in order to contribute to the enforcement of its dynamics and effectiveness<sup>46</sup>. At the

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38 “Perhaps superficial and definitely ambiguous”, according to Sophie Ernst. See, Sophie Ernst, “Entangled Memories: Holocaust Education in Contemporary France” in K. Fracapane & M. Hass in collaboration with the Topography of Terror Foundation (eds), *Holocaust Education in a Global Context*, UNESCO, Paris 2014, 40.

39 Introductory note: “Teaching About the Holocaust in Contemporary Europe” in K. Fracapane & M. Hass in collaboration with the Topography of Terror Foundation (eds), *Holocaust Education in a Global Context*, UNESCO, Paris 2014, 18.

40 As the unraveling of their suffering during Soviet Union hegemony became a primary focus not leaving much of a space for Jewish victims – a most complicated issue (o.p.).

41 Doyle Stevick & Zehavit Gross, “Research in Holocaust Education: Emerging Themes and Directions” in K. Fracapane & M. Hass in collaboration with the Topography of Terror Foundation (eds), *Holocaust Education in a Global Context*, UNESCO, Paris 2014, 61.

42 The last two decades, with England being the first one to offer Holocaust as a mandatory part of History teaching in secondary education.

43 Yehuda Bauer, *Can Mass Atrocities Be Prevented?*, Speech addressed to *International Conference on Genocide Preventing*, Brussels, Egmont Palace, 31 March-1 April 2014. [https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/can\\_mass\\_atrocities\\_be\\_prevented.pdf](https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/can_mass_atrocities_be_prevented.pdf) (access 14/6/2014).

44 Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times. Living in an Age of Uncertainty*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2007, 1. “*Liquid Modernity*: the passage from the solid to a ‘liquid’ place of modernity, that is a condition in which social forms (structures that limit individual choices, institutions that guard repetitions of routines, patterns of acceptable behavior) can no longer (or are not expected) to keep their shape for long, because they decompose and melt faster than the time it takes to cast them, and once they are cast for them to set they create a new and unprecedented setting for individual life pursuits raising a series of challenges never before encountered”. As Sean Scanlan, *Journal of American Studies*, 43, 2009, E19 doi:10.1017/S0021875809006513, points: “For Bauman *liquid modernity* is a new period of global development in which five ‘departures’ are simultaneously at work: institutions and social forms are decomposing faster than the time it takes to cast them, power and politics are divorcing as power is held by global business interests, which political organizations are unable to regulate, social safety nets are dissolving at the same time as monopolies are being deregulated, long term planning and thinking about the shape of communities and social patterns has ceded to quick fixes and quick profits and the economic and political risks generated by global power are shifting the burden of volatile markets onto the shoulders of individuals” <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=5503132&jid=AMS&volumeld=43&issuelid=01&aid=5503124> (access 2/7/2014).

45 Doyle Stevick & Zehavit Gross, “Research in Holocaust Education ...”, o. p., 60.

46 Doyle Stevick & Zehavit Gross, “Research in Holocaust Education ...”, o. p., 59.

critical point where politics is securely attached to ethics<sup>47</sup>, Holocaust education has become the cornerstone of citizenship education in fragile democracies of today. Taking into consideration the devastating socio-economic crisis for European countries, especially in the South, the frightening increase of power of far right and neo Nazi parties all over Europe, along with the revival and proliferation of antisemitism, racism or of discourses of cold and civil war (as in the case of Greece), should not take one by surprise.

Important emerging themes according to Stevick & Gross are the following:

- the type of curriculum serving Holocaust education,
- the fidelity of the curriculum and its implementation in classroom,
- the quality of textbooks and their treatment,
- the level, training and knowledge of teachers on the subject,
- the prior knowledge and the attitudes of students/pupils, other minorities and their dynamics in a country.

Stevick and Gross<sup>48</sup>, following Habermas' analytical tools on researching Holocaust Education, refer to instrumental knowledge, that is knowledge on the subject serving a 'technical' interest and helping to solve problems, along with the practical concern of communication and understanding (communicative knowledge and interest), as the Holocaust is deeply – and quite differently – meaningful in diverse societies<sup>49</sup>. So, here comes the third type of knowledge and interest, according to Habermas, that aims to change humans' views and attitudes, concerned with self-transformation: the emancipatory interest. Therefore, unraveling and studying deeply rooted values, commitments and attitudes, implicit or even unconscious theories and tradition is of important value when reflecting on Holocaust education.

Innovative approaches such as the use of person testimonies in classrooms or the visit and use of commemoration sites were first used in Holocaust Education during the last two decades. Diversity of approaches also questions the approval – or even existence of a common theoretical basis on the field. Recent surveys such as Schweber's (2012) and Davis and Rubistein-Avita's (2013) question the who, how, where and when Holocaust is taught, the former expressing skepticism on bringing H.E. to younger and younger ages, while the latter pose the question on "how Holocaust education can be related to critical contemporary concerns such as racism and human rights", underlying the problematic use of the term among others. Davis and Rubistein-Avita discuss also the role of media and the efforts of international organizations and NGOs on the topic. Also, they discuss the risk of failure of Holocaust education due to the incomprehensibility of the evil in its totality, posing questions on "moral lessons" that often teachers feel obliged to give to their students. Another topic is this of memorialization, discussed by Andrews (2013) as well: whether memorial sites and sites of atrocities addressing an emotional response by students are effective and help to "create deeper layers of meaning", imposing the dichotomy over the emotional and cognitive functions of Holocaust Education process<sup>50</sup>.

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47 Sophie Ernst, "Entangled memories ...", o. p., 56.

48 Doyle Stevick & Zehavit Gross, (o.p., 59-76).

49 For instance, people in the Baltic Democracies (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) often display considerable and increased skepticism of the evidence of Holocaust atrocities produced by the Soviet regime – attitude connected with the trauma of Nazi and Soviet dominion of the lands (o.p., 61).

50 Analytical references to above researches in Doyle Stevick & Zehavit Gross, "Research in Holocaust Education ...", o. p., 65-67.

If the abstract, almost de-historised Holocaust approach is the main dimension of the pathology of the dominating museological and didactic approach, there are still grave dangers that cannot be underestimated. Firstly, the danger of students over-identifying themselves with the victims. This is the result of a handicapped historical empathy, which does easily succumb to the temptation of moralization, melodrama and emotional exchange, distorting historical understanding, especially when it does not force the whole learning process towards the serious psychological trauma of the recipient-children. This is something that could, for example, be the case when the French President Sarkozy tried, without success due to the coordinated reaction of the teachers, to establish a pedagogical practice of constant Holocaust memory, which forced every 11 year old pupil to adopt the name of one of the 11,000 Jewish children who were displaced from the French territory and died in Nazi camps. Secondly, the danger of the instability and psychological disturbance that can result from the burden caused by the painful memory of the Holocaust in Western imagination.<sup>51</sup>

Comparing Holocaust with other genocides in the classroom can be an opportunity and a challenge at the same time, as they can be used as a comparative framework placing students to a position to identify injustice and discrimination in forms prior to mass murder and acts of extreme violence and alerting them to the potential of mass violence in the contemporary world. Challenges of this approach refer to aims, as it needs to be well thought and defined, based on a clear analytical framework and can be distinguished in

- *practical* (regarding educational systems and practices, culture and tradition),
- *intellectual* (the study of the Holocaust itself does not provide an explanatory framework for other examples of mass violence),
- *pedagogical* (it does not function per se, if not part of the broader culture of history teaching),
- *emotional* (for instance, how to engage young people emotionally without traumatizing them and how to engage intellectual curiosity and emotional empathy for the victims)<sup>52</sup>.

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51 Joel Hubrecht and Assumpta Mugiraneza, *Enseigner l'histoire et la prevention des genocides. Peut-on prevenir les crimes contre l'umanite*, introduction by Antoine Garapon, Hachette, Paris 2009, 78. Generally regarding the importance and the ways of teaching the Holocaust to children and young people see Jean-Francois Bossy, *Enseigner la Shoah a l'age democratique. Quels enjeux?*, Armand Colin, Paris 2007 and Stephane Bruchfeld and Paul A. Levine, "Dites-le a vos enfants", *Histoire de la Shoah en Europe 1933-1945*, Ramsay, 2000, as well as Hubrecht and Mugiraneza, o.p., 75-91. In the last case, the appropriate didactic methodology, depending on the age of the students, is based on the following principles: a) access to appropriately processed and at the same time indicative archive and visual material, b) presentation of films, factual or fictional, that do not violate the rules of pedagogy and do not distort historical truth, despite the partial point of view of their creators, c) meetings with the survivors in the school room, provided firstly that the mnemonic recall of the past should not replace the round and multi-faceted approach to scientific historical rhetoric, which the teacher oughts to have and secondly, that the children are part of the aural literature culture (that they are in a state of mind to listen to the 'survivor', they know techniques of how to decode the message and skills to create their own meaning from the meeting), d) visitations to memory places, among them most importantly the nazi camps. Especially for the use of cinema within the framework of teaching modern European history see Dominique Chansel, *L'Europe a l'ecran: le cinema et l'enseignement de l'histoire*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2001.

52 Paul Salmons & Matthias Hass, "Comparing Genocide in Classroom: Challenges and Opportunities" in K. Fracapane & M. Hass in collaboration with the Topography of Terror Foundation (eds), *Holocaust Education in a Global Context*, UNESCO, Paris 2014, 105-110.



Holocaust as a transnational subject may, also, serve as a prism through which to address local traumatic issues too, as in the case, for example, of Argentina<sup>53</sup>, Rwanda, South Africa, China.

Eli Wiesel, after studying material and methodology on Holocaust Education<sup>54</sup>, described clearly the work of educators :

Identify the evil, unmask it, deprive it of its poisonous power – which is hatred – and then try to understand and to make people understand its incomprehensible nature and extent.

Recent empirical research on Holocaust Education indicated that educators and teachers need continuous and constant reflective support and training. As witnesses of the Holocaust are almost extinct, training of children of survivors to speak to classrooms, studies in inter-generational and societal memory and deliberate forms of remembrance that take into account this ongoing loss are suggested. Also, epistemological assumptions – such as what is knowable and how it can be known – on which research is based are questioned too, as knowledge is not neutral, neither its distribution process. As Stevick and Cross indicate:

the value of a fact, a piece of knowledge is not absolute and its meaning, derived from a socially dominant or marginal ideology, is reconstructed in the dynamic interaction of people within the school<sup>55</sup>.

More issues raised by Holocaust Education refer to textbooks: the dominance of nation-centered approaches, the limits and pedagogical framework shaped by national or even regional conditions, several factors, such as implementation of curriculum, number of students, methodology and training of the teachers are strongly connected with the use of textbooks. There is a shift on conceptualizing Holocaust as a universal paradigm, especially in conflict or post-conflict areas, carrying the danger of de-contextualizing it from its concrete historical background, omitting a detailed description of the Nazi power establishment and their system of suppression and domination<sup>56</sup>. Nevertheless, research shows that the process of globalization has intensified long-term trends of harmonizing methodological requirements of defining common basic knowledge and support general values<sup>57</sup>. Within this frame research in textbook

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53 Daniel Rafecas, "Projecting of Holocaust Remembrance on the Recent Past of Argentina" in K. Fracapane & M. Hass, o.p., 121-128. Rafecas points out, though, that "when a society with a state policy that prohibits review or discussion of an authoritarian past lies in the shadow of other historic eras, like the Nazi period and the Holocaust, this history in turn remains unexplored and is not understood ..." (o.p., 127).

54 Published in the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) journal *Prospects* (p.5), as cited in Doyle Stevick & Zehavit Gross, "Research in Holocaust Education ...", o. p., 67. Eli Wiesel stands for facing Holocaust in its uniqueness, denying any kind of comparison to other genocides.

55 E. D. Stevick & Z. Cross, "Epistemology and Holocaust Education: History, Memory and the Politics of Knowledge", in *Prospects*, vol. 40, 2010, 10-20.

56 Problematic is also either the de-contextualization of Holocaust, excluding the wide range of Nazi racist persecution that was directed to other people too (disabled, Sinti, Roma etc) or the only reference to Jews as victims (as in the case of some textbooks in USA). See David Lindquist, "The Coverage of the Holocaust in High-school History Textbooks, in *Social Education*, Vol. 73(6), 2009, 298-304, as cited by Frank Pingel, "The Holocaust in Textbooks: from a European to a Global Event" in K. Fracapane & M. Hass in collaboration with the Topography of Terror Foundation (eds), *Holocaust Education in a Global Context*, UNESCO, Paris 2014, 82.

57 J. Mayer, "World Models, National Curricula and the Centrality of the Individual", in A. Benavot and C. Braslavsky (eds.), *School Knowledge in Comparative and Historical Perspective. Changing Curricula in Primary and Secondary Education*, Comparative Education Research Center/The University of Hong Kong, Springer, Hong Kong 2006, 27.

analysis has revealed a shift in the nature of discussion of Holocaust from a historical event to a violation of human rights or crimes against humanity, which supports trends to teach the history of the Holocaust as a paradigmatic event on a global level, posing the relevant didactical challenges.

Historic and memorial sites play also a significant role in the Holocaust Education, while some researchers and didacticians suggest a gender-sensitive approach to them, touching upon the topic of correlation between the construction of gender, hetero-normativity and antisemitism. As Angelika Meyer points out,

the interplay of anti-Semitic hostility, contempt for women and homophobia is a huge challenge for the historical and civic education of young people who, as they grow up, find themselves torn between uncertainty and assurance about their own sexuality and their own body<sup>58</sup>.

The Ravensbrück women's concentration camp is exemplar for the case and is often addressed in discussions regarding the role of gender in crimes of the kind<sup>59</sup>. The topic of the female perpetrators<sup>60</sup> provides, also, pupils with the opportunity to discuss the perception of relations between the sexes.

The educational use of memorial sites sets a number of questions though, as visiting places such as Auschwitz needs a very careful preparation, clear pedagogical aims and frame and a very solid cognitive background on which pupils should step on and try to comprehend the inexplicable forms of utmost evil and insanity- otherwise they just get emotionally kicked<sup>61</sup>.

It is worth noting that children above the age of fourteen, exactly due to the fact that they have already formulated mechanisms of emotional management, are allowed- of course on specific conditions and after the appropriate educational environment has been created – to come in contact with the figurative sources of unprecedented violence and the horror of the Holocaust. In this way they can, firstly, achieve to fathom the historical peculiarity of Nazism and genocide, and secondly, to be gradually guided away from the initial awkwardness, fear of the so-called “therapeutic shock” (even though there are many objections to this), towards historical empathy, solid and multi-faceted historical knowledge and, finally to the ethico-political commitment against the modern versions of racist fixation and nationalist bigotry.

On the other hand, for obvious reasons, this is not the case for younger children.

However, as specialists agree, the necessary guidance of younger children in the painful historical reality during the Nazi period has to anyway be carried out on the basis of their familiarization with “before” and “after” in the life of the victims, in an attempt to create a signifying historical wholeness, a chain of meaning. A chain of meaning that can be comparatively established on culture, geographical origin, habitat and the everyday life of the

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58 Angelika Meyer, “Shedding Light on the Invisible: Towards a Gender-sensitive Education of Memorial Sites” in K. Fracapane & M. Hass in collaboration with the Topography of Terror Foundation (eds), *Holocaust Education ...*, o.p., 99.

59 A. Meyer, “Shedding Light on the Invisible ...”, o.p., 96.

60 Seen as “mannish women”, according to A. Mayer's research, o.p., 99-100.

61 Simone Schweber, “Holocaust Fatigue”: Teaching it Today, in *Social Education*, January-February 2006, 48-55, available in <http://www.schaefshouse.com/Holocaust%20Studies/Pittsburgh/Holocaust%20Fatigue.pdf> (access 10/6/2014).

people and the groups persecuted and found themselves due to their race, religion, ethnicity, ideology, sexual orientation or sometimes accidentally in the belly of the Nazi Leviathan.<sup>62</sup> This pedagogically imposed choice finds its equivalent in the critique of James Young against the way that the Auschwitz Holocaust is presented. When victims are merely approached through their death, that is, their absence, which becomes more intense by juxtaposing fragmented images and mainly by the museum display of “soulless” personal effects (dismembered fragments), the corpses of which escalate the feeling of fragmentation, vanity and lack of meaning.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore it is necessary to have a holistic approach towards the culture and the habitat of the victims and their communities. As Young writes,

... the Holocaust, after all, was not merely the annihilation of nearly 6 million Jews, among them 1,5 million children, but also the extirpation of a thousand-year old civilization from the heart of Europe. Any conception of the Holocaust that reduces it to the horror of destruction alone ignores the stupendous loss and void left behind. The tragedy of the Holocaust is not merely that people died so terribly but that so much was irreplaceably lost. An appropriate memorial design will acknowledge the void left behind and not concentrate on the memory of terror and destruction alone. What was lost needs to be remembered here as much as how it was lost.<sup>64</sup>

It is clear that more in depth research on Holocaust Education is needed, as it is a profoundly meaningful event which needs approaches focusing on something more than instrumental knowledge, in order to shape a more accurate and complicated perception, understanding and interpretation, moving from practical uses of it to deeper communication and emancipatory attitudes.

### **Holocaust Education in European Countries: Germany, England, France, Italy, and Greece**

Research on Holocaust Education in places like Israel and the former Soviet Block are of special interest, however, this paper can only deal with the topic briefly. In Israel we recognize the periods of denial and suppression (40s to 60s) and of public recognition (60's to 80s). In the 80's the topic of Holocaust became by law compulsory for matriculation examination in history, while the 90s are characterized by the post-Zionism criticism and from 2000 to the present day, this criticism was followed by fierce public debates on history textbooks and alternative approaches, thus deconstruction – though from completely different sides, such as left and Orthodox Jews<sup>65</sup>. These internal differences and tension reflect the characteristic stages through which societies may pass when dealing with traumatic issues, such as Holocaust and genocides.

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62 Alicja Bialecka (et al.), o.p., 27-28. Yad Vashem has formulated a pedagogical-historical framework regarding the use of primary historical material for the Holocaust, with the criterion of the students' age, in order not to cause children a secondary trauma due to the unprecedented violence of the historical events they are called to study. See <http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/index.asp>.

63 James E. Young in Ann Weiss (ed.), *The Last Album: Eyes from the Ashes of Auschwitz-Birkenau*, W. W. Norton and Company, New York 2001, 16-18, as cited in Alicja Bialecka (et al.), o.p., 24-25.

64 James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge. After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 2000, 197-198.

65 Doyle Stevick & Zehavit Gross, “Research in Holocaust Education ...”, o. p., 69-71.

No country has dealt with her responsibility, guilt and dark past as Germany has tried to do. Antifascist interpretation of the Holocaust, followed by former East Germany, echoes how former Soviet Block countries deal with their complicated and controversial past of significant collaboration with the Nazis on the extermination of their fellow Jew citizens. If not perpetrators, then a large number of the population as bystanders skirt round their moral dilemmas, for example in the Baltic States and Ukraine. They adopt a general politically correct discourse of common moral reference to the Holocaust through an “abstract transnational lens”<sup>66</sup> lining up with the remaining Western countries and seeking a place next to them. Faced with their recent past in the post communist era, these perpetrators or bystanders chose not to scratch old wounds but to attribute them to the convenient common evil of communism and a distant, abstract ‘fascism’.

In Germany, the way the Nazi past was faced went through labyrinthine phases resulting to the present explosion of memory.

Already in the '40s during and after the Nuremberg trials the idea of collective guilt (*Kollektivschuldthese*) of German people was dominant. The process of de-nazification proved not very efficient, as, soon, the majority of victimizers and their collaborators found themselves in high positions (politics, justice, science, economy) in German society and elsewhere<sup>67</sup>. School history reflected the approach of the Allies, adopting the policy of ‘re-education’ of the Germans, in order to uproot the remaining traces of Nazism and its mentality<sup>68</sup>. This was based mainly on an anti-communism rationale during the 40s and 50s and attributing the Second World War to the demonic personality and ideology of Hitler.

Anti-semitic incidents in West Germany in late 50s triggered an intro-German debate on how to deal with the guilty past. During the 60s the radical activism of German students demanded substantial de-nazification<sup>69</sup> and a critical reprocessing of National Socialist past of the country. The terrorist activism of the Red Army Faction. in the 70s triggered conservative reflexes and a normalization of Nazi history. This period of unstable attitudes, insufficient approach of war and the perplexity of teachers belonging to this generation was followed by a period when Shoah memory came intensively to the foreground. The American TV series “Holocaust” (1979) affected greatly public opinion worldwide and in Germany, with relevant consequences for history teaching<sup>70</sup>. The Holocaust has been taught since the 80s in German schools and from then onwards it has retained its position to the educational process<sup>71</sup>.

So we can in general identify three periods in Holocaust Education in Germany [and western countries]: the first (1945–1965) characterized by absence and silence on the topic, the

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66 Doyle Stevick & Zehavit Gross, “Research in Holocaust Education ...”, o. p., 71.

67 Torben Fischer-Mathias N. Lorenz (eds). *Lexicon der “Vergangenheitschwältigung” in Deutschland. Debatten- und Diskursgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus nach 1945*, Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld 2009, 43.

68 Hagen Fleisser, “Makronisos 1950: Prototypos gia ti Germania tou Psyhrou Polemou? Amerikanikoi Provlitimatismo kai Syntages gia ti Dimokratiki ‘Anamorfoisi’” (“Makronisos 1950: Exemplar for Cold War Germany? American thoughts and prescriptions for democratic ‘Reformation’”), in *Istoriko topio kai mnimi: To Paradeigma tis Makronisou* (Historical landscape and memory: the exemplar of Makronisos), Filistor, Athens 2000, 205-209.

69 Anna Maria Droumbouki, *Mnimeia tis Lithis...*, o. p., 109-111: “Väter sind Täter” (“Our fathers are victimizers” and “We are the Jews of today”).

70 Public history and Holocaust representations through films played an important role on the on how the public got informed about Holocaust, “Sindler’ List” functioning as an archetype of the kind.

71 Torben Fischer-Mathias N. Lorenz (eds). *Lexicon der “Vergangenheitschwältigung” in Deutschland ...*, o. p., 174-175.

second (1965-1990), greatly affected by the Eichmann and Frankfurt trials and *Holocaust* TV series, and the third one (1990-today), characterized by the explosion of memory and monumentalization of Shoah and the establishment of Holocaust Studies chairs at universities. Public History invades the public domain. The 80s are marked by the Historikerstreit<sup>72</sup> and the debates around it, introducing the equation of Nazism to Stalinism, the relativising of Nazi crimes and the conservative re-interpretation of the past, provoking strong reaction and a holistic process on re-approaching it.

After 1989 there was a shift to memory sites, monuments and museums, characterized by the criticism of the anti-fascist founding myth of East Germany and the transformation of the Holocaust to a common *lieu de memoir* for Europe bearing symbolic and universal dimensions. This time the dichotomy of producing memory sites for processing the memory of East Germany and National Socialist Germany (“the two German dictatorships”) proves to be problematic in their historical reframing. At the same time a new debate about the guilt and involvement of the German people – and not just the SS – on the Holocaust – causes turmoil in German society<sup>73</sup>.

Holocaust Education echoes the struggle of German society to re-define its past and identity. It is compulsorily taught in primary and secondary schools as a discrete historical theme, with reference to micro, social and biographical historical methodologies.

Nevertheless, problems such as the following create a dystopia, leaving little space for connotations of current neo-Nazism and racist attitudes:

- o banalisation of Holocaust and public opinion as well as
- o pupils’ fatigue and a “fed up” attitude regarding the topic<sup>74</sup>,
- o the antagonism of traumatic memories of persecuted groups fighting for recognition of their trauma and thus minimising the relativity of Holocaust
- o the incomprehensibility of the barbarism and evil.

Does the question remain vital and acute about the way in which the complex and, to a certain extent, internally conflicting processes of reconstituting the collective self-image of the German people reflects itself in the field of education? Indeed, the Holocaust is one of the most central dimensions of both the provided knowledge and the ethics within all the grades of the German educational system, without, however, being limited to the teaching of history, since the study of the Holocaust has an inherently interdisciplinary and integrative nature.<sup>75</sup> But this central position that the teaching of the Holocaust holds, even though it is differentiated in terms of density, comprehensiveness and methodology in each different school grade, creates, reflectively, an intense feeling of saturation, intolerance and emotional instability in the German student population.

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72 See Ernst Nolte’s article in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (June 6, 1986) provoking historians’ debate: “The Past will not go away” – “Die Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will. Eine Rede, die J. [http://www.hdg.de/lemo/html/dokumente/NeueHerausforderungen\\_redeNolte1986/](http://www.hdg.de/lemo/html/dokumente/NeueHerausforderungen_redeNolte1986/) (access 5/6/2014). See also: New German Critique, *Special Issue on the Historikerstreit*, Spring-Summer, v. 44, 1988, J. Habermas, *New Conservatism, Cultural Criticism and the Historians’ Debate*, MIT Press, Cambridge 1989, R. Evans, *In Hitler’s Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape the Nazi Past*, Pantheon, New York, 1989.

73 After the publication of Daniel Jonas Goldhagen’s dissertation: See, Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, Random House, New York 1996.

74 Simone Schweber, “Holocaust Fatigue ...”, o.p.

75 Peter Carrier, “L’ambiguïté du sentiment national à l’école en Allemagne contemporaine face au souvenir de la Shoah”, Benoit Falaize, Charles Heimberg, Olivier Loubes (dir.), *L’école et la nation*, ENS Editions, Lyon 2013, 56.



These feelings are, in turns, implicitly connected with the so-called “tyranny of traumatic memory” and the ideology of “national masochism” of post war Germany, a consequence of the national re- edification and the democratic and moral reform that the German people underwent for many decades. The intensification of negative or ambivalent feelings coming from Germany’s youth against the systematic teaching of the Holocaust is closely connected with the rejection of the trans generational legacy of the trauma and, therefore, with the questioning of collective guilt and moral stigmatization resulting from the commitment of Nazi crimes against humanity.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, if someone researches German history books of secondary education during the last decades, he/she will realise that they approach the Nazi phenomenon and more specifically the Holocaust with the following narrative strategies.

Firstly, their authors avoid reference to the German nation and decide to put the blame of the Holocaust exclusively on national socialism, that is represented like a dark power dominating the country, as well as on Hitler, without, at the same time putting names on specific historical and moral perpetrators and victimizers. It would not be futile to suggest that the tendency of hiding the responsibilities of the German people is starting to look like an almost unbreakable taboo.<sup>77</sup>

Secondly, they use vague expressions (e.g. “gas chambers were built away from German soil in Poland”) or resort to a generalised use of passive voice (e.g. the Jews were dislocated”). This is a choice of strategic importance, inextricably linked with the underlying depersonalised representation and interpretation of historical action,<sup>78</sup> where the demand for covering up and exculpating is found.

Thirdly, “it is rare to find references in the European or international dimensions of the Holocaust, especially in the sections where there is reference to the collaboration with the enemy or the resistance in Western as well as in Eastern Europe”.<sup>79</sup>

Generally and according to the findings of recent researches, teaching lessons about National Socialism, WWII and the Holocaust in German schools functions rather like a decisive process of transition in the whole mental and psychological process of organising and negotiating the ways of incorporating students within the German nation of (self) excluding them, especially if we are talking about students whose families are not involved in the events of this specific historical era, either as a victimizer or as a victim.<sup>80</sup>

The attitudes emerging during the process of developing the historical identity of German students are various: they range from the moral and emotional identification with the victims or their part of burden deriving from the moral responsibility as involuntary inheritors of the collective trauma to the total denial of any commitment.<sup>81</sup> Of course, as Carrier points out successfully, the negotiation of the identity and the content of historical consciousness cannot be considered as a strict rational process of individual responsibility and choice, since the role of the subject’s emotional charge is dominant, while the boundaries of individual autonomy are drastically limited. This is either, in general, by the asymmetrical relations between power

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76 Peter Carrier, o.p., 58.

77 Peter Carrier, o.p., 57.

78 Peter Carrier, o.p., 57.

79 Peter Carrier, o.p., 58.

80 Peter Carrier, o.p., 59.

81 Peter Carrier, o.p., 59.

and dominant ideology, which determine what is and what is not nationally acceptable within the framework of historical rules, or, more specifically, by participating in specific memory communities and the imposing reference to family experiences, a case where the distinction between “victimizer vs victim” remains morally committing and almost insurmountable.<sup>82</sup> The rift however, that is caused by replacing history with memory unavoidably undermines the canonical validity of the concept of democratic citizenship. As such, focus on memory clusters and fragments society and doubts the role of school as a basic institution for future citizens to socialize and form their identities.<sup>83</sup>

Though there is no official Holocaust Education Curriculum in England, it has been specifically prescribed in every version of the National Curriculum since 1991<sup>84</sup>, so every child should study the Holocaust in their History lessons in KS 3 for 11-14 year olds. Up to 2009 though, there was little research in Holocaust Education, while at the same year the Holocaust Education Department Programme (now called Center for Holocaust Education)<sup>85</sup> published a research report: “Teaching about the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools: an empirical study of national trends, perspectives and practice”, aiming to “examine when, where, how and why the Holocaust is taught in state-maintained secondary schools in England and to inform the design and delivery of a continuing professional development programme for teachers who teach about the Holocaust”<sup>86</sup>.

The key findings of the study reveal that the Holocaust is approached in a wide variety of subject areas, mainly in History (51%) with the subjects of Religious Education (25%), English and Citizenship following. Data from the survey also reveals that teaching about the Holocaust occurs across all seven years of compulsory and post-compulsory secondary education, with a clear concentration in year 9, in the final Key Stage 3. Also, the research reports considerable variation in time spent teaching about Holocaust (from 1-20 hours within KS 3 history, within an average of 6 hours in Year 9).

The most interesting part of the report referred to exploring teachers’ aims, understandings and pedagogical practice: managing curriculum time was reported as the most common challenge, while, focusing on perpetrator-oriented narratives rather than exploring victims’ responses suggest their attitude towards approaching the subject. The majority indicated that they were confident and “very knowledgeable” about the subject – however their answers to some knowledge – based questions revealed some important gaps in historical understanding, indicating that “knowledge of the Holocaust is perhaps often drawn from popular than academic discourse”<sup>87</sup>. The majority of teachers understood the meaning of the term “Holocaust” as, “the persecution and the murder of a range of victims targeted by the Nazi regime”, while many teachers found it difficult to articulate the distinct historical significance of the Holocaust. Stuart Foster underlines this confusion on the precise definition of Holocaust, as two thirds of the

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82 Peter Carrier, o.p., 60.

83 Peter Carrier, o.p., 60.

84 The UK has long played a leading role internationally on Holocaust education, remembrance and research, as in 1991. England was the first European country to make teaching about the Holocaust a mandatory part of the history curriculum in state secondary schools. <http://www.holocaustremembrance.com/member-countries/holocaust-education-remembrance-and-research-united-kingdom>

85 <http://www.holocausteducation.org.uk/>

86 A. Pettigrew – S. Foster – J. Howson – P. Salmons – R. A. Lenga – K. Andrews, *Teaching About the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools: An Empirical Study of National Trends, Perspectives and Practice*, Institute of Education, Department of Arts and Humanities, University of London, London 2009, 7-9.

87 O.p., 8

subjects in this survey were not in alignment with the major international organizations (such as International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, Yad Vashem, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Imperial War Museum) preferring definitions that did not emphasize the distinctively antisemitic focus of the Nazis, lumping the Jews with all other targeted groups<sup>88</sup>.

Though the vast majority of teachers (94,7%) consider always important to teach about the Holocaust, many of them said they believed it was difficult to do so effectively, indicating serious challenges, such as organizing cross-curricula cooperation, dealing with emotional content and responding to students' misunderstandings and prejudices<sup>89</sup>.

Holocaust education has a history of more than 20 years in France, becoming firmly established, as it is a compulsory subject for primary and secondary education level. The country processed seriously its traumatic collective memory when president Jaques Chirac, in 1995, acknowledged in public the guilt of French people for the extermination of their Jew fellow citizens<sup>90</sup>. With a clear preference to the term "Shoah remembrance" instead of Holocaust, carefully defined as "the education on the history of the systematic extermination of European Jews" by the educational authorities of the country, the French case is an exemplar<sup>91</sup>. Taking, inevitably, the form of the country, bearing equivalent national characteristics linked to her historical, political and social ones, educational matters, Holocaust education included, correspond to national<sup>92</sup>. A number of problems, raised by claims, concealments, half-truths, genuine falsehoods, legitimacy, resistance, groundbreaking activism and educational innovation, characterize the early periods on Holocaust Education in France – problems identified in other European countries as well<sup>93</sup>. Problems such as the hostile behaviour from students of Arab origin, a significant population in France, the naming of the event ('Shoah', 'genocide' or 'extermination'), the controversy over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, triggering often an anti Jewish aggression and "creating panic in the community"<sup>94</sup>, different extreme-right movements (anti-Semitic and anti-Arab racism too) create a very special image for Holocaust education in the country.

One should take into consideration that France retains a sizable Jewish population<sup>95</sup>, though from different origin (Ashkenazi Jews, descendants of Eastern European immigrants and Sephardi Jews from North Africa), carrying different experience and memories but unified under

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88 Stuart Foster, "Teaching about the Holocaust in English Schools: Challenges and Possibilities, in *Intercultural Education*", Vol. 24 (1-02), 2013, 133-148, as cited by Doyle Stevick & Zehavit Gross, "Research in Holocaust Education ...", o. p., 66.

89 A. Pettigrew – S. Foster – J. Howson – P. Salmons – R. A. Lenga – K. Andrews, *Teaching about the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools ...*, o.p., 9. Teachers when interviewed, acknowledged the importance of support from a variety of specialist Holocaust education organizations working in England.

90 Giorgos Kokkinos – Maria Vlachou, "Historical Consciousness and Memory" in Giorgos Kokkinos- Maria Vlachou-Vassiliki Sakka-Evaggelia Kouneli-Aggelourania Kostoglou-Spyros Papadopoulos, *Prosegizontas to Olokaytoma sto Elliniko Sxoleio (Approaching the Holocaust in Greek Schools)*, Taxideytis, Athens 2007, 106-122.

91 Elli Lemonidou, "Epimaha Zitimata sto Mathima tis Istorias sti Gallia" in Giorgos Kokkinos – Dimitris Mavroskoufis – Panayiotis Gatsotis – Elli Lemonidou, *Sygrousiaka themata sti didaskalia tis istorias (Controversial issues in teaching history)*, Noogramma, Athens 2010, 201-206.

92 Sophie Ernst, "Entangled Memories: Holocaust Education in Contemporary France" in K. Fracapane & M. Hass in collaboration with the Topography of Terror Foundation (eds), *Holocaust Education in a Global Context*, UNESCO, Paris 2014, 41.

93 Sophie Ernst, "Entangled Memories ...", o.p., 55

94 o.p., 42.

95 After U.S.A. and Israel.

the “memory against anti-semitism”, while French identity is very strong to them<sup>96</sup>. France also has the largest Arab community in Europe, a result of long standing immigration following decolonization; both minorities co-exist often creating an explosive ground strongly connected with current political affairs. The crimes committed against national minorities were, for almost a decade, a subject of public debate on what and how is taught in school history lessons, feeding “memory wars” and “victim competitions”. The strong school tradition of the Republic though, more or less placed the situation within a context of rationalism and peace. Curriculum, educational material and projects, well-trained teachers, memorial sites<sup>97</sup>, visual and media literacy comprise a rich, fresh and varied pedagogy/praxis of critical approaches to the subject. This is the result of an efficient educational policy for the subject, bearing a significant role in moral and civic education, not enough though, as a broader and more positive dimension is needed, based not only in knowing and avoiding the horrors of the past with negative commemoration<sup>98</sup>.

The (always present) problem of transmission of the knowledge and the meaning to be conveyed comprise a new wave of present day problems, especially for countries with a strong tradition and ‘well armed for the job’ teachers, such as France. The problems of transmission and meaning are affected by

- o conflicting interpretations,
- o the provision of mass education (in terms of structure and not quantity, thus taking into consideration not only ‘best practices’ but improper ones too),
- o the risks of managing standardization “that is likely to lead to trivialization and set ‘content’ to which demotivated teachers and bored pupils glumly submit”<sup>99</sup>
- o along with moral and political issues.

In Italy, Holocaust Education has undergone many changes, as for a long time the history of deported Italian Jews and the Jewish genocide was not a subject of public debate. During the last two decades, however, the subject – though not compulsory in the way it is in Germany, Great Britain or France – is taught in primary and secondary level, especially at ages 13 and 18<sup>100</sup>. It is a compulsory part of the curriculum for secondary education, with an indication to

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96 One can identify a conflict on the use of the Shoah memory among French Jewish: those who believe that history must be transmitted so that “nobody will ever lay a finger on a Jew” and those who prefer a humanitarian universal message so “no state will ever again commit a crime against humanity”. Sophie Ernst, o.p., 45.

97 As Peter Carrier indicates, memory cultures have flourished in European countries from the 70s, France and Germany being among them which were characterized by numerous openings of museums, historical exhibitions and monuments, as well as various commemorations on the 40th and 50th anniversaries of 2nd W.W. Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989*, Berghahn Books, New York – Oxford the , 2. **Holocaust teaching is also widely supported and enhanced throughout national territory by various memorial sites**, which not only carry out activities to educate young people but also **help to train teachers**. The Shoah Memorial in Paris is heavily involved in providing training for teachers from both France and abroad. See, International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, *Holocaust education, Remembrance and Research in France*, in <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/member-countries/holocaust-education-remembrance-and-research-france> (access 10 July 2014).

98 Sophie Ernst, “Entangled memories ...”, o.p., 55.

99 Sophie Ernst, “Entangled memories ...”, o.p., 56.

100 Laura Fontana, *Rethinking School Trips to Auschwitz. A Case Study of Italia Memorial Trains: Deterioration of Holocaust Pedagogy?* in Nitza Davidovitch & Dan Soen(eds.), *The Holocaust Ethos in the 21st Century. Dilemmas and Challenges*, Ariel University Center of Samaria, Austeria Publishing House, Krakow-Budapest 2012, 369-390 (e book) and in <http://www.fontana-laura.it/area-stampa/articoli/rethinking-school-trips-to-auschwitz-a-case-study-of-italian-memorial-trains-deterioration-of-holocaust-pedagogy/> (access 7/7/2014).

study the Shoah in the age of 13, which is followed by teachers. Teachers get training about the subject – though the training seminars have been significantly reduced recently due to the financial crisis – and they are inundated by a flood of suggestions, invitations and requests related to 27th January memorial day<sup>101</sup>. As Laura Fontana<sup>102</sup> notes: “the last two decades have seen an increasing centrality of the Holocaust in memory culture but have also witnessed the establishment of a paradigm that relativises other fascist crimes and levels the differences between fascism and antifascism”.<sup>103</sup> In Italy, a special way of commemorating Holocaust, under the title “Education and Memory”, based on a project including trips to Auschwitz using trains, involves local communities, several entities, organizations and different population groups, apart from teachers and pupils. The trips, organized in the winter, usually start in January 25th in order to reach Auschwitz in 27th<sup>104</sup>, where among thousands of other visitors, in noisy and usually incomprehensible guide tours in a hurry, pupils get emotional, without adequate and sufficient cognitive background on the subject and within a questionable pedagogical frame, depicting Jews as just “poor and suffering people”.

Holocaust commemoration is faced here mainly as a moral obligation. Nevertheless, educational material and a variety of methodological approaches are suggested to the educational community. For the academic year 2013–14, the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR), under the auspices of President of the Italian Republic and in cooperation with Jewish Communities of Italy, has launched for all students of primary, secondary and tertiary education as well as students of Drama, Dance, Music and Fine Arts colleges/schools, a series of projects in order to promote information, study, research, art, literary, drama, music works on the subject, using several and diverse forms of expression. The discussion on the content and methodology of Holocaust Education is open though. The discourse indicates the necessity of teaching history of Jewish communities and the history of anti-Semitism throughout the ages, so as to understand the substrata on which this crime happened as well as targeting focal points. Cumulative, this achieves an accurate awareness of Holocaust complexity and deals with the idea that it was not inevitable. Obviously focusing on gas chambers, is not enough, as it maintains the danger of creating, finally, apathy.

Hungary defined 2014 officially as the commemoration year of the genocide of Hungarian Jews introducing, by the way, an holistic revision of contemporary Hungarian history, the peak of which is the whitewashing of the intrinsic, institutional and spontaneous anti-Semitism as well as the responsibilities of the Hungarian state for Holocaust. Consequently, this holistic revision is expected to have an influence on historical education in the country too.

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101 <http://hubmiur.pubblica.istruzione.it/web/istruzione/shoah/concorso>. Italy voted for 27th of January as Holocaust commemoration day (211/2000).

102 CEO of the Education and Memory Project, Rimini, Italy. She characterizes these memorial trips to Auschwitz as “a shot in the darkness” (o.p.). Laura Fontana poses a basic question in Holocaust Education too: “How can visitors understand what was lost with the destruction of European Jewish communities if they do not know anything of the diverse cultural, spiritual, artistic wealth of these communities?” See also Elena Loewenthal, “Contra il Giorno della Memoria”, in *La Stampa*, 16/1/2014.

103 Discussion with Paolo Ceccoli, too, *Landis* (Italian History Teachers’ Association) and EUROCLIO Association board member, confirms the above; he reflects on the possible dangers of “overdose of memory without history” effect, as pupils are not aware of what exactly they are supposed to commemorate and empathize and many things are quite incomprehensible to them while in a process of pedagogic deterioration. He also indicates the prejudicial influence of extreme right in public uses of history and Holocaust.

104 In a rather naïve, according to our opinion, attempt to make pupils and others empathize with the deported Jews.



It is well known that during the long period of admiral Horthy's political sovereignty (1920–1944) he took special measures and enacted a number of anti-Jewish laws, starting from 1920 with the limitation of access to higher Education for the Jews and ending from 1938–1942 with the seizure of basic rights, the enforcement of forced labor in 1939, the enforced expatriation to Ukrainian lands where the expatriated civilians were easy prey for the genocidal mania of Einsatzgruppen. In fact, the existing anti-Jewish politics which was followed by the totalitarian semi-fascist Hungarian state during the inter-war period [1920–1939], was simply radicalized after the conquest of the country by the German troops on March 1944, leading to about 437.000 Jewish people deportation to Auschwitz. This decision was willingly implemented by the collaborator governments of Sztojay and Szalasi, though Horthy himself tried to thwart the deportation of the Jewish community of Budapest.

In the case of Hungary, museum education is of utmost interest, as memory politics designed and implemented by the Hungarian state recently, based on the controversial 2012 constitution, silences / hushes up the severe responsibilities of the Hungarian state and of a significant part of Hungarian society in the extermination of their Jews. On the contrary, they put exclusively the blame on the Germans, transforming the Hungarian people to an innocent victim of a double attack resulting to the loss of their national sovereignty, therefore as an object of double victimization, by the Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism. The innocence of the Hungarian state and people is based on the promotion of "elements" that confirm the role of Hungarians as willing and without self interest saviors of their Jewish origin neighbors.

The four pillars of this revisionist memory policy are:

1. The functional re-engulfment of the Horthy period in the national narrative and national memory and, simultaneously, the a-historical banishing of the communist period, the latter conceived as an alien body or a rapture/cut of the continuity of Hungarian state.
2. The foundation of the state institute "Veritas", whose responsibility is to revise contemporary Hungarian history, based on the double victimization attitude. The interweaving of executive power with quasi-independent scientific institutions form the conditions of the state control and the ideological instrumentalization of historical knowledge, historical culture, historical conscience and historical education.
3. The foundation of a new Holocaust Museum, despite the existence of the Holocaust Memorial Center<sup>105</sup>; it is practically an informal substitution of the latter by the former, which is subvented by the constant underfunding and based on the constant negative criticism by political persons / bellwethers of the country, due to the Centers' museologic strategic, common in many similar museums of the West, which is oriented to show the responsibility of Hungary on the industrialized genocide. Its opponents claim that there is evidence to refute this belief.
4. In the frame of public history: the erection of an imposing sculpture about Nazi occupation in Hungary, where the representation of victimized Hungary is in the form of the Archangel Gabriel.

Inside Hungary the ideology of double victimization has acquired a formative meaning, having strong support in ultra-right circles (Jobbik) and helping build an axis of a miserable and self-

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105 <http://www.hdke.hu/en> Report on the case: <http://cosmopublic.eu/article/the-biggest-falsification-in-hungarian-history/>. (There was an agreement on the cooperation between the two centers recently, probably a sign of compromise by the Hungarian government <http://hungarianspectrum.org/2014/05/01/viktor-orban-shapes-the-holocaust-memorial-year/> access 24/8/2015)

victimized historical consciousness, despite the strong reaction by the Association of Jewish Communities of Hungary (MAZSIHISZ) with a monumental rebuttal of the conspiracy theories produced by xenophobia.<sup>106</sup> On the contrary, when abroad, Hungarian officials, due to the reaction of international community, move to selective and spasmodic steps in acknowledging the responsibility of the Hungarian state over the Holocaust, action that could be perceived as a kind of regret and apology.<sup>107</sup>

Coming to Greece no serious work has been done, apart from, I am afraid lining up with the rest of European countries, with the necessary delay as far as adopting Holocaust commemoration day, co-signing up to recommendations and a general reference to the event in History Curricula among others. This applies to historical education as well, nailed to the primacy/status of an homogenous Grand Narrative<sup>108</sup> where minorities, either officially recognized or not, have not yet found a place in collective memory<sup>109</sup>. Recent short scale research, such as with history teachers in the (very much polarized politically) region of Messinia, South Greece, reveals that the vast majority of teachers do not teach about the Holocaust either because they “do not have the time to do so”, or “they do not feel well armed to do so”<sup>110</sup>.

Resistance derives partly from the attitude that Greek Jews' history is not really considered Greek History and has not compulsory status, along with the complete lack of systematic training on the topic. Also, the extermination of the Greek Jewish community is considered

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106 Hungarian ultra-right politicians and journalists do not miss a chance to attack Jewish and Roma civilians in their country (Of course as in other countries too). For instance, Hungarian M.P., invoking national security reasons, demanded that M.P., ministers and high ranked officials of the state that are of Jewish origin should be registered in special separate catalogues!

107 Interesting analysis by Nora Berend, “Hongrie: le travestissement gouvernemental de la mémoire de la Shoah”, *Usages Publics du Passé*, site de l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, <http://usagespublicsdupasse.ehess.fr/index.php?id=313> (πρόσβαση 28 Οκτωβρίου 2014).

108 Giorgos Kokkinos – Panayiotis Gatsotis – Vassiliki Sakka – Haralambos Kourgiantakis, “World History in Greek Primary and Secondary Education” in *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, v. 8, n. 2, 2009, 63-91, Vassiliki Sakka – Katerina Brentanou, *Teaching History in Greek schools. Adventures of a “fresh” History Curriculum for Compulsory Education. Another lost chance?* Paper presented in the 13th International Conference of ISSEI, International Society for the Study of European Ideas in cooperation with the University of Cyprus, Nicosia 14-16 July 2012 <http://lekythos.library.ucy.ac.cy/bitstream/handle/10797/6228/ISSEIproceedings-Sakka%20Brentanou.pdf?sequence=1> (access 6/7/2014).

109 “The political framework of an education system is strongly shaped by national traditions. The curriculum reflects the extent of control exerted by the educational authorities in society (open/closed, prescriptive/discursive curriculum)”: Frank Pingel, “The Holocaust in Textbooks ...”, o.p., 77.

110 Vassiliki Sakka, History Teachers’ Attitudes on Teaching Controversial and Traumatic Topics in Secondary Education Schools in Greece, in the Context of Crisis: the Case of the Region of Messinia, paper presented in *HEIRNET 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference “History, Conflict and Identity”*, 14-16 September 2013, Home for Cooperation, Nicosia, Cyprus. Also, in a Panhellenic Competition among Secondary Education pupils, conducted in 2013 by the Department of History – Ionian University, on producing a short 10’ film on a historic topic in contemporary history (Greek-European-World), out of 174 participations, only two deal with Greek Jews and their extermination, both coming from areas with flourishing Jewish population in the past, Thessaloniki and Larissa, while we trace 3 references on Jewish population, in local history topics. See Vassiliki Sakka, “Prosegizontas Kritika to Parelthon: Anazitontas ton Optiko, Mintiako kai Istoriko Grammatismo. Skepseis pano sta Apotelesmata tou Diagonismou Paragogis Istorikou Dokimanter apo Mathites Deyterovathmias Ekpaideysis” (“Approaching the Past Critically: Seeking for Visual, Media and Historical Literacy. Some Thoughts on the Results of the Recent Competition on Producing Historical Documentary Films by Secondary Education Pupils”), paper presented in *14th Conference by Network for the Study of Civil Wars: “Uses and Misuses of Public History”*, Volos, 31 August-1 September 2013.

a traumatic issue, interwoven with the Nazi collaborators and the exploitation and seizure of Jewish property among others – so they prefer “safety in silence”. The last 10 years initiatives such as 5 courses of Greek educators trained at Yad Vashem, Jewish Museum of Greece training seminars as well as several conferences and training courses in Universities and seminars organized – bottom up – by local entities, teacher unions and, lately Ministry of Education<sup>111</sup>, try to shake the stagnant waters of history education in Greece<sup>112</sup>.

It is important to mention that the historical education in Greece hardly deals with the Nazi regime within the context of 2nd W.W. – or, to be more precise, it does not deal efficiently and in depth – something that is at the heart of public debate on the significant and frightening increase of the popularity, expressed in votes, of Golden Dawn neo-Nazi party in recent elections<sup>113</sup>. We have also to mention here that in Germany the Nazi crimes, reaching extraordinary heights in Greece, are not known, as the notorious Distomo massacre<sup>114</sup> is never mentioned by German media when they refer to similar cases like Oradour or Lidice<sup>115</sup>. Finally it is important to mention that a national scale research about anti-Semitism in several countries, conducted in Greece by the Anti-Defamation League, followed by a research of the

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111 Co-funding Yad Vashem educational seminars on Holocaust Education, organizing (2014) a historical film contest on the Holocaust of Greek Jews for secondary education pupils (1st award a trip to Auschwitz for the winning team), while in cooperation with Jewish Museum of Greece we have the first school trips to Auschwitz.

112 Among them, the ground breaking for the time first book on Holocaust Education in Greece for Primary and Secondary Education composed by professor George Kokkinos and his team, under the title: *Approaching the Holocaust in Greek schools*. The book, an educational and research program for primary and secondary education pupils, includes theoretical (Holocaust Education, Curricula, Rationale, Pedagogical Aims, international practice, Biography Method, Oral History-Oral Testimonies and practical approaches, suggesting didactical paradigm based on original interviews with Holocaust survivors from the island of Rhodes. It was based on a research project conducted by the Laboratory of History and Social Sciences (Pedagogical Department of Primary Education – University of Rhodes) on Holocaust survivors of the island (2005–2006) (See: E. Lemonidou, G. Kokkinos, P. Kimourtzis, “La question de la diversité à travers l’enseignement des questions sensibles: l’exemple de l’extermination de la communauté juive de Rhodes”, Benoit Falaize, Charles Heimberg, Olivier Loubes (sous la direction), L’ecole et la nation, ENS Editions, Lyon 2013, 257-270). The book and Holocaust Education is part of the curriculum for primary teachers of the university, consisting a basis on which many interesting projects have been implemented. Projects and presentations of students’ work in: <http://giorgoskokkinos.blogspot.gr/> (in Greek). The book takes into consideration the uses and misuses of public history, focusing on visual and media literacy when suggesting approaches to the complex and controversial issue of the Holocaust.

113 The whole situation was the reason for a another book edited by Aggelos Palikides: *Critical Approaches to Nazi phenomenon*, Epikentro, Athens 2013, addressed to history and civic educators and focusing on how to approach Nazi phenomenon (rise, propaganda, education, Holocaust, Wannsee Conference, Greek Jews, Distomo massacre etc) in secondary education. See G. Kokkinos, “Istorikos Anatheoritismos kai Anisi tou Olokaistomatos (Historical Revisionism and Denial of Holocaust (Negationnisme)” in A. Palikides (ed.), *Critical Approaches ...*, o.p., 57-74 and V. Sakka, “The Others and Us: the Experience of Inperceptible Fascistication of a Society and the Current Juncture”, o.p., 103-251. Also, Anna Fragoudaki, *O ethnikismos kai i anodos tis akrodexias (Nationalism and the rise of extreme right)*, Alexandraia, Athens 2013, 151-182, attributing among others, the rise of Golden Dawn, to nationalistic historical education. Also, Anna Fragoudaki, *H shesi tou antisemitismou kai tou ethnikismou me tin tin elliniki ethniki taytotita (The relationship of anti-Semitism and nationalism with Greek national identity)* article (June 29 2014) in <http://athensreviewofbooks.com/?p=1213> (access 6/7/2014).

114 Zeta Papandreou, *Didaktiki Prosegisi Epimahon kai Traumatikon Gekonoton: I Periptosi tis Sfagis tou Distomou (Didactical Approach of Controversial and Traumatic issues: the Case of Distomo Massacre)*, Phd Dissertation, Pedagogical Department of Primary Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of Rhodes, 2013.

115 Thanasis Gotovos, *To Distomo den yparhei gia tous Germanous. As ftiaksoyme ena biblio mazi tous. (Distomo does not exist for Germans; let us write a common book together)*, article in tvxs website (June 18, 2014) in <http://tvxs.gr/news/paideia/distomo-den-yparxei-gia-toys-germanoys-ftiaksoyme-koino-biblio-istorias-mazi-toys> (access 18/6/2014).

kind by Macedonian University and British Embassy in Greece, revealed quite high percentage of anti-semitic attitude and beliefs-actually the highest in Europe<sup>116</sup>!

### Conclusions

Despite the variety in national educational cultures and practices, internationally in Europe Holocaust education has some common points. The historical uniqueness, the causes and its universal moral meaning are the focal points when teaching about it. Educators, politicians, stakeholders and entities still discuss topics such as:

- when, who, what and how to teach about Holocaust
- focus on its uniqueness in History
- compare it with other genocides
- focus on universal values, such as defense of human rights and promotion of active citizenship
- study the background and historical context of the situation that allowed it to happen, such as Nazi ideology and long standing antisemitism
- could it be prevented? Can we take preventive measures so as no genocide happens again?
- question the personal and collective responsibility
- correlation with current affairs
- the proper use of monumental sites such as concentration camps with clear defined pedagogical aims
- empathy and the danger of students over-identifying with the victims
- how to face or prevent the possible 'fatigue' on the topic

**It is important that study and research on the subject is needed and surely it has a long way to go yet.**

### Correspondence

George Kokkinos  
[kokkinos@rhodes.aegean.gr](mailto:kokkinos@rhodes.aegean.gr)

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116 <http://global100.adl.org/#country/greece/2014> (69%!) – though, according to our opinion, this is based on expressed (and probably confused) anti-israeli and pro-palestinian general attitude (pro-arabic anti-semitism). Anyway, some questions posed are easy to confuse.

**INVISIBLE LANDSCAPES – HERITAGE IN CONFLICT: MEMORIES OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING<sup>1</sup>**

**Andrés Domínguez-Almansa**, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain  
**Ramón López Facal**, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

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**Abstract:**

*The nature and role of History in the curriculum is internationally contested. With History Education's focus on the development of the personal and social identity of young citizens, both what is taught and how it is taught are crucial. A curriculum that ignores the vernacular roots and origins of contemporary society, both locally and nationally, can be both impoverished and misleading, i.e. propagandistic. A crucial aspect of social memory is the canon of vernacular, folk history. Its stories, legends, myths and beliefs are transmitted and shared from generation to generation, usually orally, both through the family and socially through bodies such churches/mosques, schools, sporting and social clubs, societies, museums, cultural organisations and musical groups, bands and orchestras. Their often hidden vernacular histories parallel the national, governmentally approved narratives transmitted through national curricula and their official textbooks and pedagogy.*

*The authors in their seminal article encounter head on the problem of impoverished national curricula that centre on an approved, sanitised canon of stories that enshrine a set of values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that encapsulate a nationalistic image. While the local and particular issues that their paper face relate to Spain, the underlying structure and methodology of the paper is appropriate internationally, particularly in jurisdictions [countries/states/regions] with a traumatic past. Here facing and dealing with controversial issues is crucial to the teaching for Citizenship that has to be based upon historical foundations and through History Education.*

*This article presents the results of research carried out in the area of Social Science teaching in the University of Santiago de Compostela (Lugo Campus) with students training to become elementary teachers and also, through them, with elementary education pupils. Firstly, the student teachers were encouraged to discover hidden memories of executions carried out during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) in their immediate surroundings. The changes in these future teachers' historic awareness were analyzed along with the collective construction of knowledge regarding the educational virtue of this type of activity. Finally, the way in which some trainee teachers worked on this type of content, using similar methods, with children in elementary education (9-11 years of age) and the results they obtained will be presented.*

**Keywords:**

Controversial issues, Elementary education, Emotional education, Traumatic past, Heritage, Historic memory, Invisible landscapes, Spanish Civil War, Teacher training

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## Introduction

The process of transition from the Francoist dictatorship to democracy, which was undertaken in Spain implied, among other aspects, an attempt to forget the recent, and uncomfortable, past. However, diverse sectors of today's society are demonstrating their discomfort with this willing forgetfulness and are advocating the exercise of collective and historic memory in order to settle the score with the Francoist dictatorship and to consider other points of view ranging in time from its violent beginnings to its integration/dissolution into the Transition Period. This conflict is also evident in the classroom, where the policy of forgetting the past has avoided a genuine educational attempt to situate the dictatorship, its crimes, its significance and its supporting structure in a place from which the population can be educated.

Here, in an attempt to place Francoism in this central position, we shall present a proposal developed in collaboration with elementary education trainee teachers, students, which complements the way in which they have dealt with this controversial issue in the elementary education classroom.

In order to carry out an experiment of this type it is necessary to overcome traditional teaching practice and routines and to avoid any kind of indoctrinating bias. The students were directed towards discovering this forgotten past by investigating the immediate surroundings of the Education Faculty itself. From this everyday landscape, a hidden history emerged, rife with invisible victims who, far from becoming a heritage upon which the value of human rights can be established, remains in a state of anonymity, incomprehensible for those who, like these students, do not feel indebted to this hidden past.

### **From the Spanish Civil War to the Transition Period: A greater degree of visibility in the classroom?**

In different sectors of society, such as the spheres of politics, journalism and even education, it is common to state, with overtones of a scientific theorem, that ignorance of History condemns us to repeat the same mistakes. Evidently, this assertion makes reference to undesirable historical episodes, above all wars and all they bring about in terms of individual and collective suffering. However, reality insists on proving the falseness of the prophylactic ability attributed to mere knowledge of the past.

If the aim is to avoid war and other conflicts which can drift towards barbarism and to promote a culture of peace, both political and social action is required, along with a commitment from the population and an education policy in accordance with this commitment. From this perspective, several authors (Tribó, 2013) stress the fact that it is an error to hide war in the context of education. This is especially true in the case of recent and emotionally relevant wars, which should occupy a significant place in the context of education in order for them to be dealt with in the classroom in terms of problematization, meaningful reflection and even to root them in that collective memory so well-defined by M. Halbwachs, who was, himself, a victim of the Nazi death camps. Indeed, it is the system of Nazi extermination which Adorno (1998) proposes as a requirement in the formulation of a new concept of education. However, this idea, except in the resilient memory of the victims, did not capture the attention of Western society until the 1960s (Novick, 1999) when, for many reasons, it became a recurring theme, albeit narrated in an unsubstantiated, though dramatic, way as far as the genealogy of the phenomenon is concerned (Baer, 2004; Cuesta 2007).

In Spain, from the time the democratic system became consolidated (during the 1980s), the lengthy process beginning with the military coup of 1936 and the ensuing Civil War, which was inexorably linked to the prolonged Francoist dictatorship and what became known as a successful Transition Period, has been treated in an extremely unequal way. In the worlds of cinema and literature and even those of journalism and historiography, it has been dealt with prolifically. However, its treatment has been much vaguer, or even non-existent on certain issues, in the context of 'memory' policies (Aguilar, 1996) or in schools, both of which are fundamental areas for providing visibility to a phenomenon which coincides chronologically with the Nazi/Fascist apotheosis in the scenario leading up to World War II and set within the even lengthier context of violence which began with the preliminaries to the Great War of 1914.

It was not until the 1990s, and even then not in all cases, that information incorporating historiographic research began to appear in textbooks, making mention of political violence both in the war and during the dictatorship. The most recent textbooks are those which contain the most educationally relevant information, although this is almost without exception in material for students of higher education and not for those in compulsory education (Valls, 2007; Lamikiz, 2011). Textbooks are the most commonly-used tool in the classroom (Prats, 2012; Valcárcel, 2012) but, due to the fact that they are a market product, they tend to demonstrate apparent neutrality and attempt to avoid issues which may prove controversial in the present.

Nowadays, both within the context of Spain and internationally, the concept of historic memory has taken root to deal with and analyze the crimes committed by dictatorial systems from new perspectives. This is a problematic matter due to the fact that all dictatorships, with Franco's being no exception, succeed in obtaining and maintaining broad social support, which is difficult to quantify and to qualify. In addition, in the case of Spain, the successfully conceived idea of a consensus with the unquestioning support of the population during the transition process (1975–1982) has proved a burden, both in the classroom and in society as a whole, for the in-depth study and handling of a decisive period of Spanish history ranging from the political extermination carried out during and after the Civil War to the Transition itself. This Transition is frequently idealized as being a peaceful and harmonious process emerging from a generalized social consensus, but also hiding from view the difficulties of social struggles for democracy, the resistance to change of the Francoists and the figure of almost 600 deaths due to political violence from the death of Franco to 1983 (Sánchez Soler, 2010).

Bearing these special circumstances in mind and going beyond the question of textbooks, attention must be paid to the school curriculum. The inclusion of content relating to History and Social Sciences is usually formally justified, stating that they encourage the development of a critical mind and a civil conscience among pupils, thus teaching them to become citizens of a democratic society. However, content relating to the Civil War and the dictatorship, which could play a significant role in this area, have been swallowed up in the immensity of the Social Science curriculum to the point of becoming marginalized, or even trivialized. Although the aim may not be to deliberately hide them, they are given the same status as any other element of the curriculum and are located, both in high school and in elementary education, at the end of an extensive syllabus. To this situation can be added the fact that the teaching staff in elementary education are not specialized in these matters and in order to justify not going into detail, in many cases, the excuse is made that the pupils are too young to understand. All of these reasons make it difficult to introduce a subject which should be a part of the education system from elementary education onwards.

In order for the dictatorship and its crimes to be given more importance throughout the education system, taking into account the fact that the textbooks do not include the necessary

detail, it is advisable to provide the teaching staff with new perspectives focused on human rights and to move past the sterile debates which dominate the current panorama in Spanish society (accommodative narratives, amnesia and the struggle for an uncritical identity between the two sides which fought the Civil War).

This content and reflection should make an attempt to overcome the deficiencies pointed out by Valls (2006) and deal with both victims and perpetrators, breaking the taboos established during the Transition period, along the lines of the paper by Domínguez-Almansa and Santiago Arnosó (2014). As part of this process, victims should not be associated with either side in the conflict, especially concerning the killings committed by both sides in the rearguard. These victims should be dispossessed of the heroic role which has been conferred upon them in order to free them, on the one hand, from their false condition of the fallen for God and for Spain (the unquestioning acceptance of the fictitious discourse created by the victors) and on the other hand, from the none less false condition of heroes of democracy, willing to give up their lives for their ideals (an updated, and equally biased, discourse which is common among some sectors advocating the recuperation of historic memory). As an alternative, an explanation should be sought, based on critical research, for what led to this conversion to the state of victimhood and an updated vision of victims in today's society. Likewise, it is necessary to investigate/reflect on the perpetrators, taking into account the impunity of the crimes against humanity which were committed in the rearguards and, above all, in the revolt which led to the long dictatorship in which the violation of human rights was constant.

The aim here is not to go over this topic yet again, but to present a proposal, far removed from traditional methodologies and indoctrinating intentions, developed during the academic years of 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 with students in the last two years of their Elementary Education degrees in the Faculty of Teacher Training of the University of Santiago de Compostela (Lugo Campus). The proposal aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) That the students should discover within their immediate urban surroundings how invisible the victims of the political violence carried out by insurgents on the side of the 1936 military coup and its ensuing war have become in today's democratic society.
- 2) That the students should analyze the causes of this neglect by looking critically at the present, investigating the origins of this situation and suggesting alternative forward-looking proposals.
- 3) That as future teachers they should appreciate that this is an educationally relevant matter within the framework of compulsory education.
- 4) That the students should be able to design, or at least consider, activities to be used in their future teaching careers which aim to break down this invisibility via the use of both academic and emotional contents.

### **Discovering invisibility in the urban landscape: memories of the civil war and teacher training**

This proposal, although it was developed within the general framework of elementary education teacher training as part of a subject on the teaching of social sciences, has gained consolidation in different contexts.

During the first semester of the 2013–2014 academic year, following years of personal dedication to historiographic research in the area of the Civil War in Galicia and its place in collective memory, a brief experiment was carried out with an interactive group of third year students. This group comprised some 30 students, constituting a third of the total number of

students in the subject. This experiment consisted of investigating hidden memories of the most extreme violence perpetrated by the uprising army in the students' immediate surroundings.

The excellent reception received by this experiment, in an atmosphere which combined emotion and rationality, encouraged us to continue into the second semester, though this time with the whole of the fourth year divided into three interactive groups of approximately 30 members in each. The interest aroused by this activity was confirmed and this time, the students were asked to write (as a voluntary task) a report giving their opinion. Here follows an extract from the work of a 21-year-old student, which serves as an example:

... The way the Civil War is dealt with in books did not provoke any interest in me, as only names of people and dates of events are given. This did not satisfy me, nor did it encourage me to reflect on this barbarity.

Having learnt from this experience, the proposal was repeated the following year with students from the third year, although this time it was part of a project on landscape-heritage teaching, taken as a holistically conceived unit, breaking down preconceived ideas and over-used social representations regarding the conception of heritage resources (Dominguez-Alamansa and López Facal, 2014).

In this context, the students were asked to go outside in groups into the vicinity of a well-known hotel near the Faculty to interview people about what existed in that area in the past and if they knew if anything important had happened there. When they returned to class, after approximately forty minutes, practically all the groups had gathered information regarding the existence of an old cemetery, which disappeared during the 1970s. Practically all of the students who had grown up in Lugo had previous knowledge of this cemetery and they were told individually that the aim of their investigation transcended this fact. Others learnt that the area had also been the site of a garrison of the Civil Guard. A smaller number of students established, through asking elderly people whose families had told them of the war, that that place was where the 'Reds' had been killed. Indeed, that building, outside which they had been standing for some time, was built on the site where all the people put on military trial and condemned to death in the province of Lugo were executed. This occurred mainly between 1936 and 1937 against the walls of what was then the new barracks of the Civil Guard, adjacent to the cemetery, where they were buried ([www.nomes y voces.net](http://www.nomes.y.voces.net)). This information uncovered a universe of victims for the students. In Galicia, the number of deaths was in excess of 4000, making it one of the most affected areas of those dominated from the start by the insurgents (Fernández Prieto and Miguez Macho, 2014).

This discovery led to reflection on the contradictory memory of the city of Lugo, which, sheltered by a renovated Roman wall, exalts its Roman past and which, therefore, would probably celebrate the discovery of a mass grave of executed centurions. However, a much more recent mass grave with much greater impact on modern society remains invisible and forgotten. Taking advantage of the state of surprise and interest created by this discovery of a recent traumatic, and invisible, past, a debate was proposed in the class regarding whether this willing forgetfulness is necessary, why people wanted to forget, if the victims and the places where these events occurred could be considered to be elements of heritage and whether it is possible to seek a consensus on these matters.

In order for the students to be better able to evaluate the significance of all this, they were provided with historical documentation containing information on the military trials, documents in which only a truly fanatical person would be incapable of finding evidence of barbarity. As far as

socio-affective education is concerned, although the aim was evidently not only emotional, use was made of oral sources, hearing truly tragic testimony related mainly by people who are now elderly but were extremely young in 1936 (or who had not even been born). Finally, an extract from the documentary entitled *Coexist* (Mazo, 2010), on the genocide in Rwanda, was shown in order to provide a better understanding of the universality of the problem and its proximity in time. Two testimonies can be highlighted from this film: that of a relative of people who were killed, crying for the loss which cannot be forgotten and that of a confessed perpetrator who continually calls for the time to be forgotten and the page to be turned, justifying this in the name of a desired reconciliation.

Then a question was asked: On which side would we be in any of today's wars or armed conflicts? Rather than leading to debate, silence hung over the class denoting uncertainty, some gave vague answers and, after consideration, some answered 'on neither side!' What emerged was a sense of identification with the victims, with those killed, persecuted or tortured, those who were involuntary participants in the process. None of them chose this role, which is what makes it possible to identify with them and to be aware of the infinite injustice done to them, all of which is magnified by the policy of forgetfulness.

Introducing the Spanish Civil War and Francoism, with its universe of victims and perpetrators, into the classroom is not a pleasant experience for many sectors of Spanish society because, as shown by our experiment, it implies questioning the Transition Process on which the current state of law has been built and that this same process could be looked at from a more critical perspective. This criticism is aggravated by verifying that upon delving into their own memories, none of the teaching students was able to name a single victim of Francoism, neither from the 1936 coup, from the Civil War nor from those imprisoned, tortured or killed in the final years of the dictatorship.

The reactions in the classroom have demonstrated the potential of this methodology based on investigation, discovery and debate to produce motivation on this topic and its correlation with emotional education.

However, in addition to the value of what was expressed spontaneously and in the context of a group, as homework the students were asked to write an individual and anonymous narrative based on this experience and on their own ideas. They were asked to include their opinion of the experience, whether they would be prepared to include this topic in the elementary school classroom and if so, how they would carry this out and with what aim.

The attitude and response shown by the students in class about the investigative activity, along with the interest demonstrated regarding everything about human rights and issues relating to citizenship, allowed us to foresee narratives which would, on the whole, be receptive towards this topic. However, it was possible that the freedom provided by anonymity could give rise to divergent opinions which, for different reasons, were not expressed in public. In the end, the surprising result was that all of the narratives (75) defended the appropriateness, even the necessity, of dealing with this issue in the education system in order to mitigate and correct the prevailing policies of forgetfulness, which were considered by the students to be inappropriate. Some of the arguments are reproduced here to serve as examples<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> The students have been identified by a code which includes their sex, age and a number. For example, female students aged 20 have been referred to as AM20, 1; AM20, 2, etc. Male students of 20 years of age have been referred to as AH20, 1, etc.



As well as repression, one fundamental element of dictatorships is the imposition of forgetfulness. As democrats, it is a mistake to consider remembering as an act of revenge and forgetting as the recuperation of peace (AM20, 1)

Hiding this reality is almost as pitiful as wanting to hide envelopes full of money in briefcases or cars in your garage (AH20, 1)

The majority of the students also stated their surprise at finding out that scenes of these characteristics occurred immediately in front of the building where they studied:

The secrecy is such that, today, nobody knows that the old cemetery of Lugo was one of the 'killing fields' of Galicia. I have to say that I find it both funny and ironic that the Teacher Training Faculty lies immediately opposite the cemetery (AH20, 2)

Furthermore, the students tended to contrast this experience of discovering the invisible with their past as elementary pupils by considering that an activity such as this one would have proved extremely motivating in learning about a new topic, stating that an active method is more stimulating and giving themselves the objective of carrying out similar activities in their future teaching careers. Those planning to employ such activities in the future were inspired by a methodology in which the pupils are the protagonists, using relevant places or interviewing local people.

Although the students tended to highlight the victims as a point of reference, divergent opinions emerged regarding presenting the facts to their future pupils, with some considering that the topic should not be shown in such a bloody way or that it should be put off until the last stage of elementary education.

They also demonstrated aspects of truly ethical value, such as showing empathy towards victims regardless of their ideology:

In our education, the Civil War was studied, but not in an appropriate way...It was studied 'in passing', without stopping to think...Now we must be mature enough to confront our past, working in such a way that future generations will be made aware... (AH20, 3)

We should be taught from a young age the reasons why society is the way it is, not only from the point of view of one side or another, but we should be taught about the facts which led to people being killed during that period of history. (AH22, 1)

I would also make mention of certain things so that, thanks to having learnt about them, they will not happen again, I mean things like torture, summary executions, public humiliation, etc., in order to promote understanding and respect for different ways of thinking. (AH20, 2)

Furthermore, the students expressed their criticism of and indignation at the fact that they consider themselves victims of the hiding of a period of history which they take as being fundamental for understanding the present and, as a consequence, they assume their teaching career as an ethical commitment:

Francoism is still a relevant subject in Spain, an 'illness' which hasn't been cured, which we all keep secret 'just in case'. I ask myself, 'Just in case? Why?' (AH20, 2)

We have great power to transform this education system and to teach children things... There are many hidden places all over Spain which reflect the cruelty of that time...we should not forget this because if we do, we are committing a grave mistake. (AM20, 2)

If we, as teachers, do not show an interest in a subject such as this one, which concerns and affects us all, we will continue creating silent graves upon which hotels can be built. (AM26, 1)

### **Experiences in the elementary classroom: uncovering our surroundings and finding barbarity**

We shall now go on to describe two experiments which complement the work carried out with the teacher training students. They concern activities carried out in two consecutive academic years during the period of teaching practice. A project was designed and developed collaboratively by way of which the trainee teachers could help their elementary pupils discover undervalued and largely invisible aspects of their immediate surroundings.

In this context, the student teachers created, by themselves, a teaching program to be carried out in class with extremely positive results opening a path for elementary students to be able to identify with the landscape-heritage (Domínguez-Almansa and López Facal, 2014). Within the framework of this project, two of the students involved (one from the 2013–2014 academic year and another from 2014–2015), motivated by their previous experience and without any external influence, decided to make their pupils aware of the dramatic, brutal and unjust events surrounding the coup of 1936 and the Civil War in the areas around their schools, making use of school trips to do so. In the first case, the trainee teacher taught his pupils from the 4<sup>th</sup> year of elementary education that in that area there had been a mass execution of men and women, one of them a young girl who was very religious who was shot in retaliation for the fact that her brother had not been caught and had escaped. In the second case, in a granite landscape of unique geomorphological value and, therefore, susceptible to the configuring of heritage value, pupils in their 5<sup>th</sup> year of elementary education were taught that the area had served as a refuge for a group of people who, aware of the danger they were in, had fled to the hills, a common occurrence in many parts of Galicia at that time. This group of escapees managed to find in the rocks a means of subsisting until their tragic end at the hands of their pursuers.

Many aspects of these two experiences with elementary school pupils aged between nine and eleven from rural areas are deserving of mention.

Firstly, it has been noted that the subject of the Civil War does not awake special interest among school pupils. However, this situation changes when the treatment received by the victims is introduced, awakening the conscience of bearing witness to a special event. The pupils' capacity for empathy with victims of a not so distant past, which affected in one way or another the childhood of their grandparents, was made evident. As the trainee teacher (DP1) commented in his diary, the experience was extremely effective:

...the burden of values represented for them by the fact that several people were killed for political reasons or for their way of thinking was quite moving.

But without a doubt, the most interesting aspect was to see how the pupils were able to debate about and reflect on this barbarity, agreeing that nobody can be killed for their ideas or, as the pupils of the 4<sup>th</sup> year of elementary education (9 years of age) expressed in their own language: we all have the right 'to support one team, and whichever team you are on, nobody can kill you

for it' (DP). Both the teacher of the class and the trainee teacher, in addition to noting that the matter had deeply affected the pupils, expressed their surprise at how boys and girls of the 4<sup>th</sup> year were capable of 'reflecting so much and so well' (DP).

With this 4<sup>th</sup> year group, the teaching practice continued into the 5<sup>th</sup> year (10 years of age). This time, the main task was that the pupils themselves would organize a field trip with the aim of showing their landscape and heritage to their schoolmates from the 4<sup>th</sup> year and to create a wiki in order to interact with other schools carrying out similar projects regarding landscape-heritage. The trainee teacher, as several months had passed since the previous experience, decided, as a reminder, to point out the places they had visited together so that the pupils could evaluate whether they considered them important to show to the younger children. Regarding the site of the executions, the children had no doubt about including it as a place worthy of mention, proving with this decision their ability to emotionally evaluate certain places as worthy of being remembered and their ability to transmit this to other people, treating them as heritage elements with different meanings. The same interest in evaluating this knowledge and integrating it as another way of learning about the heritage of their surroundings was evident among the pupils of the other school.

The behavior of these elementary school pupils and their evaluations lead us to the formulation of a dilemma: is it necessary to make the Civil War and the dictatorship invisible or should they be used to strengthen the democratic values of a population which must have different aspirations to those who experienced the Transition? Can the victims and the places where they suffered become heritage sites which can help us to problematize the present by investigating the past and thinking about the future?

The results of these brief but intense experiences no doubt help to clear up the mystery. The pupils, in spite of their young age, at no time showed symptoms of being submitted to unnecessary anguish and torment but to an opportunity to think on barbarity. This is a thought which in their growing minds can give rise to the philosophy of 'never again' promoted by Adorno, which is not rooted in forgetfulness but in remembering, thus allowing us a history full of memories. In addition, as far as teaching is concerned, a climate of group participation was established in which everybody participated and, in this case, a unanimous intolerance for such attacks on human rights was expressed. This intolerance is the fruit of both individual and collective reflection via which the past has been able to be confronted, a past which calls out to their own human conscience, giving rise to words which are not banal with regard to a correct way of teaching such aspects as freedom, respect and justice, which we understand to be values forming part of the pupils' personal and, therefore, social life.

Furthermore, these two experiences have shown how pupils of such a young age are able to connect the past to the present with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the latter. In the case of the 4<sup>th</sup> year pupils (9 years of age), who used the comparison of having the right to belong to a team without their choice supposing a threat to others, there is the challenge of creating a better society in which respect for diversity reigns and a perspective of solidarity with the victims of barbarity is projected. These same pupils demonstrated this capacity to connect the past and the present in other scenarios. In their surrounding landscape-heritage, they went from disdaining a medieval tower due to its poor state of preservation, to valuing it as a site of interest upon finding out that it had been ruined, not due to time and abandonment, but due to a peasant revolt against the medieval nobility. It was a ruin caused as a result of a social struggle in which the pupils did not hesitate to put themselves into the shoes of those who would become victims of repression on the part of the nobility. What is more, in the next year, when they acted as guides for the pupils of the year below them and when they taught other

schools about their heritage, they identified this brotherhood of medieval peasants with the rural population today, with their own families and themselves.

### **Conclusions**

Through these complementary experiences we have attempted to present a new way of approaching a subject which is still the cause of conflict in Spanish society today. Use has been made of historical content relating to the War, the dictatorship and its memory, which has been badly digested, hidden and now questioned. It has not been taught in the context of specific teaching on the Civil War and Francoism but in the context of heritage, with the landscape as the main point of reference. Within this framework, a space for interaction and reflection has been created with learners (be they university students or elementary school children) facilitating a change in their initial conceptions (Dominguez-Almansa and López-Facal, 2014). An attempt has been made to create a more significant sense of identification with the surrounding area in which these sites appear, enhancing the value of all its potential heritage sites, which bear witness to a past full of victims.

We have opted for a different way of dealing with these significant sites and, taking the social approach of P. Nora (1992) as a starting point, have taken into account contributions of teaching experiences on dictatorships, conflicting memories and human rights, such as the recent work on Latin America by Toledo, Veneros & Magendzo, (2009) and the pioneering work on Spain by Rojo Ariza et al. (2014).

We are of the opinion that our proposal, which is methodologically inspired by both action research and emotional/socio-affective models, has given positive results, in that, through working in the learners' surroundings, unknown realities have been revealed which allow both social and educational problems to be raised, not only making learners more aware of their existence but also leading to that awareness inspiring transforming actions.

Of course, this awareness is extremely different in the cases of university students and elementary school pupils. However, both cases have served to uncover a universe of victims which, far from remaining hidden, should be considered part of a common heritage via which future generations can accept that to identify themselves with an executed person they cannot first ask about their affiliation. However, at the same time, this experience has enabled an uncomfortable feeling to emerge among the future teachers towards the political representatives holding the majority who impose and encourage the population to forget a dictatorship which accommodated key figures and sectors in the Spanish democratic process.

The results obtained from this experience encourage us not only to continue with it but also to deal with it in greater depth with new groups of teacher training students. The experience shows that students training to be elementary school teachers are becoming aware that it is necessary to integrate conflictive memories, which have their own history, into the classroom and, at the same time, they should express critical historical knowledge (Cuesta, 2000), which can help understand, deal with and transform problematic realities in the present. Furthermore, it has been shown that knowledge of the past is nothing cryptic for elementary school children, not even if that past needs to be rationalized via an educational process which forces them to become aware of the value of human rights in order to be able to start designing a critical and transforming education system.

### Correspondence

Ramon Lopez Facal  
email: [rfacal@me.com](mailto:rfacal@me.com)

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## IMPLEMENTING THE HISTORY CURRICULUM

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### TOWARD A GLOBAL PAST? THE PRESENCE OF WORLD HISTORY IN DUTCH HISTORY TEXTBOOKS AND HISTORY TEACHING

**Tim Huijgen**, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands  
**Henri Abbring**, Luzac College, Groningen, The Netherlands  
**Ronald Bokdam**, Dollard College, Oude Pekela, The Netherlands  
**Marije Brouwer**, Drachtster Lyceum, Drachten, The Netherlands  
**Durk-Rein Lolkema**, Topsport Talentschool, Groningen, The Netherlands  
**Fenneke Reinders**, RSG De Borgen, Leek, The Netherlands

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#### Abstract:

*History curricula of different European countries seem to emphasize national and European perspectives on the past. This might result in less attention given to world perspectives on historical phenomena and in less student understanding of present world issues and problems. Despite the importance of world history in History Education, not much is known about how Dutch History Education presents world perspectives on historical phenomena. The central aim of this study was to examine how world history is represented in contemporary Dutch history textbooks and how world history is taught to secondary school students. Using comparative textbook analysis, we examined the four most frequently used history textbooks in secondary education.*

*We found a very strong focus on European history in three textbooks. The four textbooks did not display a strong focus on national history. Subsequently, we examined teachers' views (n=99) on world history using a questionnaire. Most teachers in the sample found the formal history curricula and the textbooks they used to be strongly Eurocentric. They also characterized their lessons as Eurocentric and most teachers would like more opportunities to teach world history to their students.*

*Results of this study could be used by educational policy makers and schools to reshape history curricula. Furthermore, the study could help teachers to select their classroom material more critically and help to shape teachers' professional programs more to teachers' specific needs.*

#### Keywords:

European history, Dutch educational system, Dutch history textbooks, Global History, History curriculum, History Education, History teaching, Netherlands, Textbook research, World history

#### Introduction

When observing a history lesson, we heard a pre-university student (16 years old) asking her teacher why all her history lessons were only filled with Dutch and European history. "I do not get it, we live in the world, and not just in the Netherlands or in Europe. So why don't we learn more about the things that happened in other countries and other parts of the world?" A very good question and we were very curious what her teacher would answer, but the teacher only referred to the demands of the formal exam program and quickly continued the lesson.

Many countries seem to emphasize national perspectives on the past instead of providing world perspectives (Clark, 2009; Symcox & Wilschut, 2009). Grever, Haydn and Ribbens (2008) noted that many political leaders might be more interested in achieving national pride rather than creating a multi-perspective educational program for History Education. Furthermore, research indicates that in many European countries history textbooks are designed from a strong national and Eurocentric perspective and do not provide world perspectives of the past (e.g., Even-Zohar, 2007; Grever, Pelzer, & Haydn, 2011; Tosh, 2008).

In the last two decades, History Education in the Netherlands shifted from a strong emphasis on reasoning competencies towards more knowledge of the Dutch past. For example, in 2007 a Dutch historical canon was implemented by the Dutch government to provide an overview of what everyone ought to know about Dutch national history and culture. This canon consists of 50 chronological 'windows' about the Dutch past (Van Oostrom, 2007). Furthermore, plans were made for a national museum of Dutch history based on the *House of the German History* in Bonn. In 2007 a new history curriculum for elementary and secondary education was introduced in the Netherlands, which divided the history curriculum into ten chronological eras and 49 'characteristics' (Commissie Historische en Maatschappelijke Vorming, 2001). This new history curriculum was criticized by various scholars and history teachers because of its strong Eurocentric character (e.g., De Vries, 2007; Van Oudheusden, 2001; Polak, 2001).

This possible lack of a world perspective in different European history curricula and textbooks might be problematic for educating students to perform historical reasoning competencies and to participate in civil society. Different scholars stress the importance of world history and argue for the use of world history in History Education to promote students' reasoning competencies and citizenship. For example, Bentley (2005) noted that teaching world history seems to lead to a better student understanding of present world issues and problems. Grosvenor (2000) also advocates a multicultural approach to History Education in order to understand cultural diversity. Furthermore, world history might promote students' global citizenship displaying in students' care for people in distant places and their appreciation of the interconnectedness of peoples (Zhao, 2010). Barton and Levstik (2004) and Seixas (2007) argued that students should be taught more than their national histories to stimulate democratic citizenship and participation in our contemporary multicultural societies.

Despite the importance of world history in History Education, not much is known about how Dutch history textbooks and secondary school history teachers present world perspectives on historical phenomena. In this article, we therefore explore how Dutch history textbooks and history teachers present world history to secondary school students. We first describe the concept and importance of world history and discuss previous research on world history. Next, we present our research questions, our methods and results. We end with our conclusions, discuss our findings and provide practical implications for the teaching and learning of history.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **The concept of world history**

Global history, universal history or trans-national history are also synonyms used for world history (Mazlish, 1998; O'Brien, 2006). We chose to use the term world history since this is the most common term in literature. World history started as a sub-field of history in the 1980s (Gran, 2009). The World History Association (WHA) defines world history as 'macro history, trans-regional, transnational and transcultural'. Furthermore, the WHA (2015) argues that:

Although it is important for students of world history to have a deep and nuanced understanding of each of the various cultures, states, and other entities that have been part of the vast mosaic of human history, the world historian stands back from these individual elements in that mosaic to take in the entire picture, or at least a large part of that picture.

To further define world history, O'Brien (2006) distinguishes two forms of historical analysis that can be used to study world history. One of them is the model of *connexions* (e.g., McNeill & McNeill, 2004) in which historical research and education focus on the webs of connexions between cultures, continents and countries around the world. The second model is the one in which history is studied in a *comparative* way (e.g., Ragin, 1987; Bin Wong, 1997). Studying characteristics of time which are found in different places in the world and which "exhibit comparable, but, more importantly, dissimilar geographical, economic, political and social features in other places" (O'Brien, 2006, p. 3).

### **The importance of world history**

Different scholars agree that world history (using the model of connexions or performing comparative historical analyses) could contribute to important students' competencies, such as becoming world citizens, performing disciplined inquiry, understanding the connection between the past and present, expressing historical empathy and understanding multiple perspectives (Merryfield, 2008; Zhao, 2010).

Furthermore, some scholars argue that world history can promote students' motivation for History Education. Students' interest in the history of other parts of the world is highly understandable in a society that is characterized by its rapid globalisation and where borders between countries hardly play a role in digital and normal life (Clark, 2009; Girard & McArthur Harris, 2013). A very strong focus on national or continental history in History Education might cause students' demotivation since 'recent attempts to revive history in primarily national terms may result in a model of school history that many students consider irrelevant' (Grever, Pelzer, & Haydn, 2011).

### **World history in classrooms**

The call to include more world history in the classrooms is not new. H. G. Wells (1920) already argued in *The Outline of History* for including world history in secondary school education as the basis for a world community with an understanding for each other's values and beliefs. However, recently the attention for world history in the teaching and learning of history has increased including incorporating subjects as 'Big history' (where world history is taught from the beginning of the world toward the present) in school curricula (Christian, 2004; Spier, 2010). Furthermore, different organizations provide lesson examples for teachers who want to include world history in their lessons.

The Stanford History Education Group (2016) provides different lesson samples on world history related to their *Reading Like a Historian* project. The Annenberg Foundation (2016) developed the *Bridging World History Project*, which consists of different lessons that provide a world-view on historical phenomena. For example, there is a lesson on the concept of industrialisation in a global context. Focusing on the Industrial Revolution students learn that this was not only a European process, but also a global affair and students learn to understand how industrialization caused increased global inequality. The Annenberg Foundation also developed the *World History Traveller*, which can be used to learn more about the patterns and processes that make up world history. The National Centre for History in the Schools (2016) also provides lessons focusing on world history. For example, one lesson is about the consequences of the Cold War regarding the Third World, not only to develop an understanding

of the ideologies of the United States and the Soviet Union among students, but also to contribute to understanding the impact of the Cold War on other countries. Euroclio (2016) also provides in their *Historiana* project different learning materials which promote multi-perspective taking on historical phenomena. Also in the Netherlands there is a project group of the Dutch Association for History Teachers working on different good practices which focus on world history.

### **The teaching of world history**

Despite the increased attention given to world history and the development of classroom material focusing on this subject, not much is known about how Dutch history textbooks and history teachers present and promote world history. Some studies have been conducted on the teaching and learning of world history (e.g. Bain & Harris, 2009; Thornton, 2010) but almost no research focused on world history in the Dutch context. Pingel and Boitsev (2000) examined how the concept of Europe was represented in history textbooks from different countries, including textbooks from the Netherlands. Kleppe (2013) examined the quantity and quality of photographs in Dutch history textbooks. Van der Vlies (2014) focused on national narratives in Dutch and English history textbooks between 1920 and 2010 and De Baets (1994) focused in his book on the representation of the Third World in Flemish history textbooks.

Even-Zohar (2007) is the only one who investigated how world history was represented in Dutch history textbooks in his Masters thesis. He focused on the period between 1975 and 2005 and concluded that Dutch history textbooks generally provide a national and European perspective on the past. Furthermore, he stated that when textbooks present world history, often topics related to the Dutch past, such as the colonization of Suriname and the Dutch West-Indies, were centralized and presented from a Dutch perspective. However, important questions remain such as how world history is included in current Dutch history textbooks and how world history is used in the teaching of history in Dutch classrooms.

### **Research questions**

To explore the role of world history in Dutch secondary History Education, we specified two research questions:

1. How is world history represented in contemporary Dutch history textbooks?
2. How do history teachers in secondary schools teach world history to their students?

Analysing history textbooks could provide useful insights, because textbooks are still considered the dominant translation of the curriculum in schools and the most widely used resource for teaching and learning (Foster & Crawford, 2006; Pingel, 1999).

However, recently more attention is drawn on the classroom context in history textbook research. How do teachers use textbooks in their classrooms? What are their views and opinions? Including this context could provide valuable information for answering research questions. The addition of a teachers' questionnaire could provide important information about teachers' views and attitudes towards world history as a conception of history teaching (Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillon, 2010).



## Method

### Research design

To answer our first research question, we selected the four most used history textbooks in Dutch History Education and created a coding scheme to conduct horizontal textbook analysis (Nicholls, 2003; Pingel, 1999). To answer our second research question, we used guidelines of Colton and Colvert (2007) and developed a digital questionnaire consisting of five categories (curricula, textbook, teaching, students' ability and teachers' views) and 25 items to examine how history teachers use world history in their lessons and what they think of the usefulness of world history. The items could be scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'I strongly disagree' to 'I strongly agree'. Items included were, for example: 'I use world history in classroom discussions' and 'The national exam program has a strong Eurocentric focus'. The complete questionnaire was tested in two expert panel discussions for face and content validity before collecting responses. Based on the expert's comments, some items were replaced, rephrased or deleted.

### The Dutch educational system

In the Netherlands the educational system makes a distinction between elementary and secondary school. All elementary and secondary schools are under the jurisdiction of the Dutch Inspection of Education that monitors the educational quality. At the age of around 12, children make the transition from elementary school to secondary school. For the first time there is a differentiation towards educational levels: vmbo (pre-vocational education), havo (general higher secondary education) and vwo (pre-university education). The duration of these educational levels are set to respectively four, five and six years. The first years (lower secondary education) all students follow the same subjects, like English, math, geography and history. After these years students switch to upper secondary education and make a choice for subjects they wish to follow.

### The Dutch history curriculum

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the subject of history received a place in the Dutch elementary and secondary education curricula (Wilschut, 2010). In the 1960s and 1970s politicians and society stated that History Education was not suitable for the changes arising with the modern age. More emphasis was laid on the development of critical thinking skills. However, in the 1990s History Education shifted toward more focus on content overview knowledge. This tendency started when a Dutch magazine tested some Dutch politicians for their historical knowledge of the Dutch national past. The average results were dramatic: most politicians answered only six out of 15 questions correctly. This outcome started a public debate about the purpose and function of History Education and resulted in the advice to implement more (national) historical content knowledge in the history curricula. In 2007 a new history curriculum was implemented consisting of 1) historical overview knowledge (divided in ten chronological periods with 49 'characteristics' and historical reasoning competencies. In 2014 four historical 'contexts' were added to the ten chronological periods. These contexts are historical topics, described in detail, about the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century, The Enlightenment, Germany between 1870 and 1945, and the Cold War.

### History textbook sample

History textbooks do not need permission from the Dutch government to be published and to be used in schools. Schools are free to choose which textbooks they want to use. In the Netherlands there are four large educational publishers for history textbook research: Noordhoff Bv (Geschiedeniswerkplaats), Tieme-Meulenhoff (Feniks), Malmberg (Memo) and Walberg Pers Educatief (Sprekend Verleden). These four textbooks are used by approximately 95% of

the history teachers in the Netherlands (Van der Kaap, 2014). For answering the first research question, we selected the four most used history textbooks for upper secondary education in the Netherlands. See Table 1 for further details.

TABLE 1. History textbook sample

<i>History Textbook</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>Publisher</i>
Geschiedeniswerkplaats	2014	Noordhoff
Feniks	2014	Tieme-Meulenhoff
Memo	2014	Malmberg
Sprekend Verleden	2014	Walberg Pers Educatief

### Teacher sample

The digital questionnaire was filled in by 103 history teachers. In total, there are 1,785 history teachers with a Masters Degree and 3,944 history teachers with a Bachelors Degree working in the Netherlands (Dutch Ministry of Education, 2011). Four questionnaires were excluded from further analysis because of missing data, yielding 99 questionnaires in total. See Table 2 for further information about the teachers' qualifications. Furthermore, most teachers in the sample had less than 10 years working experience (53%), 28% of the teachers had between 10 and 20 years working experience, and 19% had more than 20 years of work experience. We also asked the teachers which history textbooks they used in their classrooms. Most teachers in the sample used Feniks (40%), Geschiedeniswerkplaats was used by 35%, Memo by 18%, and Sprekend Verleden by 10%. Some teachers used two history textbooks at the same time in one classroom.

TABLE 2. Teacher sample (n=99)

<i>Teachers' qualification</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Master qualification	70	71%
Bachelor qualification	14	14%
Student teacher	13	13%
Other	2	2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>100%</i>

### Data analysis

First, to answer our first research question, we used a horizontal textbook analysis of the four selected textbooks since we were not interested in a development in time (Pingel, 2010). We performed a quantitative analysis focusing on the space devoted to world history in the selected textbooks. A coding scheme was created to structure the quantitative analysis. In our coding scheme we created five categories:

- 1) the total wordage of text,
- 2) text referring to the Dutch national past,
- 3) text referring to the past of the Netherlands in combination with the past of Europe, 4) text referring to the past of Europe and

5) text referring to world history.

See Table 3 for further details. We define the category of world history as text that does not focus on Dutch or European history but on history of other parts of the world.

The textbooks were analysed by looking at four criteria: text devoted to the five categories, historical agents, in-text questioning and historical sources. The coding was done by four of the authors who all hold a Masters Degree in the field of history combined with a Masters Degree in History Education. First, every paragraph of the textbook was scored and based on these scores the chapter and whole textbook scores were calculated. Two discussion sessions with all authors were organized to minimize inter-rater bias.

TABLE 3. Categories of the coding schema

Categories	Description
1. Total wordage of text	The number of words in paragraphs, chapters and the whole history textbook
2. Dutch history	Text focusing on only Dutch history such as the rise of a Dutch political party
3. Dutch and European history	Text focusing on Dutch and European history, such as the Dutch role in European political cooperation
4. European history	Text focusing on European history, such as the start of the First World War
5. World history	Text focusing on history of other parts of the world, such as science in China

## Results

### Textbook analysis

To answer our first research question, we present the results from our horizontal textbook analysis in Table 4. We calculated absolute and relative numbers to provide an overview as clear as possible. The results indicate that *Geschiedeniswerkplaats*, *Feniks*, and *Memo* have a very strong focus on European history. For example, these textbooks have a mean of 57% of the total text dedicated to European history. The choice of historical agents also illustrates the focus on European history: more than 62% of the total number of historical agents in these textbooks are European historical agents. In *Memo* even 72% of the historical agents are European.

Furthermore, when examining the graphical sources more than 52% is a European historical source in the three textbooks. *Sprekend Verleden* contains the most world history compared to the other textbooks, with the in-text questions as an exception with 25% of these questions dedicated to world history compared to 36% of the in-text questions of *Geschiedeniswerkplaats*. Besides the in-text questions and the historical agents, the text, the written sources and the graphical sources displayed a focus on world history.

The presence of Dutch history in the four textbooks is interesting. When examining the text dedicated to Dutch history in the four textbooks, a mean of 13% of the text is dedicated

to Dutch history compared to a mean of 25% of the text dedicated to world history. *Memo* (10%) and *Sprekend Verleden* (9%) displayed the least text dedicated to Dutch history. *Geschiedeniswerkplaats* and *Feniks* contain more national historical sources compared to historical sources, which represent world history. Furthermore, not much text in the textbooks is dedicated to the role of the Netherlands in Europe. *Sprekend Verleden* focused the most on the role of the Netherlands in Europa compared to the other textbooks.

**TABLE 4.** Comparative analysis of the four history textbooks

History textbook	Dutch history		Dutch and European history		European history		World history		Total	
<i>Geschiedeniswerkplaats</i>										
Text	10.925	16%	5.668	8%	39.976	57%	13181	19%	69.750	100%
Historical agents	46	17%	15	5%	170	62%	43	16%	274	100%
In-text questioning	0	0%	0	0%	7	64%	4	36%	11	100%
Witten sources	3	37.5%	0	0%	3	37.5%	2	25%	8	100%
Graphical sources	50	24%	11	6%	107	52%	37	18%	205	100%
<i>Feniks</i>										
Text	11.875	18%	3.763	6%	36.127	56%	13067	20%	64.832	100%
Historical agents	65	17%	30	8%	253	65%	38	10%	386	100%
In-text questioning	0	0%	0	0%	8	100%	0	0%	8	100%
Witten sources	29	19%	5	3%	93	59%	29	19%	156	100%
Graphical sources	60	21%	13	5%	162	58%	46	16%	281	100%
<i>Memo</i>										
Text	6.235	10%	5.455	9%	34.345	57%	14.177	24%	60.212	100%
Historical agents	25	11%	11	5%	160	72%	27	12%	223	100%
In-text questioning	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	100%
Witten sources	33	17%	9	5%	93	49%	56	29%	191	100%
Graphical sources	28	16%	4	2%	96	55%	47	27%	175	100%
<i>Sprekend Verleden</i>										
Text	13.171	9%	35.513	25%	38.599	28%	52.580	38%	139.863	100%
Historical agents	45	11%	24	6%	183	44%	165	39%	417	100%
In-text questioning	2	6%	8	22%	17	47%	9	25%	36	100%
Witten sources	4	36%	1	9%	1	9%	5	46%	11	100%
Graphical sources	73	21%	52	15%	48	14%	167	49%	340	100%

### History teaching

To answer our second research question, we present, in Table 5, the mean scores of the questionnaire' items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The highest scores were obtained on items reflecting the Eurocentric character of the formal history curricula. For example, the items 1 to 5 obtained a score  $\geq 4.00$ . In the pre-university track there is more space for world history compared to the general higher secondary education track (items 4 and 6). Most teachers in the sample also have the opinion that their history textbook has a Eurocentric character (item 7) and teachers do not use many additional resources to teach world history (item 8).

TABLE 5. Mean scores on the questionnaires' items (n=99)

Category	Items	Mean score
Curricula	1. The four historical contexts have an Eurocentric character	4.19
	2. The ten eras of the exam program have a Eurocentric characters	4.16
	3. The exam program has a Eurocentric character	4.13
	4. There is little space for world history in the general higher secondary education exam program	4.12
	5. The 49 characterises have a Eurocentric character	4.00
	6. There is little space for world history in the pre-university exam program	3.73
Textbook	7. The history textbook I use has an Eurocentric character	3.99
	8. Besides the history textbook I use additional resources for teaching world history	2.79
Teaching	9. When teaching the four historical contexts my lessons have a Eurocentric character	3.97
	10. Most of my lessons have a Eurocentric character	3.91
	11. When teaching the ten eras my lessons have a Eurocentric character	3.78
	12. In my lessons I teach recent world phenomena	3.53
	13. In my lessons I teach world history	3.51
	14. In my vwo lessons I teach more world history compared to my havo lessons	3.26
	15. In upper secondary education I teach more world history compared to lower secondary education	3.14
	16. In upper secondary education students work on world history assignments	3.13
	17. I use classroom discussions to teach world history	2.88
	18. In lower secondary education students work on world history assignments	2.71
	Students' ability	19. My students know that people's views are time and space bound
20. My students know that the Western time categorization is subjective		3.57
21. My students learn enough about world history		2.70
Teachers' views	22. It is important to teach world history, because we live in a time of globalization	3.86
	23. I would like to teach more world history in my lessons	3.60
	24. I would like to give a course focusing on the interaction between people all over the world	3.36
	25. Students could not master historical reasoning competencies when world history is not taught to them	2.66

Note: Items were shown in random order



Furthermore, when examining how the teachers think about their teaching, most teachers display the opinion that their lessons have a Eurocentric character (items 9 to 11). Students in lower secondary education seem to work less with world history assignments compared to students in upper secondary education (items 15, 16, and 18). Most teachers view their students as capable of explaining that people's views are time and space bound (item 19) and that Western time categorization is subjective (item 20). Many teachers want to teach more world history (item 22, 23, and 24) and they think that this is important due to globalization (item 21). Interestingly, many teachers in the sample think that without teaching world history in classrooms students might be able to master historical reasoning competencies (item 25), such as perspective taking and working with historical sources.

### Conclusion and Discussion

The central aim of this study was to examine how world history is represented in contemporary Dutch history textbooks and how world history is taught to secondary school students. Using comparative textbook analysis, we examined the four most used history textbooks in secondary education. In three textbooks there was a very strong focus on European history. This is in line with research conducted by Evan-Zohar (2007) on Dutch history textbooks. One textbook (*Sprekend Verleden*) displayed a focus on world history when examining the number of text, written sources, and graphical sources dedicated to world history. The textbooks, in general, did not focus much on Dutch history and the Dutch role in Europe. This is an interesting finding, because different scholars emphasize that governments of European countries are trying to influence history curricula to provide more national history (e.g., Symcox & Wilschut, 2009; Tosh, 2008).

Using a teachers' questionnaire, we explored how world history is taught to secondary school students. Most teachers in the sample found the history curriculum very Eurocentric and did not include much world history in their lessons. In the highest educational track (pre-university education) there seems to be more opportunities to teach world history compared to the lower educational track (general higher secondary education). This finding is not surprising since pre-university education lasts an extra year, while the demands of the formal exam program do not differ too much. Most teachers also want to teach more world history and despite the possible absence of world history in their teaching, most teachers did think that their students could master historical reasoning competencies such as historical perspective taking. It would be interesting to conduct intervention studies in future research to examine if teaching world history could promote specific historical reasoning competencies as described by Van Drie and Van Boxtel (2008). Some scholars stress this point (e.g., Barton & Levstik, 2004; Bentley, 2005), but empirical evidence is still missing.

We must acknowledge the following limitations of our study. We only included the four most used history textbooks. However, some teachers might use additional (own developed) textbooks and we did not include this in our textbook analysis. To answer our second research question, we only used a teacher questionnaire while the addition of other research methods could provide valuable insights (Kyriakides, 2008). Future research should include student questionnaires, teacher and student (semi-structured) interviews, and classroom observations. Furthermore, our teacher sample included 99 history teachers who worked in the Netherlands. Future research should also examine if the same views are also present among teachers when the sample is enlarged.

Since different scholars argue that world history could contribute to democratic citizenship and important historical reasoning competencies (e.g., Merryfield, 2008; Zhao, 2010) it is important

to view historical phenomena not solely from a national or European view. Students should be provided with opportunities to practice multi-perspective taking, not only within their own country or continent but worldwide. Since history textbooks do not provide much of these opportunities, teachers might include other texts and student tasks focusing on world history in their teaching. Teacher education programs could provide support for teachers who want to develop such tasks. A good example might be using the website *OurWorldInData.org*. This website with interactive maps and timelines could be used to design student assignments on viewing terrorism from a world historical perspective (Nagdy & Roser, 2015).

To conclude, if Europeans are seen as ‘the makers of history’ (e.g. Blaut, 2012) it could be dangerous to teach students to participate in discussions and civil life. As our study illustrates, teachers should be aware of their choices when teaching history and critically select their classroom material to teach students historical reasoning competencies and to participate in civil life. We should remember, George Orwell (1949) who noted in his book *1984*: “He who controls the present controls the past. And he who controls the past controls the future”.

#### Correspondence:

Tim Huijgen  
[t.d.huijgen@rug.nl](mailto:t.d.huijgen@rug.nl)

Department of Teacher Education  
Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences  
University of Groningen  
Grote Kruisstraat 2/1 9712 TS Groningen  
Phone: 003150 363 9195  
Fax: 003150 363 6614

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## **'THE REVOLUTION IS NOT OVER YET' – GERMAN SPEAKING NINTH GRADERS' CONCEPTIONS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

**Christian Mathis**, School for Teacher Education, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Northwestern Switzerland, Liestal

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### **Abstract:**

*This study applies the Model of Educational Reconstruction (MER) to history. A key assumption of the MER is that, by having a more intimate knowledge of the students' prior knowledge, the curriculum developer can create a curriculum content that can be taught in accordance with the learners' prior knowledge, i.e. the French Revolution and the second-order concept 'change/continuity'. Three areas of research are being addressed.*

*Firstly, a hermeneutical analysis of the content structure and the concepts behind it make it possible to clarify scientifically the subject matter, i.e. the scientific clarification.*

*Secondly, empirical investigations of the learners' conceptions concerning the subject matter, allow for a better comprehension of the students' perspectives. Thirdly, in educational structuring, the structure of the subject matter is gained by relating the students' conceptions with the scientific concepts.*

*The empirical data is gathered from German-speaking Swiss 9th-graders (N=22) by the means of group discussions and problem-centred interviews. The data has been evaluated using a reconstructive qualitative method. Twelve typical patterns of explanation have been reconstructed, e.g. 'order and stability' or 'freedom of expressing opinions'. These patterns of explanation are constructed in an everyday sense and not according to academic history. A super-pattern called 'presentism' could be isolated which interferes with all other patterns, thus obstructing the students' academic historical thinking. One consequence is that teachers should act as cognitive models and guide their students with purposeful scaffolding to proper historical thinking which avoids presentism.*

### **Keywords:**

Historical thinking, Conceptions, Pre-concepts, Conceptual change, Model of Educational Reconstruction (MER), Prior knowledge, Second-order concepts, Switzerland

### **Introduction**

During the last 200 years, the word 'revolution' has fired people's imagination about what might be a better and more just world. However, for the academic community of historians, the French Revolution was and still is a topic of controversial ideological ideas and polarising patterns of interpretation. It is a topic involving cognitive and intellectual dimensions. (Pelzer, 2004, p. 14). For Günther-Arndt (1997, p. 11), the French Revolution is not buried in the archives yet. It lives on in collective memories, which can be seen from how it is dealt with in the 'national autobiographies' with its plurality of conceptions of history (i.e. Geschichtsbilder). Twenty years ago, Riemenschneider (1994) showed that globally, the French Revolution was a compulsory topic in almost every curriculum. More recent empirical research on national narratives shows

that the revolutionary era around 1800 plays an important part in students' national narratives (Carretero, 2015).

### **Background and framework**

For the last thirty years, German speaking research on history education has focused both theoretically and empirically on elaborating the concept of historical consciousness (Pandel, 1987; Schreiber et al., 2006). An interesting large quantitative study opened up new perspectives on history education (Angvik/von Borries, 1997). Apart from this, there are only a few studies in the field of teaching and learning history. In the years that followed, the lack of qualitative research on historical learning, thinking and understanding has been criticized (Beilner, 2003; Sauer, 2004; Günther-Arndt, 2006; Günther-Arndt & Sauer, 2006). Influenced by European and Anglo-Saxon studies on historical learning and reasoning on history (e.g. Lee & Ashby 2000; Stearns, Seixas & Wineburg, 2000; Wineburg 2001; Limón, 2002), a more psychological orientated research on historical cognition has come forth and tries to answer these critics (Kölbl 2004; Zülsdorf-Kersting 2007; Meyer-Hamme, 2009; Martens 2010; Lange 2011; Stöckle 2011; Mathis 2015).

### **Learning as conceptual enrichment or conceptual change**

Historical knowledge is mentally constructed. These constructions are based on traces of the human past (artefacts and relics) and accounts of the human past (Rüsen, 2013). As the past is gone and not accessible, meaningful statements about it are only possible through 'logically' constructed narratives (Straub, 1998). Psychologically speaking, history is a complex and poorly structured knowledge domain and historical knowledge will always remain fragmentary and a question of perspective. Thus, the learning of history is not easy.

Yet, problems and difficulties that students may have with historical learning are not only due to the structure of historical knowledge or the historical phenomenon, but have a lot to do with deep-rooted (pre-) conceptions and epistemological presuppositions (Günther-Arndt, 2014). Newly acquired knowledge has to be meaningfully linked to existent knowledge by the learner (Günther-Arndt & Sauer, 2006, p. 9).

As Seixas and Morton (2013) point out, it is the structure of a discipline that constitutes the way we look at the world. History, as a discipline, is characterised by a set of closely related core issues. The English researcher, Peter Lee (1983, p. 25) called them 'structural second order concepts or 'meta-historical concepts. Limón (2002, p. 264) underlines their importance as follows: 'The way in which these meta-concepts are defined and understood forms the basis of historical knowledge.' Therefore, the interactions between the topic knowledge and the second-order concepts for the historical reasoning have to be emphasised. Without addressing these core issues, we could neither begin to think historically nor become better experts.

One of these second-order concepts is 'change and continuity'. It is closely related to 'cause and consequences'. If historians try to explain the past, they look for explanations for change by identifying causes. They most probably search for historical figures and their intentions. So their explanations will partly be made out of intentional causes (Lee, 1983, p. 36). Conversely, the way we address them shapes our historical thinking', as Seixas (1996, p. 765) argues. Therefore, a more intimate knowledge of the learners' views, their prior knowledge or pre-conceptions, is crucial for a more adequate teaching.

The goal of teaching according to the idea of 'conceptual change' is to help learners abandon their own everyday notions in favour of the 'appropriate' scientific ones. Furthermore, Solomon

(1993) supposed that alternative student concepts would only exist in an area of real life and the concepts of science in a symbolic area. Successful learning takes place for him when the student manages to connect the two areas. Caravita and Halldén (1994) also pointed out, that learning often means to conceptualize the world in an alternative way. The possibilities in setting the environment in different contexts or rather looking at the world from different perspectives should therefore be encouraged (see Halldén, 1997, p. 201; Barton/Levstik 2004, pp. 1-24; Günther Arndt, 2014).

Historical knowledge can be considered to be organised hierarchically, i.e. from concepts to conceptions and to patterns of explanation (Caravita & Halldén, 1994) (see TABLE 2). Concepts and conceptions organise the knowledge, whereas patterns of explanation shape the way concepts and conceptions are perceived and organised (Mathis, 2015).

The cognitive approach is challenged by 'situated cognition' and 'socio-cultural approaches' (Halldén, 1998, p. 272f.; Barton, 2001; Barton, 2008). One theoretical assumption is the distinction of two systems or contexts of knowledge: firstly, naive knowledge (or everyday knowledge) that derives from everyday experiences and secondly, scientific or academic knowledge, which is the result of a systematic coordination of theory and experience (Günther-Arndt, 2006, p. 253).


In order to distinguish the psychologically functional differentiation at various conception levels, a sociological distinction is added in two qualitative different knowledge systems. Schütz and Luckmann (2003) distinguish two different areas of knowledge: the first level (first order) describes the everyday constructions of reality, often referred to as common knowledge within conceptual change research. Learners acquire their everyday worldly knowledge by addressing the living environment in real situations; it is therefore rooted in experience and originates from a pragmatic motivation. Everyday knowledge is subject related and provides subjective meaning. The individual gives it an integral character, i.e transfers it to other real situations. (see TABLE 1)

TABLE 1. Two contexts of knowledge (Mathis, 2015, pp. 22-23 after Caravita & Halldén, 1994; Günther-Arndt, 2014)

<i>Everyday knowledge</i>	<i>Academic, scientific historical knowledge</i>
– biographical (experience)	– constructed (reflective)
– mix of believing-wondering-knowing	– knowledge based on evidence
– authenticity	– logic
– rules of the interacting persons	– institutionalised rules
– routine actions	– reflective actions
– knowledge badly organised	– knowledge systematically organised
– appropriateness	– search for truth
– assurance	– discourse
– avoid doubt and incertitude	– make doubt and incertitude visible
– intentional understanding	– theoretical understanding

Scientific structures differ from everyday normality. According to Schütz and Luckmann (2003, p. 239f.), scientific knowledge is a construction of the second degree (= second order) because it is constructed by real life structures (first degree = first order). Scientific knowledge arises from a theoretical motivation. In contrast to everyday knowledge, scientific historical knowledge is fundamentally systematized, with a focus on history and the past, or domain-specific. This leads to a schematic exposition of historical knowledge with two axes, i.e. with different hierarchical levels of cognitive representation and a range between everyday and academic historical knowledge (see TABLE 2).

TABLE 2 Schematic exposition of historical conceptions (Mathis, 2015, p. 37)

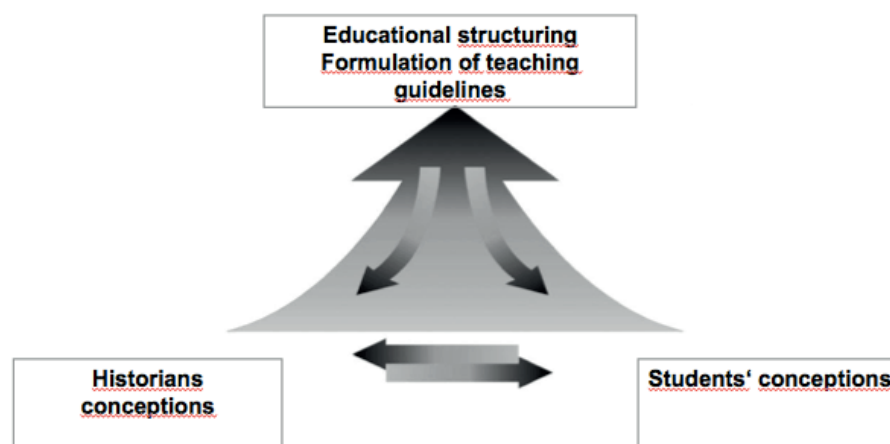
Conceptions of everyday life		Conceptions of academic history
	pattern of explanation <i>second order</i>	
	pattern of explanation <i>first order</i>	
	conceptions	
concepts		

## The Study

### The Model of Educational Reconstruction

My research is based on the Model of Educational Reconstruction (Duit et al., 2012). A key assumption of the model is that, by having a more intimate knowledge of the students' prior knowledge, the curriculum developer can create curriculum content which is more adequate to the student's understanding of the subject, i.e. the French Revolution and the second-order concept "change/continuity" (Mathis, 2015). Three areas of research are being addressed within the model (see TABLE 3). Firstly, a hermeneutical analysis of the content structure and the concepts behind it allow one to clarify the subject matter scientifically i.e. the *scientific clarification*. Secondly, *empirical investigations* of the learners' conceptions concerning the subject matter, allow for a better comprehension of the students' perspectives. Thirdly, in *educational structuring*, the structure of the subject matter is gained by relating the students' conceptions with the scientific concepts. Thus, subjects can be taught in accordance with the learners' prior knowledge. These three areas will be handled in an iterative procedure, i.e. not one after another but as a steady and systematic comparison (Reinfried, Mathis & Kattmann 2009; Duit et al., 2012).

TABLE 3. The Model of Educational Reconstruction



#### Clarification of the subject matter

Soon after the French Revolution, historical research concerning this historical event started and the amount of historical interpretations to date are astounding. Nevertheless, three different traditions of interpretation on the French Revolution can be distinguished. Firstly, there are the liberal historians. They give emphasis to the constitution, political liberty (as the liberty of expression for example) and equality before the law. Secondly, there are the Marxist historians. They emphasise the economic causes, class struggle and emancipation of unprivileged people. Thirdly, there can be distinguished the Revisionists. They reject the Marxist view of history and focus mainly on cultural causes.

Of course, the traditions of interpretation either correspond or coincide with the foci and perspectives chosen by the historians. The preference for a particular school of interpretation guides the research question and the historical focus of the historian on the French Revolution. Here are examples of three different perspectives: the political, the socio-economic and the cultural history approach.

Therefore, history always has a perspective. And none of these historical points of view are able to explain the French Revolution adequately or sufficiently.

However, historians and students have to choose a perspective to explain and to reflect this point of view, i.e. this choice should be made clear, because it determines the explanation and narration of the historical event.

#### Research questions, methods and sample

In the empirical area of my study, I address the following questions: What conceptions do students have of the French Revolution and which 'theories', patterns of explanation, or mental models do they use to narrate the French Revolution? What kind of quality do their conceptions have? Furthermore, I am analysing their conceptions of the second-order concept 'change and continuity' and whether (and how) this second-order concept is of any importance for their historical thinking.



The empirical data is gathered from German-speaking Swiss 9th graders (n=22) – Swiss grammar school, i.e. the most academic type of school – on the basis of four group discussions (Bohnsack, 2010) and six individual problem centred interviews (Witzel & Reiter, 2012). The two methods are meant to be complementary in the sense of a ‘between methods triangulation’ (see Denzin 1989, pp. 237-241).

The data has been evaluated using a reconstructive qualitative method (Straub, 1999; Kölbl, 2004). This process will be supported by atlas.ti® software.

### Findings

When asked what comes to mind, when thinking about the French Revolution, Paula immediately answered with an ironic undertone, ‘Someone was decapitated then, wasn’t he?’ Of course, this statement should not be overstressed, but it still demonstrates what first comes to some students’ minds, which is the violent period of the French Revolution, with the decapitation of thousands of people. Indeed, it is the period called ‘The Terror’, that lasted from 1793 to 1794, which irritates historians and continues to divide the scientific community today.

Besides that, twelve typical patterns of explanation have been reconstructed (see TABLE 4). These patterns of explanation are constructed in an everyday sense and not according to historical science or academic history. A pattern called ‘presentism’ could be seen as a ‘super-pattern’ which interferes with all other patterns, thus obstructing students’ academic historical thinking (see Halldén, 1997; Halldén, 1998; Kölbl, 2004). It can be observed that present day values, beliefs, schemata and ideologies “are applied to the past without taking into account that they were different at that time” (Limón, 2002, p. 281).

TABLE 4. Schematic exposition of different levels of cognitive representation of historical conceptions (Mathis, 2015, p. 37)

1. ‘Presentism’: present day values, beliefs, schemata, and ideologies are applied to the past without taking into account that they were different at that time.
2. ‘Order and stability’: without legitimate authority chaos would dominate; a political, economic and social balance or equilibrium leads to social stability.
3. ‘Power’: there’s no society without a government; its goal is the indemnity of the common good; therefore, every society needs a leader.
4. ‘Violence’: violence is seen to be a constitutive element of the French Revolution; it is considered to be a driver or condition of historical change.
5. ‘Equity’ and ‘solidarity’: the focus lies on social justice entangled with social and political emancipation of women and under classes; solidarity is understood both as an individual need and as a social responsibility.
6. ‘Liberty’ mainly be seen as autonomy; liberties are formulated ex negativo, e.g. freedom of dependency, freedom of arbitrariness or despotism.
7. ‘Freedom of expression and public sphere’: education fosters the freedom of expression which is seen to be the principle for participation in the public sphere.
8. ‘Modernity’: the present liberal state with its democracy, human rights and public sphere are seen both as a project to enhance and protect and as universal values and norms.

9. 'Optimism of progress': education is seen to be the engine and the guarantor of progress towards liberty, equality, and democracy; positive attitude towards technical, social, and political development.
10. 'Society – dualistic concept / middle classes': firstly, above the perpetrators, i.e. the rich and bad oppressing clergy and nobility and below the victims, i.e. the poor and good oppressed peasants; secondly, a stable society has to seek for levelling extreme positions and create a strong middle-class.
11. 'Utilitarian and meritocratic thinking': those who are useful to society and show an endeavour to the common good should be able to participate politically.
12. 'Change and continuity': the French Revolution is considered to be the mother or the model of all revolutions, it is seen to be the beginning of the modern world; students consider themselves in a linear continuity with the French Revolution and think of having an obligation to continue or accomplish the revolutionary change towards a more just world.

#### Historical actors and structures

Foremost, it is noticeable that the students consider the French society of the Ancien Régime in a dualistic way: at the top, there is the nobility 'in company with' the clergy and at the bottom, the peasants. It is interesting that there does not seem to be a bourgeoisie somewhere in between, or if there is one, it seems to be of no importance. The third estate is considered to be poor and without property. Furthermore, the students speak more about the nobles than the nobility. Thus, it can be said that they refer more to acting people than to sociological structures.

Thomas: I believe, it was like this, wasn't it? 98% were peasants and 2% were from the first and the second estate?

Peter: Yes, at any rate, the peasants were the bigger part.

'Nobles' is imprecisely used as a synonym for the first estate. Roughly speaking, the students hardly make any social nuances when they speak about pre-revolutionary society. Nobility, for them, is a symbol for privileges, oppression, exploitation or injustice.

According to their dualistic conception of the society, the peasants are unprivileged, oppressed, exploited or unjustly treated.

Peter: The nobles were free to do virtually everything and # they really bled the peasants dry.

Paula: # and I believe the peasants actually, well, almost, so to speak, financed the nobles. ## I mean the biggest part of it, or something like that.

I: Hm.

Thomas: ## Didn't they live at their expense?

Peter: ## Well, they nearly fed them.

Thomas: And the priests and the monasteries as well/ it was always a monastery which had to see to the tithes, wasn't it?

Therefore, it can be said that students have a conception of emancipation on the poor, disadvantaged and repressed peasants when they talk about the French Revolution. According to them, it is the awareness of social injustice, which made the peasants start the revolution.

One of the peasants' main revolutionary goals, according to the students, was the abolition of the nobility. Their view is, the nobility had the jester's licence, i.e. the freedom to do whatever it wanted; even if it was at the expenses of the peasants. By providing everyone with food, they were useful for the society. Therefore, it was their right to participate politically and socially. To conclude carefully: ninth graders have a utilitarian conception of society.

### **Consequences of the French Revolution**

As one of the main consequences of the French Revolution, the students mention liberal achievements like the implementation of a constitution which guarantees liberal rights.

I: You said before, they wanted a change as fast as possible.

Claudia: Mm, yes, something like more rights. For example, the peasants had to deliver a part of their income to the nobles, didn't they? And somehow that they wouldn't be mistreated anymore. # They're as human as the nobles, you know, and as I said: more rights, somehow.

Paula: # They enacted a kind of a constitution, didn't they?

With regard to the second-order concept 'change and continuity it can be said that change is considered to be a deliberately committed action, i.e. human actions provoke historical change. Students consider historical changes as straight forward and determined processes. However, students are aware that a change – at first sight considered as a rupture – has duration; its effects have to be examined from a later point of view. Furthermore, students consider mainly the changes of social rights. Change has a forward direction, i.e. changes allow social progress to advance. It can be said that there is obviously a relation to the Marxist perspective on the French Revolution; that students are somehow 'crude' Marxists.

It can be stated that the students' conception of the political emancipation of the peasants is very dominant. Still, because the peasants and the third estate are considered to be poor and to be starving, it is not only the political emancipation of the peasants they have in mind; it is also the social emancipation. The students' conception, that changes allow social progress to advance, is overlapping the achievement of the political rights. Furthermore, there had been a lot of achievement, but – in the understanding of the ninth graders – there is more to be done. The Revolution is not over yet! For example in regard to women's emancipation:

Eva: Well, women should have had the possibility to express themselves. Well, I think nowadays/ in contrast to before the revolution, when women actually had nothing to say. They just sat/

Dina: In the kitchen. [...]

Eva: Yes, they hadn't the possibility to decide. [...] She had to please the man, look after the children, do the cooking. [...]

Eva: Today, it looks a lot different. Well in some places it's still like that. Well, there are still places and people where/ or who don't want to accept that women have a voice. And yes, in the past: Woman – school, girl – school? No, she has to work at home! She had no chance to get education or anything. Today it's completely different.

Dina: That's/ yes. That's changed somehow only in the last hundred years, somewhat. And now it is/ let's say: okay; it's good. (laughter)

Eva: Or it's improving. It's still not totally good, but it's getting better.

Erik: It's still not good enough, but it's good.

Yves: That's right

To conclude, it is noticeable that most of the students focus on social and economic issues. The students bring attention to the material conditions of people's lives and social relations among people. Their understanding is that the lack of basic food in combination with despotism lead sooner or later to riots and revolution. Students are committed to a peasants' and workers' revolution as the means of achieving human emancipation, equality and social progress. They consider human rights (mainly social and economic) as the most important achievements of the French Revolution.

As already mentioned above, the students' historical thinking is dominated by a presentism, as they judge the past applying the values of their time, i.e. of the present. There is no temporal distance. A typical pattern of explanation – a so-called master narrative – named 'modernity' could be reconstructed. It goes along with a sheer optimism of progress (see TABLE 4) (Mathis, 2015, p. 204).

### Conclusions

In accord with the Model of Educational Reconstruction, the 'educational structuring' relates the students' conceptions with the academic historians' conceptions; thus, the following guidelines for a teaching of the French Revolution that is more in accordance with the students' pre-conceptions are suggested.

Firstly, focussing on *multi-perspectivity*: it is necessary to tie up to the 'crude' Marxist view of history in the students' conceptions and examine differing perspectives on the French Revolution. Secondly, considering *economic history*: teachers should take into consideration the students' economic focus, then continue with the political and cultural and finally assess the symbolic causes of the French Revolution. Thirdly, the accounting of *different kinds of historical time*: it is vital to exemplify historical change both on the basis of individuals and structures (economic, social, political, cultural) and to apply the notion of different kinds of historical time and to emphasise different rhythms and tempi. Fourthly, connecting historical learning and *human rights education*: it is necessary to move from the 'rights of man' to the 'human rights'. It is crucial to historicise these concepts, i.e. to highlight the evolution of these concepts.

In terms of conceptual change, the confrontation with differing perspectives on the French Revolution may lead students to enhance their conceptions, leading towards a more meaningful historical learning. Furthermore, the emphasising of different rhythms and tempi of historical time as well as the conceptual underpinnings of the language of time and of change may stimulate and enrich not only the students' historical language skills but the organising and 'mapping' of the past.

In terms of the teachers' action, it is significant to emphasise that the teacher has to take an active role. The teacher has to act as a model for historical thinking, e.g. the model of cognitive apprenticeship (Collins, Brown & Holum 1991). He or she has to moderate and to model cognitively the change of the contexts of knowledge. They have to be able to reflect and to give

a feedback to the students' interpretations. For this purpose, teachers should make obvious what they think, in regard to context the students are referring in a given case.

There has to be an explicit acquisition of the second-order concepts, strategic knowledge, and epistemologies of history. The teacher should furthermore show lack of certainty, use 'perhaps' more often, and to 'yes-and-no', and to 'yes-but' which is inherent to academic historical thinking (Stoel, van Drie & van Boxtel, 2015).

### Correspondence

Christian Mathis  
[christian.mathis@fhnw.ch](mailto:christian.mathis@fhnw.ch)

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## MY EMPIRE IS OF THE IMAGINATION: HISTORY STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

A. D. Burns, University of Leicester, Leicester, U.K.

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### Abstract:

*There are countless possible sources for people's understanding of the history of the British Empire, be it through popular culture, family, school learning or some other genesis entirely. Where some present-day critics see teaching the history of British imperialism in English schools as a politically motivated attempt to inculcate national pride, others see it as encouraging an empowered awareness of the Britain of the twenty-first century. Through analysing the responses of students to a single visual source relating to British imperialism, this article seeks to ascertain whether students in English secondary schools studying – at least partially – the same content on British imperialism at Key Stage 5 (16-18) express views on imperialism in anything like the uniform manner that some might expect, or whether empire remains in the power of their imaginations.*

### Keywords:

British Empire, Visual source analysis, England, English National Curriculum for History, History teaching, Imperialism – British, Student perceptions of imperialism, Mediation, Nationalism

### Introduction

The eponymous *She* of H. Rider Haggard's late-Victorian imperial novel states at one point that her empire is held together largely by her people's *belief* in her power – in her words: 'My empire is of the imagination' (1887, p.161). This quotation aptly condenses a number of the issues that are at the heart of this piece when it comes to how people formulate their own understandings of the British Empire – be it through popular culture, family, school learning or some other source entirely. In the days when H. Rider Haggard was an author with whom schoolboys were near universally familiar, perhaps their imagined version of empire came partially (or even largely) from his yarns about mysterious African civilisations. However, one could reasonably argue that Rider Haggard's adventure tales are no longer texts of first reference for young people in today's Britain, and this begs the question of what has taken their place, in influencing how the British Empire is imagined today.

The research presented here is part of a wider project that aims to consider the significance of what students learn about British imperialism in schools today, in an attempt to gauge the extent to which *what* students are taught in school or college affects how they come to understand British imperialism. The place of British imperial history in the English National Curriculum for History has been much debated in recent years: at one extreme stand those who worry that a sanitised version of British imperial history would create a generation of imperial apologists, while at the other stand those who feel that without a full appreciation of British imperial history students will become overly (and unquestioningly) critical of the British Empire and all it was responsible for (for more detailed discussion of this debate see: Burns, 2014).

This study aims – at least in part – to ascertain the extent to which this largely theoretical debate over the influence of what is taught in school history lessons has a basis in reality.

This article explores the results of questionnaire feedback from students across three contrasting 'types' of Key Stage 5 (16-18 age range) providers within a large town in Southeast England. All of the students studied British imperial history for part of their Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS Level) course in history and therefore one of the things the questionnaire sought to find was whether students who were studying (or had studied) at least partially the same core content began to form similar conceptions of British imperialism. The Year 12 students were currently covering the imperial content, while the Year 13 students had sat exams on the imperial content the previous summer. Although the questionnaires were only one element of data collection within the wider research project (the others comprised of student focus group interviews and teacher interviews), they yielded some very rich insights that are worthy of consideration in their own right. The questionnaire data reveal a number of striking similarities and differences in how students express their views on British imperialism between the three different sites, and within the sites themselves, often in spite of the common core of information they were required to study for their examinations. What one might expect were some solid similarities between sites in respect to what (and how) they had learnt about the British Empire, but what seems evident from analysing the data is that no such correlation exists.

### Literature Review

As presaged in the introduction, an important point of contention between many who engage with reform of the history curriculum in England – either from the top, or from the sidelines – seems to lie primarily in the understanding of curriculum as a syllabus (a body of knowledge to be transmitted), rather than something more interactional and dynamic (Smith, 2000). For some, what appears in the history curriculum could perhaps be used for political ends, to engender certain broader beliefs among students. For Beck (2012, p. 8) the former Education Secretary for England, Michael Gove (May 2010–July 2014), had dreams of using the history curriculum to shape 'a prospective neoconservative pedagogic identity' among England's children and future citizens. Both Beck (2012) and Young (2011) point to Gove's emphasis on curriculum reform whereby the government was to select the knowledge students should learn and the schools were to transmit this knowledge. For other critics, such as Laurie Penny (2010), writing in the left-wing *New Statesman*, Gove and his Conservative Party wanted 'our children to be proud of Britain's imperial past,' or in the words of historian Sir Richard Evans (2013), 'to use the teaching of history in schools to impart a tub-thumping English nationalism'. Clearly, for some, the danger of a history curriculum with an emphasis on specific parts of British imperial history would be to create conservative nationalists of the future.

Nonetheless, for others, a focus on British imperial history is necessary, not to propagate misconceptions and nationalism but to challenge them. For Cole (2004, p. 534) an 'honest' evaluation of British imperialism is required to give students 'an empowered awareness of it'. From this point of view, without a real understanding of the issues raised by studying it, students living in the multicultural Britain of today will continue to be doomed to a 'continued enslavement by an ignorance of Britain's imperial past' (Cole 2004, p. 534). However, Cole points directly to the role of students in coming to this understanding – an 'empowered awareness' – suggesting that the simple transmission of facts is not the likely outcome of learning about imperial history, but rather that a curriculum is something more dynamic and discursive.

Although the history curriculum has often been, and still is, treated to a large deal of scrutiny as alluded to only fleetingly here, perhaps it is given too much power in the minds of many. After all, this paper seeks to discover whether students come to similar understandings on British imperialism when studying similar specified content concerning British imperialism. Clearly implied within this is the idea that student notions about British imperialism might well be formed

and mediated through means other than the curriculum. To begin with there are the teachers and the students as mediators within the classroom and the identities they bring with them to the classroom (Grever, Haydn & Ribbens, 2008; Rozas & Miller, 2009). Aside from this one could point to a long list of factors that have affected these identities and forged preconceptions of imperialism, from literature and media, to family and friends (Burns, 2014). This study aims not to provide a definitive answer to *how* students come to understand the British Empire, but rather to shed light on the debates outlined above through the lens of the students involved in the learning process.

## Methodology

### Selection

As my wider research project sought to look at student views of British imperialism and – where possible – the extent to which classroom teaching affected these views, it was decided at an early stage that the students selected should be those studying British imperialism at Advanced (A) Level, i.e. the 16-19 age range. The reason for this is that, although the National Curriculum for History does require students to study British imperial history prior to A Level, the content covered and time spent on the topic is left largely up to the individual school and/or teacher (DfE, 2013). At A Level, as the course requires teachers and students to adhere relatively closely to themes outlined by the examination board, this seemed to take out of the equation a few crucial variables that would no doubt have made the data even more difficult to compare and contrast.

With this in mind, I attempted to find schools in a small region where students studied at least one module of British imperial history for their AS/A Level in order to conduct a multiple-case study made up of theoretically diverse cases (Yin, 2006). In this case all three sites studied Edexcel's module, 'D2: Britain and the Nationalist Challenge in India, 1900–47' (50% timetabled hours of history) in Year 12, and Sites 2 and 3 also studied 'C6: Britain and the Scramble for Africa, c1875–1914' and 'C7: Retreat from Empire: Decolonisation in Africa, c1957–81' in Year 12 (25% timetabled hours of history each). Such self-imposed restrictions limited my options quite dramatically and it was critical to build good relationships with teachers in advance of the study to gain access to the sites (Walford, 2001). What resulted was a study of three heterogeneous sites around a large town where all of the students were either studying, or had studied, British imperial history at AS Level (and where at least half of the content was the same as at the other sites). In each site the same teacher taught both the Year 12 and Year 13 groups. The deliberately heterogeneous sites were composed as follows:

*Site 1 (22 students) – A state sixth form college*

Group 1 (Y12): 17 students A–Q

Group 2 (Y13): 5 students R–V

*Site 2 (23 students) – A state comprehensive school*

Group 1 (Y12): 14 students A–N

Group 2 (Y13): 9 students O–W

*Site 3 (15 students) – An independent school*

Group 1 (Y12): 9 students A–I

Group 2 (Y13): 6 students J–O

In this article I refer to the sites and students by alphanumeric abbreviations: S1A, for example, referring to Student A (Group 1) at Site 1. Although this is somewhat impersonal, given the



number of students and sites involved in the study it does allow for more straightforward comparisons to be made by the reader.

### **Design and Distribution of the Questionnaire**

The main reason for choosing a questionnaire for collecting data was that – although it is a method more often seen as most suitable for collecting positivist data (Scott & Morrison, 2006) it had a number of distinct advantages such as: standardised questions, anonymity, and questions that can be written for specific purposes (Opie 2004). The use of a short, open-ended question enabled students to express themselves freely (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Opie, 2004), while avoiding the dangers of asking leading or biased questions (among the many other pitfalls outlined by Wellington (2015, 195)).

The questionnaires were self-administered in class time in the students' regular classroom, allowing for easy distribution, explanation of purpose, identification and correction of misunderstanding, and more control over completion (Opie, 2004). The regular classroom teacher was also present, which I judged would bring an air of familiarity to proceedings. Students completed the questionnaires individually after I had given a short introduction to my research project and an explanation of the consent form that formed the first page of the questionnaire.<sup>1</sup> At this stage it was made clear to the students that no real names would be used in the presentation of this data at any stage of writing up the results (Thomas, 2009). In this way the research exercise aimed to be as unobtrusive as possible and seem more like part of a routine day in school/college.<sup>2</sup> The students were given twenty minutes to complete the questionnaire with timings being given at five-minute intervals. Though this might have limited the responses to an extent, it also ensured more likely completion of the questionnaires.

The questionnaire contained four sources, and only the first of these is analysed in detail here for the sake of space. However, it is worth noting that the two pictorial sources provided more diverse responses, touching on a far wider range of themes than the two textual sources that had been provided.<sup>3</sup> The two images provided were deliberately chosen to contrast with the textual sources – both chronologically and thematically – and were also selected to be unknown to the students and (in common with the textual sources) veer away from the content they were studying directly for their A Level course. The image not discussed in detail here is a photograph of British officers posing for a picture during the Second Afghan War (Burke, 1878) (Fig. A 2 (below) and to contrast with this, the other image – the focus of this article – was a fine art image from the earlier nineteenth century titled 'Negro Dance' (Fig. 1 below).

### **Coding and Analysis of Data**

A key benefit and – at the same time – a primary difficulty of posing open-ended questions is that they generally engender rich and lengthy answers. This means not only that the questions are more difficult for the respondent to answer, but also that they are very challenging to analyse (Opie, 2004; Wellington, 2015). In order to first organise this data, a series of codes was devised using a form of qualitative content analysis as outlined by Schreier (2014). The categories were formed in an *a posteriori* (or inductive) manner from themes that arose during analysis of the pilot study questionnaire data and were then further refined iteratively so that each broad code became mutually exclusive (Wellington, 2015; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun,

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1 See Appendix A.

2 In the case of Site 3 I was known to some of the students completing the questionnaire but had never been their History teacher.

3 See Table 1.

2012). The codes, as the data analysis section below illustrates, could often bring together a large number of variations on a theme and therefore the data is presented here through sub-themes that became apparent from comparing and contrasting the coded data.<sup>4</sup>

### **Ethics**

After a brief explanation from myself, all participants in this study gave their written consent to take part by reading and signing the questionnaire's cover page outlining the aims of the research, which was then detached and stored securely and separately. Participants were also made aware of the fact their real names would not be used in any future written output. All respondents were over the age of sixteen and the regular classroom teacher was present during the data collection period. Given all this, I feel that this research adheres to all of the conditions expected of informed consent: competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, 2011).

### **Student responses**

The questionnaires were distributed to students across the three sites in the autumn/winter of 2014/2015 and the written responses were subsequently transcribed on a word processor. The data was then thematically coded to draw out the major themes raised by the students. As well as the image itself, the questionnaires contained the title of the image 'Negro Dance' (Fig. 1), the date of production (1836), and the name of the artist, Richard Bridgens. Further information was not provided – for example, that the picture is taken from a book by Bridgens entitled *West India Scenery*, or that the date of publication lies three years after the abolition of slavery in most parts of the British Empire (1833).

The difference in frequency between the key terms used by the six groups does not appear to be all that marked when transferred simply into a tabular form (see Fig. 2).<sup>5</sup> The fact that 'race' is the most frequent theme raised is unsurprising, nor is the frequency of references to 'happiness'. However, when broken down between groups, the way happiness and race are discussed does bring to light some interesting differences. Nevertheless, Wellington (2015, p.266) posits that it is impossible to represent every voice when presenting such data, and therefore discussion will be restricted here to the three most common themes raised by the students across the sites when it came to this image: 'inequality', 'happiness [and freedom]', and 'race' (omitting the five others: 'oppression', 'pride', 'unity', 'Christian civilisation', and 'power').<sup>6</sup>

### **Inequality**

**Regarded as Inferior** The most common type of discussion relating to inequality across the sites was the notion that the image revealed (or implied) how the British regarded black people. In Site 1 students discussing this theme focused on the title of the picture. S1F suggests that the title 'Negro Dance' shows that 'the British thought they were superior to the Africans they had colonised' and S1K feels that the title 'could show that they weren't treated with of [sic]

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4 See Appendix B.

5 To aid comparison, Table 1 uses figures manipulated to make every group appear to include ten people.

6 'Happiness and Freedom' as a category – has been formed into a general group linked by a largely positive view of the representation of empire (as making people happy and/or free). This has been done because, if separated, they tend to lose the connection that is much clearer across the four sources than it is in any single source, simply because of the words used rather than the impression the students are conveying about empire.



Fig. 1. Negro Dance

Table 1. Occurrences of Thematic Coding in Responses to Fig. 1

	s1g1	s1g2	s2g1	s2g2	s3g1	s3g2
Pride	0	0	0	0	1.1	0
Inequality	4.1	4	5.7	2.2	6.7	3.3
Unity	0	0	0	0	1.1	0
Christian Civilisation	0.6	0	1.4	1.1	0	1.7
Happiness/Freedom	7.6	8	5	7.8	5.6	5
Oppression	2.9	4	5	1.1	1.1	0
Power	0	0	0.7	0	1.1	0
Race	7.1	10	8.6	8.9	8.9	8.3
[Nil response]	0	0	0	0	0	0





Fig. 2. British Officers posing for a photograph during the Afghan War 1878

respect ...'. S1R, from Year 13, similarly argues that the use of the word 'Negro' helps uncover the 'white superiority beliefs' of the empire.

Students in Site 2 gave less emphasis to the title of the image in this regard, with only S2V (from Year 13) noting the title's importance. Instead, students at Site 2 focused more on the *portrayal* of the figures as inferior. S2B suggests that the work might be 'patronising to black people,' S2G that the image shows that the British thought 'poorly of other ethnicities,' and S2K notes that the 'disorderly' manner of those in the picture might imply 'a sense of looking down upon the Africans in this image'.

Students in Site 3 gave a similar style of response to those in Site 2. S3I gets straight to the theme, noting that the picture 'shows us that Britain were very superior to their Empire' and they saw others as 'inferior'. S3A feels that the picture suggests that the people portrayed were seen as 'sub-human' and that the British did not 'treat them with respect'. S3B similarly feels the people in the picture are portrayed with a 'sense of undervalue,' while S3M sees the fact that white people saw blacks as a form of entertainment as evidence that whites saw others as 'inferior to themselves'.

**Living Conditions** Perhaps the most marked difference in student responses regarding the theme of 'inequality' was the tendency of students from Sites 1 and 2 to note the different and inferior living conditions of the figures in the picture. In contrast, none of the students in Site 3 commented on this factor specifically.

In Site 1, a good number of students in Year 12 noted the unequal treatment of the black people portrayed by contrasting their relative living conditions with the imagined condition of whites. S1B noted the larger house in the background in contrast to the 'smaller house made of a straw roof,' an observation echoed by S1D. S1Q also noted this contrast as an example of 'hierarchy and how the British lived in much better conditions than the Black people'. Other students looked to different aspects of what they saw as relative poverty. S1G notes the clothing as suggestive of the fact that 'the British Empire people were poor and lived in bad conditions' conditions. S1P argues that such conditions would have been 'unacceptable to live in for the British'. In Year 13, none of the students noted the housing, but S1T did note that the people in the picture appear to have 'little food, when the British would have had loads'. In Year 12 at Site 2, discussion of unequal living conditions again focused mainly on the houses, but in Year 13 none of the students noted the houses, though one did note the inferiority of the 'supplies' given to black people.

Overall, notions of inequality did differ among the students, in as much as students picked up on different aspects of the picture between different sites – most notably the larger house in the background not being commented on by any students at Site 3. However, the general gist of their comments was that although the picture did not overtly display inequality it was implied either through the title or through contrasts with how they imagined white British people lived at that time.

### **Happiness [and Freedom]**

As the picture seems to clearly depict people dancing and generally having a good time, whatever the realities of the situation – or motivations of the artist – it is not surprising at all that most of the students noted the happiness of the individuals in the picture. However, for the sake of drawing comparisons, the student responses are divided here between those who explicitly critiqued the happiness on display and those who implicitly seemed to take the image's portrayal of happiness at face value.

**Genuine 'Happiness'** Across all three sites, there were those who seemed to take Fig. 1 almost at "face value," without explicitly critiquing the source or questioning its reliability. For these students, the image was either one of simple happiness and celebration or, for some, evidence that the British were benevolent rulers.

In Site 1 S1H suggests that her negative opinion of empire is challenged by the image: 'In this source we can learn how people lived happily in the British Empire ... coming together as a community. There appears to be no form of repression or sadness ... which differs from my previous thoughts upon the empire, a place I thought was doomed to failure'. A number of others agreed, such as S1O who argues that the source shows how the British had 'respect ... for the culture of their subjects and that perhaps British rule is not oppressive as viewed by others'. In Year 13, there were also those who saw a positive, happy image in Fig. 1. S1S sees people 'enjoying and dancing according to their culture' suggesting that the empire was 'impressive and less oppressive [sic]'. S1U even argues that the willingness of these people to dance in front of the British shows 'a good open relationship' and 'no sign of fear ... which suggests the British Empire wasn't so oppressive'.

In Site 2, there were fewer mentions of "happiness" among the Year 12 respondents than in Site 1 or among Site 2's own Year 13 students. S2L was one of the most noticeably uncritical, regarding the picture as showing the Empire 'as beautiful to everyone ... beneficial and considerate towards everyone'. However, S2I also comments that the arrival of empire did not completely 'change the normal way of life and culture for the people that lived there,' and



classmate S2K simply observes that the people in the picture are 'having fun'.

In Site 3 the proportion of students who mentioned 'happiness' in either a critical or an uncritical manner was the lowest among the three sites. None of the Year 12 students gave a clearly uncritical response, but a few of the Year 13s did. S3M notes that the people are 'happy with their living standards' and seemingly 'quite happy and healthy' (though it could be argued 'seem' is rather a hedging term). S3O also uses a hedging term, 'suggest,' but does not overtly critique the source's portrayal of happiness: 'This suggests the British Empire affected people's lives in a positive way bringing positivity, wealth and happiness into people's lives ...'. Overall, it certainly appears that Site 3 saw the fewest uncritical observations of the 'happiness' shown in Fig. 1 – a statistic not clear in the table above, but much clearer upon deeper analysis of the results.

**'Emphasised' Happiness** Where S1G1 might well have provided the majority of the small number of uncritical responses across the groups, it also produced a high number of critical responses. For example, S1J and S1B note that although the figures depicted might be having a good time, they are likely to be slaves. S1G and S1I both question a British artist's motivations, with the latter noting that 'This is his [the artist's] interpretation of the Empire. He could of [sic] easily staged this and, furthermore, this is only a small group of people next to the magnitude of people controlled by India'. Here the students are more clearly evaluating the image with their own knowledge of British imperial practices, or their suspicions of the artist's motivations.

Another theme that arises among students in S1G1 is the idea that the people in the picture may well be happy, but this was largely as the British were not around. S1M makes the clearest observation along these lines: 'It shows that people still had fun and would carry on with their traditions even with the British in charge,' something echoed by S1E. One of Site 1's Year 13 students, S1V, also noted that although those depicted seem happy, this was only when 'there are no British around'.

In general, the students in S2G1 were more critical of the portrayal of happiness in Fig. 1 than S1G1. In Year 12, S2B thinks that the picture might show that 'everyone looks happy and care free' but that 'the British Empire took this away from them'. S2D and S2F recognise that the image could be, as the latter puts it, 'a propaganda tool' to make one think that 'the blacks are having fun'. The Year 13 students at Site 2 were also far more critical than not, but again in similar ways to the other groups. S2S suggests that the 'happy and joyful' people have to be put into the context of slavery, racism and stereotyping existing in the empire, similar to the sentiments of S2W. S2U argues that one must be suspicious of the likely 'British artist' and S2O thinks that the picture suggests the figures are 'happier without their "masters" or British people in charge of them'.

As mentioned earlier, Site 3 saw the most critical responses of all to the theme of 'happiness'. In Year 12, S3B suggests that what appears to be jollity, might better be seen as the subjugated performing for 'British amusement'. S3C sees the depicted happiness serving 'more to demonstrate British opinions of their own rule,' in a similar vein to S3E and S3F. In Year 13, S3N was the most overt critic of the happiness on show in the image, concluding simply: 'The presence of food and musical instruments suggests that the British Empire was a time of happiness and abundance of goods, which was not the case'. Perhaps the most interesting thing revealed in the critical responses is the diversity of type of criticisms within the groups of students. Similar criticisms arise *across* the different groups, but are often only noted individually by one or two people within each group.

### **Race**

Race, along with happiness, was the most predictable subject for students to mention in response to Fig 1. Perhaps the most remarkable observation, therefore, is that only one group – S1G2 – had every student mention race or cultural difference. Again, the responses differed in their approach to what the source showed about race. Many pondered why the painting was produced, with students divided over whether the aim was to record a culture or to perpetuate certain stereotypes of racial difference. Others felt that the most notable aspect was the separation of races – either by choice or through segregation.

**Observation of Racial/Cultural Difference (Largely Positive)** One minority strand of student opinion saw the portrayal of the ‘Negro Dance’ as an act of observation of an almost anthropological kind. This was not apparent in Site 1 at all, nor in Year 12 at Site 2. However, S2P notes the ‘seemingly traditional’ cultural dance, as does S2Q who feels that the artist was attempting to study ‘Africans’ on behalf of the British Empire. Similarly, S2T describes the picture as the ‘British capturing images of the natives of less economically developed countries and how life was like in 1836 for the indigenous people, there custom’s a[nd] fashion/ mannourism’s [sic]’.

In Year 12 at Site 3, S3B sees Fig. 1 as a ‘depiction of the tribal people’ performing (or being made to perform) for the British and S3G sees an ‘indigenous culture’ being observed. S3D feels that the picture eschews the negative racism common at the time, but rather ‘shows passion of African culture’. In Year 13 at Site 3, only S3L saw in this image as evidence of a ‘desire to observe and learn from other cultures’.

**Observation of Racial Cultural Difference (Largely Negative)** By far the more numerous set of responses along the lines of portraying racial/cultural difference came with a fairly negative light being shed on the artist’s and/or the British Empire’s motivations. In Site 1, S1B suggests that the title ‘Negro Dance’ could simply have been ‘Dance’ and that the picture might therefore be trying to portray difference, a sentiment about the negative connotations of the title that also arise in the comments of S1F and S1L. S1P perhaps sees the starkest racial stereotyping: ‘the British empire saw people who were not of English nationality as less civilised and more of a species than a race’. In Year 13, S1R noted not only the white superiority – ‘closed minded and judgmental’ – inferred in the picture, but the portrayal of the dancers as ‘poor, primitive and even grotesque,’ even if, she noted, it did show some British interest in their subjects.

In Site 2, S2A sees the depiction of black people as ‘uncivilised and chaotic,’ and S2K as ‘disorderly’. S2B puts it most bluntly, seeing people spending ‘all their time mucking around and dancing barefoot – not working’. S2C feels that the picture ‘makes the “negros” look “weird”, or “different” or less human or “normal” than a normal human,’ and S2J sees the picture as amplifying racial difference. In Year 13, S2R sees this as an attempt to ‘stereotype’ rather than record, a motive echoed by S2S who describes the era as one of ‘deep rooted racism’.

Finally, in Site 3, S3A sees the painting as ‘almost like that of a wildlife scene, like hippos at the watering hole, or a pride of lions, the native of the source makes the natives seem sub-human,’ with the animalistic theme also being noted by S3I. In Year 13, S3J suggests the figures are portrayed as ‘wild’ and ‘chaotic’ with one man ‘brandishing what appears to be a pitchfork,’ demonstrating the level of ‘ridicule/myth applied to black people’. Here some of the students appear to have taken the image and impressed an even more negative tone on it that the image really merits – the chaos and pitchfork wielding perhaps more in the eye of the beholder than actually present in the image.

**Racial Separation** As a sub-theme this really divided the sites, with very few in Sites 2 and 3 identifying racial separation or segregation, whereas it was a frequently occurring theme among respondents in Year 12 at Site 1.

In Site 1, many of the Year 12s saw evidence of racial separation in Fig. 1. S1E notes that the image 'does not show any dancing or interactions between two groups British and African, leading to the thought that the two groups did not get along or enjoy each others interactions'. S1J observes that 'there don't seem to be any white people around,' an opinion echoed by S1K. S1M argues that the source shows that 'black people were separated from the other races'. S1Q states bluntly: 'It tells us that the British Empire that they wanted to keep black persons away from white people'. However, only one Year 13 at Site 1 broached this theme: S1V felt the picture showed 'different races are joining together and celebrating each other away from the western english [sic] though dance'.

In Site 2, a couple of Year 12 students (S2E and S2N) noted that the picture showed that black and white people lived separately, and one Year 13 (S2O) mentioned that the lack of white people in the picture implies the black people are happier without white 'masters' around. In Site 3 none of the Year 13 students noted racial separation, but two Year 12s did. S3C sees in the image and its title the 'division of race at the time'. S3G identifies 'some assimilation' but notes that the title suggests a still-present separateness. Finally, there was one student who saw quite the opposite in the picture – through what must be a misreading of the source – with S3E apparently seeing 'white men dancing with black natives'.

### Conclusions

The general lack of discussion of slavery or British imperialism in the Caribbean plantations might be one of the more surprising findings, given that the image does indeed depict a scene of slaves (or former slaves) in the West Indies. This might at first appear to support the idea that the information covered in the curriculum (or 'curriculum as syllabus' (see Smith, 2000) had an impact on students' responses; having not studied 'Caribbean slavery,' most students were unable to recognise or engage with that topic when prompted to comment on imperialism in the source provided. However, the students at Sites 1 and 3 had studied British imperialism in Africa and they made little mention of specific issues of race and empire raised when studying that course either, for example, civilising mission or the 'White Man's Burden'. Indeed, scarcely any students used clear *examples* from prior learning to support their analysis of the given source.

Given that the source portrays only black people, the multiple mentions of race were to be expected, but the fact that not all students mentioned race seems worthy of note. Also, the way in which the students were divided in their understanding of the source, both between and within different teaching groups, be it through being overtly suspicious, contextually critical, or focusing on very different details (such as the larger house in the background), all pose interesting questions as to why these differences have come to the fore. Despite the fact that all of the students were studying/had studied at least partially the same syllabus for AS level, and that the methods of assessment for that AS/A Level course were exactly the same, the things they noted about the sources varied quite markedly, as did their assessments of what this told them about the nature of British imperialism. This might well help undermine views that the 'curriculum as a syllabus' is a primary factor in how students come to interpret British imperialism. If this were correct, it would leave a huge question mark over the potential efficacy of any covert attempt to indoctrinate students with a certain viewpoint through either specifying content in a history curriculum/syllabus or the way in which the topic was relayed in the classroom (see Beck, 2012; Penny, 2010).

What instead seems to be the case is that, when the students were presented with source material outside the precise subject matter they had studied, their ideas and opinions on the British Empire diverged. This is less in line with the potential dangers raised by those such as Penny (2010) and Beck (2012), and more in parallel with the findings of Barton and McCully (2005). Barton and McCully's (2005, p.111) study found that a balanced portrayal of theoretically controversial events in Northern Irish schools had potentially encouraged students 'to draw selectively from the school curriculum in order to bolster their developing understanding of partisan historical narratives'. Indeed, although a tiny number of students' responses here suggest their surprise or altered opinion in reaction to the image (see S1H, above), many more dismissed what conflicted with their understanding as propaganda. Perhaps, therefore, Cole (2004, p.534) offers the best summation of the effect of studying British imperialism in schools, when he calls for students to gain 'an empowered awareness' of the topic, and this is perhaps closer to the reality of what has actually been achieved by the students surveyed here. Indeed, most educators would probably agree that 'empowered awareness' is far more akin to the aims of a good secondary education than even the most well-intentioned form of indoctrination.

A good number of students who completed the questionnaires drew conclusions or inferences that went far beyond what one could actually tell from the image, which is a skill that is encouraged in both GCSE and A Level History exam papers. Although the students were almost certainly drawing on that which they had learned in school during their A Level studies to an extent, the sheer diversity of their responses suggests that a multitude of external variables were of equal, if not more, importance. Indeed, media, literature, family, friends – a whole range of factors – all seem likely to come into play for students when forming their ideas about empire (Grever, Haydn & Ribbens, 2008; Rozas & Miller, 2009). In conclusion, perhaps the supposed power of the curriculum writers and designers is more a part of academics', journalists', and politicians' collective imagination, and that perceptions of the British Empire among English students today arise largely from the empires of their own imaginations.

### Correspondence

A. D. Burns  
[adb31@le.ac.uk](mailto:adb31@le.ac.uk)

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## Appendix A

### Participant Consent Form

#### Title of Research Project

How Britannia Ruled the Waves: Teaching the History of the British Empire in the Twenty-First Century

#### Author of Study

Adam Burns (University of Leicester) – as part of a research project for the completion of a Doctorate in Education at the University of Leicester

#### Purpose of Research

This project seeks to fill a gap in current debates and discussions that have up until now been largely theoretical in nature. The ultimate aims of this study are to bring to light areas of concern/interest, to provide starting points for future investigations and, potentially, to directly inform the way in which any future History syllabus is formed in regard to teaching the history of the British Empire. The hope is that this study will help improve the way educators understand how students learn about British imperial History.

The **key questions** this study seeks to address are as follows:

- Is it important for students in English schools to learn about British imperial history in school in the twenty-first century?
- To what extent can/do history teachers mediate and thereby alter student perspectives of British imperial history?
- Are students' views on British imperialism more a product of the classroom or of external, extra-curricular influences?

#### Your Privacy

For my research project, I would like to collect certain information from you in two ways:

1. Asking you to complete an **anonymous questionnaire** (you do not fill in your name or identity on the questionnaire and your identity will not be stored anywhere)
2. Asking you to take part in a **small group interview** along with some of you classmates (the interview will be recorded, but the recording will be kept safely in my possession). When I write up information from the interviews, there will be **no record of your name or identity** in my notes or in the final project.

**Your name will not appear** anywhere in the final research project outcomes.

If you change your mind about taking part in either the questionnaire or the group interview, you have the right to withdraw consent to partake in the project at any time.

If you understand all of the above information and are willing to help me with my research project please turn over the page and complete the form:

Name:

School:

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Please check the following boxes and then sign and date the form at the bottom in the spaces provided:

- I am happy to take part in the project outlined on this consent form entitled:  
How Britannia Ruled the Waves: Teaching the History of the British Empire in the Twenty-First Century
- I am happy to complete a questionnaire and for the results to be used in the above research project and I am aware my name will not be used in the final research project.
- I am happy to take part in a group interview along with others in my class, which will be recorded on tape.
- I am aware that, although the conversation will be recorded, my identity will be kept anonymous in any research data that is produced.

I understand the purpose of this research project and give my consent for any information I provide in either a questionnaire or in a group interview to be used for the purposes of this research project and any resulting publication of its findings, and that my identity will remain anonymous.

Signed:.....

Date: .....

**Teaching Imperial History – Student Questionnaire**

**What follows are four historical sources which are followed by questions relating to the British Empire. Please respond to each question in the space provided and spend roughly 3-4 minutes on each response.**

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**Question One**



Fig 1. Bridgens, Richard. "Negro Dance" (1836)

**Consider the picture above. What does this source tell us about the nature of the British Empire?**

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**Question Two**

**Read the following extract from a speech given by Prime Minister Winston Churchill after the surrender of France to Germany in June 1940:**

*What General Weygand has called the Battle of France is over. I expect that the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation. Upon it depends our own British life, and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be freed and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands.*

*But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new dark age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves, that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, This was their finest hour.*

**Consider the extract above. What does this source tell us about the nature of the British Empire?**

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**Question Three**



Fig. 2. Burke, John. 'Group British officers (Q.O.) Guides' (1878)

**Consider the picture above. What does this source tell us about the nature of the British Empire?**

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**Question Four**

**Read the following extract from the 1776 United States Declaration of Independence:**

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*

*That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.*

**Consider the extract above. What does this source tell us about the nature of the British Empire?**

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## **Appendix B**

Simplified coding system for the three categories used here (as applied to all four sources)

### ***Inequality***

Inequality; less important; hierarchy; inferior; [British as] more important; unequal; disrespect; superior; elitist; arrogance

### ***Happiness [and Freedom]***

[Any form of] happy or related synonyms; fairness; **not** oppressive; equality; freedom

### ***Race***

Indigenous culture; “natives”; negro (except simply restating title “Negro Dance”); [black] slaves; [any form of] race/racial/racist; segregation

Fig. 1. Richard Bridgens, ‘Negro Dance’. Lithograph (1836) – British Library Online Gallery Available at: <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/carviews/n/022zzz000789g13u00022il0.html>

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Fig. 2: Burke, John. “Group British officers (Q.O.) Guides.” Photographic print (1878) – Reproduced from the British Library

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/g/019pho000000487u00044000.html>

## CONSIDERATIONS OF PEDAGOGY AND DIDACTICS

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### FILMIC PEDAGOGIES IN THE TEACHING OF HISTORY: RESEARCH ON AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USING VIDEO IN THE CLASSROOM

Debra Donnelly, University of Newcastle, Australia

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#### Abstract:

*As contemporary history sources, historical feature films serve to link the school and the world of the students. The films' multi-modality endows them with a currency that is often lacking in other teaching resources, and as such can provide a welcomed change from printed text. This paper reports the findings of an Australian research project that investigated teacher perceptions, understandings and practices concerning historical feature film in the history classroom using survey, interview and classroom case studies methodologies. The project concluded that historical feature films offer unique and rich opportunities to explore historical knowledge as contested, problematic and interpretative. However, the research indicated that these opportunities were often neglected in practice due to limited pedagogical approaches that failed to effectively integrate and interrogate the filmic representations. This paper culminates with the presentation of the pedagogical recommendations of the study for the use historical feature film in the teaching of history.*

#### Keywords:

Australia, Case Study, Film, Ethics, Filmic pedagogies, Historical feature films, History education, Pedagogy, Praxis, Professional development, Quantitative research, Qualitative research, Semiotics, Teacher practice, Values

#### Introduction

Many historical feature films are designed to be memorable multi-sensory events with a mission to transport their audiences temporally and geographically. They have become major artefacts of popular and youth culture and for a brief interlude they bestow global-scale historical significance on their narratives of, or at least set in, the past extended by media hype, social networking clamour, gaming appropriations and product merchandising. As contemporary history sources, these films serve to link the school and life world of the students and their multi-modality endows them with a currency that is often lacking in other teaching resources and as such can provide a welcomed change from printed text. Multi-modal literacy was first proposed by Professors Gunter Kress and Carey Jewitt (2003) and concerns the different ways that knowledge and meaning can be communicated and integrated, such as visually, aurally or somatically. However, historical filmic narratives are often a single representation of the past with no obligation to adhere to evidentiary records. Added to this, feature films serve a commercial imperative, and coupled with the limitations of the art form, this often leads to manipulation of the narrative and the inclusion of fictionalised elements. Despite these issues, international scholarship as well as anecdotal and research observational evidence suggests that these frequently historically inaccurate and distorted resources are being widely and regularly used as teaching resources in many history classrooms (Donnelly, 2013; Marcus et al, 2010; Metzger, 2007; Blake & Cain, 2011). This situation prompted an Australian research

project, which aimed to investigate how historical feature films were being used in the teaching of secondary school history and identify pedagogical strategies that allow these multi-modal texts to be effectively integrated into teaching programmes. The project was located in New South Wales, Australia's most populous state.

### **Challenges of Film in History Pedagogy**

Despite the advantages of significance, engagement and access, the effective utilisation of film to teach history is not a simple matter and requires clear learning objectives and explicit teaching (Stoddard, 2007). Wineburg and Martin (2004) found without careful time allocation and explicit teaching, film can become another "distraction" to the examination and analysis of historical sources. They conclude that if students only passively engage with the film and are not required to deeply investigate and respond to it as an historical artefact, then films run the same risk as internet searches, computer slide shows and other technology: that of being a distraction from historical literacy skills.

The very nature of commercial film production is an issue in the utilisation of film for educational objectives. Feature films are moneymaking enterprises and as such need to attract an audience. It is often the case that adherence to the historical evidence and narrative is sacrificed in the name of entertainment with distortions, compressions and fictional additions. Perhaps the most insidious problem is that of presentism, that is having characters act and speak in the manner of the contemporary society, rather than those of the film's historical setting. This is a problem in the presentation of values, attitudes and societal roles of the past, which may jar with modern sensibilities (Weinstein, 2001). For example, many contemporary audiences may not be comfortable with the rigid codes of behaviour and limited expectation of independence that existed for women in some past, and indeed contemporary, societies. However, to modernise, and westernise, these narratives for the comfort of the audience is to falsify the historical record and undervalue the dynamic shifts in sex-based roles in human history. These "creative liberties" need to be explicitly exposed and assessed, if feature films are to be helpful in the teaching and learning of history (Taylor and Young, 2003).

"New literacies" is defined as the skills of accessing and using technology across various platforms (Lankshear and Knobel, 2006) and the integration of these platforms for knowledge communication and meaning making (Grushka and Donnelly, 2010). There has been some research to suggest that history teachers have been slow to appreciate the shift to "new literacies." Marcus (2005, 2007) makes the point that teachers need to have expertise to embed film effectively in classroom studies. He found that poor levels of pedagogical understanding can result in little or no learning of critical thinking and analysis skills. He argued for the development of "historical film literacy" which is not only useful in the school context but in the students' life worlds. Marcus, Paxton and Meyerson (2006) concluded that, although the teachers in their study incorporated films into their teaching programmes, many treated film differently to other historical sources and did little to interrogate them. Afflerbach and VanSledright (2001) suggested the term "Disney effect" to explain the power of film to fictionalise historical events and figures and to caution teachers to examine the filmic representations in the light of other historical evidence. Other researchers echo these conclusions, noting that explicit teaching, comparison and analysis are needed to avoid unquestioning acceptance of filmic narratives (Meyerson and Paxton, 2007; Seixas, 1994, 2007; Wineburg et al 2000). Taylor and Young (2003) similarly advise teachers to employ mechanisms to detect and manage the compressions, distortions and fictions in historical films.

As Weinstein (2001, p.42) observes “Film is an artificially created model of reality. It is our task to train the eye and mind to translate these entertaining images into data for comparative and critical analysis.”

### **Research design**

This research project aimed to survey current usage and practices and identify strategies to use feature film to explore the nature of the discipline. The research project was designed in three phases. Initial data was gathered from two surveys about filmic pedagogies in history, one focussed on teacher practice, while the other looked at student experience. The teacher practice survey (n=203) investigated film usage in the history classroom in terms of films used, implementation strategies and the conceptual frameworks underpinning pedagogical decision-making. The second phase of data gathering took the form of semi-structured teacher interviews (n=30). These teachers were selected from those who had volunteered from the survey group and represented a cross section of the group in regard to teaching contexts and attitudes and methodological approaches to using film in their practice. Case studies formed the last phase of the project (n=2). These were selected from the teacher interview group on the basis of exemplifying distinctive approaches to the use of film and being examples of methodological approaches that were evident in Phase One and Two data. The data from the three phases of the research was coded and analysed using NVivo software. Tree maps were used to identify and categorise prominent themes. An ‘hourglass’ strategy was used for final stage data analysis to substantiate the validity of the conclusions and strengthen the case for the applicability of those conclusions (Bruce, 2007).

### **Filmic Pedagogies: Teacher Survey and Interview Findings**

The teachers were asked to report the strategies they implemented when using film in their history teaching. They were given the opportunity to add any teaching strategies that had been omitted. Nine main uses were reported. The following lists reported strategies from most to least frequently used.

1. debrief and/or discussion after viewing (69%)
2. watch for understanding of topic, introductory or concluding activity (67%)
3. pause film and discuss and take notes (52%)
4. review questions/worksheets completed while viewing (50%)
5. review questions/worksheets completed after viewing (24%)
6. as stimulus for writing (14%)
7. free form note taking during viewing (12%)
8. as stimulus for group work tasks (2%)
9. as stimulus for drama or role-playing activities (>1%)

All the interviewees (n=30) were able to describe their attitude and teaching practices using film to teach history and their reported filmic pedagogies tended to align with survey data. Pseudonyms have been used in reporting to protect the identity of individual participants.

About a third of the teachers interviewed tried to embed the film into the topic, while the majority use film as an introduction or conclusion and tend to have the film experience separate from the teaching unit. The examples of Ms Stacey and Mr Waugh illustrate the difference. Ms Stacey integrated film into a unit on the Holocaust. As she narrated,



I guess I am using the film as a jumping off for their investigation and then going back and looking at various elements of it, and you've got a common point of reference which is the film, because they've all seen it.

In contrast, Mr Waugh's method uses the film more to consolidate the topic,

Yeah it's a template that I fell into I suppose of me doing heavy input and then delivering back in terms of skills, presentations, research, essays or whatever, and while they were busy preparing that at home I would show the film to round out the topic.

Another issue was the treatment of film as a source with most of interviewees not interrogating the film as a source. All but five stated that they did not analyse film for reliability and agenda, although they were keen on analysing other sources. They spoke of the student imbibing the atmosphere of the past via the film viewing and using the shared experience of the viewing as a stimulus for class discussion of the topic. Mr Waugh viewed film as a pleasant interlude, "My attitude is enjoy the film, let's talk about it in a fairly unstructured way and then we'll move on."

Although in the minority, Mr Murray and Mr Connelly were strong in their opinion that film should be analysed in the same way as any historical source. Mr Connelly expressed his opinion,

Yeah, but really they definitely are historical sources, it's just the same as someone writing a book, like a novel set in a historical time, because you get some of the interpretation.

Mr Murray even advocated using film in a formal examination situation,

I would love to see little screens on the desks of HSC students so that they could watch a segment of *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) as source B that they have to interrogate. I'd think that was fantastic because to ignore a particular kind of source because of the nature of the source is wrong.

The majority agreed that discussing the film was important. Ms Gilbert expressed the view of many that the shared experience of viewing a film is a useful basis for discussion. As Ms Gilbert commented,

When the students are given the opportunity to visualise a topic it allows them to comprehend it and communicate their understandings during our class discussions. I consistently use the film to prompt the discussion by saying things like 'Remember when ...' or 'How is that shown in the movie ...' I find that this really helps.

Only two teachers reported using film as a stimulus for creative activities. Mrs Matthews described her approach,

One thing that students have actually commented on how good it is, once you've seen a portion of a film, get a small group to create a skit presenting the opposite point of view. I also get them to re-script speeches and deliver them to the class. Another example is writing up a police report about what happened in *Mississippi Burning* (1988), those sort of things work well with kids.

Mr Stewart was a definite no on this aspect of using film, "No I don't. I'm not very good at those creative things, and when I try them, they tend to fail. So I'm afraid I'm old fashioned, factual discussion is more my thing."

Few teachers in this project had training in the semiotics of film, that is the ways of reading, analysing and understanding the language of film (Roth, 2014), or in the issues around using film to teach history. It appeared that many teachers who were confident with printed source analysis and interpretation were less comfortable with investigating film as an historical artefact. This comment from an interviewee demonstrates this lack of understanding, "I just show the movie and talk about what happened. Then I move on to the sources." When asked what methods they used to teach using film most teachers referred to discussion and worksheets.

### **Case study findings – Key strategies**

In Phase Three of the project, two detailed case studies were undertaken including classroom observations, further interviewing and document and work sample analysis. The two teachers chosen for study were selected on the basis of their extensive use of film in their history teaching, their expertise and experience, and their successful and strongly contrasting approaches to using film to teach history. Mrs Warner's teaching was an example of a pedagogy that stresses the role of historical imagination and the affective in connecting students to history, while Mrs Drew used a much more cognitive approach which aimed to train students in historical literacy and understanding. From this investigation, six key strategies for effectively embedding historical feature film in the secondary history classroom were developed. The following discussion of the key strategies aims to provide working examples that may be applied by practitioners to other teaching contexts and other historical feature films.

### **Establishment and application of conceptual framework before seeing the film *V for Vendetta***

Both of the case study subjects, Mrs Drew and Mrs Warner, understood the importance of developing a conceptual framework, using historical terms and setting focus questions to encourage application of the established framework. These allowed the feature film to be integrated into the unit and so connected with and compared to the other historical sources. Both teachers were careful to provide a context for the unit as well as draw on any prior knowledge of the class.

Mrs Warner spent several weeks "setting up" her use of the film *V for Vendetta*. Firstly she defined and examined the motivations and methods of terrorist groups, introducing concepts such as revolution, coup d'état, civil war and anarchy. Her students presented short high interest presentations on terror groups and their tactics, famous "crimes," and rationales. These were very visual with a minimum number of photographs, maps and sub-headings prescribed and the students instructed to use these as a basis of their presentation. In her debrief for each presentation, Mrs Warner brought the class' attention back to the conceptual framework and focus questions of the topic: What is the difference between a terrorist and a freedom fighter? Are they the same thing only from another perspective?)

I wanted to do it [terrorism], because it was something from the present that we could refer to, it's now. I wanted to show them that we have to go back to understand the present properly.

Mrs Drew began her unit on Ned Kelly in a very similar fashion. Firstly she began with a collection of images of heroes and villains with labels that indicated the ambiguity of these terms. For example, Nelson Mandela's photo was entitled President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999 and militant anti-apartheid activist, and the leader and co-founder of the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC). Mrs Drew called on students' prior knowledge, but deepened their understandings in a collaborative discussion. She used a "think, pair, share"

strategy to encourage collaborative thinking. Students were asked to individually develop a list of characteristics for a hero and a villain and then share it with a partner, then join together with another pair to form a group. The group then developed their list. Mrs Drew then called for contributions from the five groups to make a class description of heroes and villains. Each student was asked to come out and write one word or phrase that they knew about the bushranger. Then the focus question was posed to the class for a vote, "Was Ned Kelly a hero or villain?" In this manner, the students were tasked with applying the conceptual framework to the example of Ned Kelly firstly on an individual basis. This was then followed up by a class discussion in the next lesson.

#### **Addressing the values dimension.**

Their use of feature film provided Mrs Drew and Mrs Warner with opportunities to include a values or ethics dimension to their teaching of history. Both teachers explicitly identified and defined particular values, attitudes and beliefs, such as human rights and citizenship rights and responsibilities, examining them in relation to their historical investigation and connecting them to contemporary society. By removing a controversy in time and place, historical feature films set in the past provide a "safer venue" for explorations and discussions of debatable issues, such as racism and immigration. As Mrs Warners explained

History is about people ... some people have pure motives and want to do the best for society, and other people are very self absorbed and are only out seeking power, all the things they find in people around them, it's the same when you go back in the past. So history is a safe place for us to explore what humans do and they then can use this to understand their own world better.

Using feature films enabled the use of analogies and parallels to current controversial situations and the filmic narrative provided a platform from which multiple perspectives could be considered and evaluated. Mrs Drew explained her approach to multiple perspectives and "truth" in history,

My truth is going to be a singular truth to me and my reality is going to be a singular reality to me. I teach my students that you have to be aware that everyone else will have a different truth and reality.

Mrs Warner gave this example of film and values when discussing her terrorism unit that used *V for Vendetta*,

They [the students] got into the moral and ethical dilemma of it, especially that terrorist and freedom fighter ... We got to the point of can you use violence for good, because that's the issue of the film or is it always bad.

As explained above, Mrs Warner's unit, which began with *Guy Fawkes* and *V for Vendetta*, culminated with a consideration of the War on Terror. The final task assignment of this unit was an individual research assignment in which students were encouraged to explore their conceptual understanding in a context of their choice. Mrs Warner was pleased with the diversity of topics and the depth of their research and quality of argument. Referring to her top-scoring student she said,

He's one of these kids right into computer technology, and he did cyber terrorism, took it [the assignment] that way. And that was fascinating, this group that were holding the Sony Corporation to ransom, all that, he got involved with all of that, and it was kind of fascinating, just his understanding of it. Very impressive.

### **Integration of graphic organisers and learning scaffolds.**

Both Mrs Drew and Mrs Warner used graphic organisers, such as T charts (columns), spider diagrams and mind maps, as communication and summary devices to show the organisation and relationships of information, concepts and ideas and to capture ideas and observations while viewing the films. By arranging information spatially their students were able to select the essential ideas and these were often used as the basis for assessment tasks. Both teachers asked individual or pairs of students to create preliminary constructions and then led the class in a collaborative final draft. This helped the students become more strategic learners and learn to modify and adapt their original ideas to accommodate other thoughts. Both teachers understood the advantages of public display and had the class collaborative work and individual efforts hung around the classroom. This allowed the graphic organisers to be integrated into later lessons, used as a teaching or reviewing tool, and modified to capture further insights. As Mrs Warner joked during an interview, "I do have an interactive whiteboard, because I call children out, students, and they write on the board, which is a nice bit of interaction, they love doing that." Mrs Drew had taken this strategy a step further and had her class re-develop a mind map using the prez software. This allowed for the inclusion of primary and secondary sources, relevant quotations and images.

### **Cognitive apprenticeship learning design.**

Mrs Warner and Mrs Drew used the cognitive apprenticeship model of instruction, although neither recognised the term when asked. It appears that their adoption of this learning design had grown from years of experience in the classroom, rather than from training or outside instruction. This constructivist pedagogy has stages of development towards a complex task from modelling and imitation, to coaching and collaboration then to fading support and independent exploration.

A good example of this method of teaching history beyond the narrative is Mrs Warner's lesson sequence for an assignment in her Year 10 *Defiance and Terrorism* unit. Firstly, the students were guided in the development of a conceptual framework of the issues and historical terms, and then applied the framework in the case of Guy Fawkes. This is a straightforward example and allows the students to gain familiarity and confidence with the concepts and material. Mrs Warner provided a very structured approach to this work using worksheets and teacher-led discussion to progress understanding. The viewing of selected clips from the film, *V for Vendetta* was used to extend their intellectual investigation of the topic and intensify their affective response to the ethical dilemmas of governmental control, freedom and revolution. The cognitive demands are increased when the unit moves to the next stage, that of the debates focused on Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi. Here grouped students prepare a case for or against and argue their allocated point of view. Using the conceptual framework, they work collaboratively to develop their historical argument. Mrs Warner's role in these lessons was that of facilitator and coach. As she explained at the time, "In [this] class I like to play the devil's advocate. It makes them more critical when they are challenged." This stage culminates in the students undertaking a test essay based on the debate topics. Although they are working with some independence at this stage, the students' responses emanate from their group work learning. This collaborative strategy aligns to the cognitive apprenticeship coaching and collaborative progression.

By Week 8, the students have reached the independent researching and reporting stage. Each student examined a terrorist group, individual or event and was tasked with answering the big questions of the topic with reference to their topic. Questions posed were designed to be controversial and encourage the development of an historical argument supported by evidence. For example, "Can wars or revolutions be seen as acts of terrorism?" and "Can a government's

use of terror in defence of its citizens be justified?" During the research time Mrs Warner supported the explorations by undertaking a mini case study about a doctor who was falsely arrested on terrorism charges in Australia, called "What happened to Doctor Mohamed Haneef in 2007?" By continuing to demonstrate the skills of the expert historian, Mrs Warner provided her students with inspiration, guidance and a template for their own work. Although she gave some advice to individual students regarding topic selection for their assignment, Mrs Warner tended to give general answers about the task. She said to one inquiring student, "That is a very good question and one that you will have to work out to do this assignment" (Memo, 4/10/2013). The quality of the presentation for the assignment demonstrated that a number of students had achieved deep epistemological understanding of the discipline through the process of cognitive apprenticeship as utilised in Mrs Warner's learning design.

#### **Close analysis of the feature film.**

Both Mrs Drew and Mrs Warner delved deeply into the film utilised in their teaching units but their approaches were different. Mrs Drew was explicit in her treatment of the feature film as an historical source. She used a note-taking and analytical template that began with a profile of the film and the focus questions of the unit. The rest of the template was a T chart with the two columns headed "Notes" and "My Ideas." As they viewed the film the students took notes in relation to the focus question and colour coded the observations to indicate whether research information corroborated or refuted the filmic representation and for new pieces of evidence beyond the film. They also used another colour to indicate emotional manipulation and persuasive techniques. Mrs Drew also focused attention on the value of film as history, beginning Week 8 with the questions, "Can a feature film be a history?" and "Does this film claim to be history?"

Mrs Warner's approach to interrogating the film was different. She made little reference to the film as an historical source, but rather used sections of the film as stimuli for investigation of the further historical information and sources. For example, in her Year 9 unit using *Gallipoli*, she used 25 minutes of the film to construct a T chart, headed "Reasons to Join Up" and "Evidence from the film." The class then studied recruitment and other patriot posters from World War I and added to the summary with annotations. This study then moved to textbook investigation with the question, "Do other sources support the film narrative?" Notes were taken under teacher-supplied headings as information from the film and textbooks were compared and contrasted. These notes became the basis for a test essay. Although she did not carry out source profiling on the feature film, Mrs Warner did effectively embed the film into the study and contrasted it with other source material to test its reliability.

#### **The performative in filmic pedagogy.**

Another important filmic pedagogical practice to emerge from the data was the inclusion of the performative. As Stengers (1999) argues "For the way in which our historian considers history is conducive to the creation of something new" (p. 17). In this instance the term "performative" suggests the need for students to create a work to give clarity to their historical understandings, or at least including, their learning from viewing and/or interrogating the film. Performative tasks can range from writing argumentative essays and constructing websites to building models or making historical "artefacts" to role plays, speeches and dramatic simulations. This task-orientated focus encourages further exploration and synthesis, relates the films to other historical material and deepens understanding.

Mrs Drew and Mrs Warner differed in their approach to the performative, but they both understood the importance of tasking students to apply and re-contextualise the knowledge they have learned. Both teachers guided their students in their historical writing, spending time on



the essay as a form and the development of historical writing skills such as embedding sources to support the argument. Both of these experienced teachers used quick quizzes, timelines and maps to establish the foundational knowledge of the period under study. Mrs Drew had her students extensively annotate primary and secondary sources and used post-it notes to highlight important themes and ideas. Mrs Warner used underlining and point summaries for the same purpose.

Mrs Drew took a more traditional approach to assessment and the tasks she set were based on the writing of historical argument. Her classes were assigned carefully designed and instructionally aligned writing tasks with particular attention to historical literacy and conventions of historical writing. The work produced was of a sophisticated standard and demonstrated the benefits of the cognitive apprenticeship style-training regime. This example from the conclusion of a Year 10 essay demonstrates the intellectual quality of the work,

All history is partial and the validity of the history is determined by the accuracy of its sources. Film and documentaries can be useful and should be used to teach history, as long as their credibility and utility and representativeness can be assured. Good histories, such as *Pompeii the Last Days*, can often be extremely engaging and educate a modern-day audience in a more effective way than standard lessons. However, bad representations of history, like *Pocahontas* distort past events and teach children biased misconceptions about people and events in history.

In contrast, Mrs Warner frequently used empathy exercises based on writing in the alternate perspectives, creating historical reproductions and model making and was much less concerned about evidentiary pathways. As she explained talking about her work using *Gallipoli*,

We do the old things like writing up – doing letters home, or I give them bits of cardboard and a pencil, and they can do a postcard home. Then I have another group set up who are the censors because you can't tell everything to the folks back home.

In this way, Mrs Warner sought to encourage an affective response and use this to have her students reflect on the contemporary world issues and situations.

## Conclusion

Feature films can be valuable stimuli for inquiry and critical thinking and have been observed in this project to inspire high order historical literacy skills and enthusiasm for exploring and understanding the past and its resonance in the contemporary. Evaluating the filmic narrative against other sources of historical knowledge can enrich and enliven the exploration as original, more nuanced narratives and understandings are conceived and collaboratively scrutinised (Donnelly, 2014). This project found a number of practitioners with highly developed understandings and methodologies who were achieving high order outcomes with their students. However, these exemplars were exceptions as the vast majority of practitioner practice narratives revealed little or no integration of historical feature films into the evidentiary debate, and a lack of deep investigation of film as an historical representation. This is unsurprising, with only 8% of history teacher respondents from NSW Australia reporting any training in using film in history teaching. This situation needs remediation.

The survey data indicated the majority of history teachers considered that the history classroom was not the domain for values considerations or that this agenda presented risk taking beyond their mandate. Unquestionably, probing societal values from the past and considering their

implementation in the present has the potential to cause controversy, and even parental and institutional sanctions, for teachers who work in a transparent and accountable learning environment. However, Phase Three of this project demonstrated the effectiveness of using film to drive a values and ethics agenda in history teaching. Both Mrs Warner and Mrs Drew draw on the affective response to the filmic product to lead their students to values identification and discernment insights and a reflective self-evaluation of their own values, attitudes and actions. The work of these teachers demonstrates the utility of film as a stimulus to examine past and present issues in relation to moral and ethical issues in experienced and skilful hands. However, the data from this project suggests that values education methodologies are not well used, or even well known, among many history teachers, and that this significant gap needs to be addressed in professional development and pre-service teacher training agendas.

The project concluded that historical feature films provide the history teacher with unique and rich opportunities to explore issues of historical representation and understanding. The aim of this exploration is to progress students beyond the narrative to see historical knowledge as contested, problematic and interpretative, and encourage a constructionist approach in historical inquiry. Despite this potential, the rapid proliferation of filmic and other visual resources appears to have caught many history practitioners unprepared with little or no training in the utilisation of resource formats other than printed text, and although the scholarly debate has intensified in recent times, the professional literature has been slow to offer pedagogical approaches for the integration of film into the history classroom. The key strategies discussed above come from the field and it is hoped that they will encourage teachers to interrogate film as an historical source, so enhancing students' historical literacy, understanding of historical representation and historiography.

### Correspondence

Debra Donnelly  
[debra.donnelly@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:debra.donnelly@newcastle.edu.au)

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## **MANNERS, POSITION AND HISTORY: DEFINING THE MUSEUM AND ITS ROLE IN LEARNING**

**Christine Smith**, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, United Kingdom

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### **Abstract:**

*From its earliest incarnation in Alexandria to its modern, twenty-first century counterpart, museums of all types, shapes and sizes share a common purpose – learning. Whilst the type of learning, the reason behind the latter or the way in which the visitor learns might be different the value of the museum in encouraging and supporting both formal and informal learning opportunities across a range of subjects remains. This article will provide an overview of the development of the museum as a place of learning before making specific links to the modern school curriculum and in particular to the use of the museum in the study of history. It provides a background which will be built upon through further research into how schools today employ museums in the learning of history and the article will end with suggestions for this.*

### **Keywords**

Enjoyment, Heterotopia, History Education, Historical thinking, Identity, Learning, Museum – definition of Museum education, Museums, National pride

### **Defining the Museum**

Such is the range of interpretations as to what a ‘museum’ might be that even the International Council of Museums (ICOM) had difficulty in providing a firm definition which would satisfy the international community ‘ICOM itself has not helped very much to produce an answer to a question that is heard more and more . . . Is it a museum?’ (Hudson, 1998, p. 45) being forced to amend their definition from the following in 1946:

A non-profit- making, permanent institution in the service of society and it’s development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment.’ (Ambrose and Paine, 1993, p. 8).

to:

a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. (21<sup>st</sup> General Conference, Vienna, 2007).  
(<http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/>)

The change in emphasis from museums displaying physical evidence to displaying both ‘tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment’ (ibid) would suggest that the idea of a ‘museum’ is greater than the physical items which it displays and that it can be adapted to meet the ever changing nature of society.


The Museums Association for the United Kingdom suggested in 1998 that: 'Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.' (<http://www.museumsassociation.org/about/frequently-asked-questions>)

The equivalent American association goes so far as to suggest some examples of the types of places which might be considered as 'museums'

A non-profit, permanent, established institution, not existing primarily for the purpose of conducting temporary exhibitions ... open to the public and administered in the public interest, for the purpose of conserving and preserving, studying, interpreting, assembling, and exhibiting to the public for its instruction and enjoyment objects and specimens of educational and cultural value, including artistic, scientific ... historical and technological material. Museums thus defined shall include botanical gardens, zoological parks, aquaria, planetaria, historical societies, and historic houses and sites which meet the requirements set forth in the preceding sentence. (Ambrose and Paine, 1993, p. 8).

In containing references to learning or education, such definitions link the modern museum to the earliest Greek example, at Alexandria. The American exemplification of its definition provides yet further links between the present and past through its inclusion of 'zoological parks' and 'gardens', features commented upon by Chadwick and in the work of Falk and Dierking (2000). Such definitions alert us to a commonality of features informed by the overarching definition provided by the ICOM – being open to the public; the acquisition, conservation and preservation of objects for the purposes of studying, interpreting and enjoyment. A closer consideration of the most basic and original definition of the term 'museum' further illustrates the importance of learning.

An etymological definition of 'museum' provides us with the following:

[museum \(n.\)](#)  1610s, 'the university building in Alexandria,' from Latin museum 'library, study,' from Greek mouseion 'place of study, library or museum, school of art or poetry,' originally 'a seat or shrine of the Muses,' from Mousa 'Muse' (see [muse](#) (n.)). (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=museum>).

Again, the feature linking both modern and classical definitions is that of study or, taken in its broadest sense, learning. The etymological definition provides links to classical Greek and Latin, attributing a specific learning purpose to the buildings described – study; indeed through association with the idea of a shrine dedicated to the 'protectors of the fine arts', a certain 'gravitas' is added to the idea of study which took place in such buildings. The Musaeum of Alexandria focused on providing the perfect atmosphere and surroundings for those who lived there, to study: 'Begun in the third century B.C.E the celebrated Musaeum of Alexandria was a group of literary and scientific scholars supported by the Ptolomies, who provided them with palatial housing and a now legendary library.' (Lee, 1997, p. 385) Although the mention of the library at Alexandria can be regarded as supporting the idea of 'book learning', the library and its books were second to the idea of learning and study, the books helping to promote learning through thought. Whilst such a description provides a chronological and historical context for the idea of learning, it also clearly indicates that the focus of the musaeum in Alexandria was not on items and buildings but on the 'musaeum' as a group of people engaged in learning, a point further supported by Murphy (2003).



The derivation of the French term 'museum' enlarges on this idea:

In 1708 ... Pierre Danet identified *museum* as the Latin form of the French term *musee*, which could refer to an academic assembly or to a cabinet; likewise ... Antoine Court de Gebelin (1725–1784) located the origins of the French term *muse* in the Greco-Latin terms *musaeum*, *museum*, which first meant an 'Academy, a place where Men of Letters assemble.' and which subsequently became associated with a private study or "cabinet for men of letters" (Lee, 1997, p. 388)

That a 'cabinet', at this time, was little more than a room in a building is emphasised through the 'cabinets of curiosities' which preceded the formal museum building. The emphasis is not on a building or room to store items of interest but rather the room or building is secondary to and in the service of learning. It is also suggestive of learning not as a solitary activity but rather as a social endeavour, predating social learning theory (Vygotsky 1962) by over two hundred years.

Antiquity however did not limit learning to a building: 'As Pliny and Varro remind us, nature was the primary haunt of the Muses, and therefore a 'museum' in the most literal sense.' (Findlen, 2007, p. 25), Learning taking place in the 'surrounding world' (ibid). Indeed Socrates was renowned for taking his question and discussion based approach to learning out into the countryside whilst Pliny in his *Natural History* continued in this vein, assigning learning to taking place in a pastoral setting, suitable for reflective thought, quiet contemplation and discussion. Such a definition is important today. It reminds us that learning can take place anywhere, even amongst 'nature' and not only within a building.

The emergence of a specific building as part of a definition for the museum can be traced back to the 'Cabinets of Curiosities' characteristic of the wealthy classes before the nineteenth century. Yet even in considering these 'Wunderkabinett' (Murphy, 2003; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Bennett, 1995) the emphasis is not on a particular building but rather on a room within a building used for private collections for 'Most museums were not originally planned for public use; more often they were private individual collections which were in time opened to the public.' (Schools Council, 1972, p. 11) That such private collections were little more than a dusty, unordered, mixed bag of items which might be regarded as having taken the interest of the collector could be one way of describing them. Yet there were examples of museums that would be recognisable today.

Opened in 1683, the Ashmolean Museum is by its own admission 'the oldest public museum in Britain, and the first-purpose built public museum in the world'. (<http://www.ashmolean.org>). Whilst the Ashmolean was purpose built and did allow the general public entrance, if they could afford the fee, it was to be through the categorisation of the items on display that the museum had the greatest impact on the development of the modern museum, providing a sense of order and structure which the cabinets of curiosities did not. John Tradescant (1656) in describing his categorisation of the items within the Ashmolean suggests a more formal, ordered way of learning, enabling visitors to recognise change and continuity, similarity and difference and the significance of items – key concepts in the study of history today (DfES 1990, QCA 2007, DfE 2013).

### **The Museum as a Specific Building**

A move to a more widespread recognition of a museum as a specific architectural construct, built with a specific purpose in mind, was not to occur until the nineteenth century, with the French architectural competitions ensuring links to the classical past through the stipulation of

certain features reminiscent of the classical 'museum' (Lee, 1997). It was to be the collectors of this period, the wealthy emerging middle classes, industrialists, explorers whose ability to collect can be directly related to their business prowess, who were far more likely to have a specific building or gallery constructed for their collections.

The move to the development of a specific building to house items of interest from across the natural history spectrum as well as examples of manmade objects which would appear to support Marcel Foucault's description of a museum as an example of a heterotopia '... of indefinitely accumulating time' (1984, p. 7). Yet Foucault's very choice of words in declaring that 'The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (1984, p. 6) does the museum, especially in its modern incarnation, a disservice relegating it to little more than a store house. Whilst many museums of the twentieth and twenty-first century do contain a range of different spaces often divided into different time periods (Roman gallery, Egyptian Gallery, Greek gallery), a sense of unity is provided by the focus on the human experience which can be regarded as being common to all and contradicts Foucault's belief that they are incompatible. Indeed it is this unifying factor which makes a museum of particular use in the study of history at all educational levels.

Even the natural history museums and galleries provide an insight into the human story, providing an insight into the elements of nature that have helped to shape our lives. Foucault's definition may just as easily be applied to many homes across the country and world today for an 'accumulation of time' could be used to describe the personal collections of mementoes, memorabilia or just general personal items collected and added to across the years by most members of society and only limited in time. Such a definition also detracts from the deeper purpose of the museum, suggesting that it is only a place for storing and displaying items. Whilst this may be applicable to the cabinets of curiosities, antecedents of the museum as we know and experience it today, the changes which took place in the nineteenth century recognise a far closer relationship between the idea of a store house of items and the original Greek idea of a place of learning.

### **The Museum: An education in political power**

Even in the earliest incarnation of the museum, political power was central to the existence of the latter. Sponsored and supported as they were by the Ptolomies, the establishment of the library at Alexandria and the scholars who studied within this rarefied setting provided a living example of the power of one of history's oldest political families and was also suggestive of a link between those with power and the promotion of learning. Wealth and power were synonymous and as such the earliest incarnation of the museum had a lot in common with the practices of collecting of the royal families both within Britain and across Europe from the sixteenth century.

Collectors were often royal, rich individuals and later, members of the new middle class, able to sponsor expeditions or purchase the items brought back from them which added to their personal collections. Such collections whilst being for private enjoyment also provided an education in where power lay, wealth and power being synonymous. The audience for such items was most definitely from the higher social orders, more often than not friends or those individuals whom the collector wanted to impress, for whatever reason. Such a use of collections was not unique to Britain. In 1584 the collection of Francesco I de Medici had been transferred to the Ufizi Gallery '... in response to the need for public legitimisation of the Medici dynasty' (Bennett, 1995, p. 27). That the public could be allowed access to the country's

treasures purely for enjoyment or education was still a long way off in Britain at the turn of the nineteenth century.

It was to be the tumultuous events which took place in France in the late eighteenth century which marked a turning point in the development of the museum into a place for public visiting (Schubert, 2009; McDonald, 2003). The decision of the revolutionary government in France in 1789 to make public the royal collections of art through the formation of the Louvre Museum marked a clear move to providing the proletariat or working classes with access to the riches which had been symbols of royal power. Yet even this act might be regarded as another example of using the museum to exert power, the difference being that the power had shifted from royalty to the governing Republic. Again this was not an attempt at providing a formal learning environment but rather the intention was that visitors would learn through their own experiences and choices of exhibits to visit, an example of the free choice learning and learning environment considered by Falk and Dierking (2000), Bamberger and Tal (2006).

The public protests, riots and social unrest in response to economic, political and social conditions (Evans, 1983; Stevenson, 1992; Gilmour, 1992; Plowright, 1996) across Britain and Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries led to a ruling class which 'feared for their safety' (Evans, 1983, p. 276). Museums were considered by the ruling conservative class to be a way of distracting the more educated, politically aware and interested middle classes, from the often violent social change taking place across Europe (Bennett 1995). Edwin Chadwick provided an example of such a use of 'museums' when he noted the successful distraction of people away from a Chartist meeting by the timely opening of the zoo, botanical gardens and museums in Bradford, leading to the meeting being a complete failure (cited in Bennett, 1995).

The museum was used by the ruling classes in the nineteenth century to help to bring about social change and social cohesion. In encouraging the working classes to visit museums in whatever form, it was hoped that they would learn the manners and morals from their bourgeois visitor counterparts, bringing about a change in the behaviour of the working masses. Rather than a focus on the acquisition of knowledge or an increased understanding of different cultures and peoples, museums were regarded as providing an education in social sensibilities and practices, in providing 'public culturing' (McDonald, 2003, p. 2). In 1888 Greenwood (cited in Bennett 1995) attributed even greater powers to the museum in declaring that '... a Museum and Free Library are as necessary for the mental and moral health of the citizens as good sanitary arrangements ... are for their physical health and comfort.' (Greenwood, 1888, p. 389) It would appear that what had once been the provider of time for thought and reflection was very much, in the nineteenth century, regarded as a panacea for the ills of society. Such a use of the museum expanded it whilst maintaining the informal nature of learning, providing a clear example of Lave's theory of situated learning (1990) over a hundred years prior to its inception.

Foremost in the mind of the government in encouraging the creation of museums via The Public Museums Act 1845, was a different type of education. The museum in the second half of the nineteenth century was to be used to create a sense of national pride, a shared identity, an idea echoed in more recent years with Gordon Brown's (2007) championing, if unsuccessfully, of the creation of a Museum of British History. The opening of the French royal collections via the Louvre can be seen within this context (Davis, 1976; Meijer-Van Mensch and Van Mensch, 2010) as can The Great Exhibition (1851) (Bennett, 1988, 1995). The ordered nature of the displays and the way in which the visiting public was able to move through the exhibition reinforced ideas of societal order and supported the ruling classes in winning the 'hearts and minds' (Bennett, 1988: 76) of the masses.

By the mid nineteenth century a general, if rather slow, movement away from a museum as a private collection of items had begun to take place. The construction of purpose built museums for the edification of the general public, funded not only by private individuals but by the state and local councils marked a definite attempt to educate society. The museum provided an informal learning opportunity, in which the visitor chose the displays to focus upon, taking from them the knowledge that they chose whilst being unaware of the controlling, clandestine influence of government through the promotion of such venues. That the public response to this exertion of power was largely positive may be seen through the media reports of the time (Flanders, 1995). The opening of the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool in 1877 led the Daily Courier to declare '... there can be no question that a multitude of visitors will throng the Art Gallery to drink in the inspiration of genius and to be imbued with the lessons the paintings and marbles silently teach.' (1877, p. 4, quoted in Flanders, 1995). In adopting the language of sustenance the Courier predated the views and thoughts of Greenwood (1888), imbuing the museums with an importance similar to that of food and drink for survival while the use of the term 'lessons' firmly establishes the museum as a place of learning.

### **The Museum and The Promotion of Learning**

The idea of learning through the museum was not that envisaged in Ancient Greece, but rather the British Museum and similar venues were to provide knowledge, a suggestion which continues to be recognised today (Hughes, 2014). A questioning approach as advocated by Socrates was not encouraged; observation was. Any reflection and deeper thought was not the overt intention although it may have taken place. The ordinary public provided with such access for the first time were meant to marvel at the objects which had been collected and displayed as examples of the achievements of 'great' Britain and Britons. Sunday afternoons could be spent in visiting the museum as well as on walks, the government thereby providing for the intellectual health of society as well as physical welfare.

That the changes which have become recognised as characteristic of the nineteenth century also included the introduction of a formal education system, which was to have a profound effect on the growth and development of museums and of public perceptions as to their purpose. Whilst private education had existed in a variety of forms for centuries (Cathedral and Church Schools, private tutors and grammar schools) a form of education for the masses regulated by the government and local authorities grew throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A plethora of educational reforms including The Elementary Education Act (1870), The Elementary Education (School Attendance Act) 1893, The Balfour Act (1902) and The Fisher Act of 1918 effectively paved the way for the state education system as we know and recognise it today, providing a platform for the Education Act of 1944 (The 'Butler' Act) and the developments of the twenty-first century. Yet in providing a clear, unequivocal, formal education system for all such acts also instigated a change in purpose for museums. Whilst they retained an informal education element (Rowlands, 2012), the focus of museums became much more concentrated on the collection, preservation and conservation of items of significance. The informal learning aspect of the museum in the twentieth century moved away from that of social education and manners, to one of learning facts, details and also the promotion of questioning, a pre-requisite to reflection and thought, features of modern educational theory and pedagogy in general (Vygotsky, 1962; Kagan, 1994; Fisher, 2000) and the pedagogy of history in particular. Cossons (1992) in exhorting museums to send '... people out of those museums provoked to ask questions.' (1992, p. 77) not only established a link between the classical ideas of learning as practised by Socrates but suggested a link to more reflective, analytical learning through museums. Indeed the distinct educational purpose of the twenty-first century museum is clearly evident in the range of literature which specifically features 'learning' or 'education'



as an aspect of the museum experience (Falk and Dierking, 2000; Lord, 2007; Davis, 1976; Hooper-Greenhill, 1994).

The twenty-first century museum has recognised the need to provide a more diverse range of learning experiences for its visitors, reaffirming the role of education as a key aspect of the role of the museum today. The number of museums of all types which now have both a physical presence and an on-line presence providing virtual, intangible tours is increasing (Bouck et al, 2009; Grincheva, 2012; Hou et al, 2014) and provides clear exemplification of the 'intangible' as mentioned in the ICOM's 2007 definition of a museum. Yet in attempting to 'keep up with the times' and employ modern technology to enhance visitor participation and enjoyment museums have been accused of compromising the integrity of the museum purpose (McPherson, 2006). Providing a virtual museum, virtual tour or on-line exhibits whilst opening the museum to a much wider audience, not limited to being able to physically visit a place, removes the experiential nature of learning in the museum. Hands on learning, exploring and unintentional learning through stumbling across items in a physical context is not possible in a virtual environment yet it is such experiences which are of importance in the promotion of learning about the past.

### **The Museum: Learning, Enjoyment and History**

Such modern approaches to the provision of access to museums not only broadens the range of learning opportunities but can also be linked to the 'enjoyment' factor, mentioned in definitions. The employment of 'inspiration' in the British definition is clearly reminiscent of the purpose of the earliest museums to create a sense of awe in the visitor, a 'wow' factor as suggested by the term 'Wunderkammer'. The inclusion of 'enjoyment' in all definitions is also significant in providing another link back to the earliest museums, in the form of the 'cabinets of curiosities', originally formed for the enjoyment, amusement and perusal of the collector and his associates. It is also significant to note that enjoyment is clearly associated with the learning process in history (Cooper 1991) and across the modern curriculum in general (Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status 2012).

The role of the museum as a specific venue through which we can learn about the past is an element of its role which clearly links both past and present incarnations of this establishment. Whilst the visiting public of the early nineteenth century were subconsciously developing their manners they were also developing their awareness of change and continuity, similarity and difference and significance, historical concepts which form a part of the twenty-first century History curriculum. Visitors to the Great Exhibition (1851) caught in the awe and wonder of the occasion and exhibits were also learning about the development of the British Empire and the role that Britain played in the wider world. That museums are considered to be an important aspect of the modern educational landscape, valued as contributing to formal and informal learning alike, is clearly evident through the work of Hooper-Greenhill (1992, 1994), Weier (2004), Schools Council (1972), Hein (1998), Hughes (2014).

Yet even those museums with an on-line, virtual presence continue to promote learning through more traditional methods of displaying information about exhibits from which it is hoped that the visitor will gain knowledge. Small cards, with close writing display what the curator considers to be key information relevant to each item whilst a larger display board may provide context to the period as a whole. Children and adult visitors alike are required to read in order to learn in this context. Yet such an approach to learning can be limiting, particularly for children who may not have the vocabulary, attention span or reading ability needed to learn from such textual sources. Observation and comparison of those items on display with similar items today, encountered in their own everyday life, enables the observer to reach a conclusion as



to how items may have changed or remained the same, imbuing the item with a value due to its longevity. In this context learning takes place not through any formal, structured process but rather through general skills and individual thought. If conversation with an additional person or people is added to the combination of observation and reading to collect information then the possibilities for reaching broader conclusions is greatly enhanced. The collection of information and subsequent personal reflection on this enables the individual to build their own views and understanding not only of the item on display but also of the context from which it was taken. Such learning about the past is not limited to school activity.

### **The Museum and Learning History**

The value of the museum, in whatever form that may take, to learning History as part of the formal school curriculum is clearly acknowledged. The various incarnations of the National Curriculum for History since 1988 have all included references to the use and value of museums in the study of the past. In 2004 National Curriculum guidance on supporting inclusion across all subjects included covering the practical elements of learning through 'visits to museums, historic buildings and sites' (2004, p. 37) whilst for history, pupils were encouraged to use 'museum displays' (2004, p. 95) when considering the concept of interpretation and for the purposes of historical enquiry. The most recent version of the National Curriculum in 2014, however, whilst encouraging the use of 'other experiences' (DfE 2014, p. 4) in the study of all subjects does not make reference to the use of museums in learning, not even for history. Such an omission whether deliberate or accidental might encourage schools to remain focussed on classroom based, knowledge acquisition following suggestions from government that knowledge is all important yet previous reports and research clearly indicate a place for museums in learning about the past.

OFSTED (2008) clearly recognised the value of the 'school visit' as part of the history curriculum at both primary and secondary level, whilst making suggestions for improvements in the use of the visit across both phases. Inspectors felt that as an aspect of primary education in history the school visit lacked clear historical learning objectives and was not prepared for or followed up in sufficient depth in school sessions. For secondary schools the issue was not the preparation, learning and follow up experiences but rather the lack of such visits taking place at all. The commitment to the use of museums, art galleries and the school visit in general to provide an enhanced learning experience can be seen from the initial National Curriculum documentation of 1988, through the 'Curriculum Opportunities' statements of the 2007 incarnation of the curriculum and the establishment of the Learning Outside the Classroom initiative of the Labour Government (2008).

Museums provide pupils with a real life context for the development of a range of skills and concepts linked to the pedagogy of the subject. The collection of information as part of research, already alluded to above, is perhaps the most basic use of a museum for the purposes of learning about the past. The nature of the museum in providing objects to consider taps into the most basic of learning approaches, clearly visible with even young children, and transcending the need to read and write – the need to question. Questioning is widely recognised as being at the heart of good teaching and learning, with teachers being required to encourage pupils to answer and ask questions (The Standards for Qualified Teacher Status 2012) for all subjects. The use of questioning for the purpose of learning about the past transforms History from being a passive, received subject as experienced in the 1960s and 1970s (Sheldon, 2011), to being one of active participation and pupil engagement in their own learning. Through the promotion of thought and reflection in order to answer the questions posed and through the need to present those answers in an accessible form, whether that be through writing, verbal

communication or visual representation the use of questioning in a museum context can have a dramatic impact on pupils learning about the past.

A range of formal learning activities through which pupils, whilst on a school visit, can learn about the past have been recognised, developed and written about for over forty years (Cooper 2000, West 1990). Museums with a specific history focus such as The Eden Camp Museum (Yorkshire), Styal Mill (Cheshire), Speke Hall (Liverpool), Hampton Court (London), Stewart Mill (Perth, Scotland) and even the Lawnmower Museum (Southport) not only illustrate the development across the twentieth and early twenty-first century of a range of different types of museum but also provide pupils with an alternative, often more revealing window on the past than can be provided by the normal school building. Having been encouraged to question the evidence on display, pupils can then attempt to find the answers to their questions through the use of the accompanying signs and displays or can use their questions as a basis for further research back in the classroom, library or even through another museum. Museums also offer the children of today an opportunity to investigate such historical concepts as change and continuity, significance and interpretation, forming their own conclusions as to the usefulness of displays and items on display for a particular historical enquiry.

### **The Museum and History in Primary School**

In terms of learning about History the role of the museum, in its broadest form, is clear. Cooper (1991) in her thesis entitled 'Young Children's Thinking In History' identifies a clear role for museums in providing a 'meaningful experience' (1991, p. 85) to promote thinking in primary school children often through 'open-ended discussion' (1991, p. 233). The Historical Association (2000) suggests that museums may be used to help primary school pupils develop their understanding of the concept of interpretation:

Draw children's attention to the objects in a museum display – how did the curator choose the objects for the display? Children might contrast this with the selection which they make of objects and pictures to place in their own classroom displays. (2000, p. 10)

Such an example of how to use a museum has clear links to the work of West (1990) and Burridge and West (1992). The works of Husbands (1996), Nichol and Dean (1997), Hoodless (2008) and Cooper and Chapman (2009) illustrates the value of the use of museums and working with museum services to promote pupil learning about History. The value to the primary school pupil of learning through a museum can be clearly seen through the words of pupils themselves. Through a consideration of old toys during a visit to a toy museum Gemma was able to recognise the concept of change: 'We found out that old toys were made from wood and our new toys are made from plastic. (Cooper, 2000, p. 63) In the 2007 revision of the National Curriculum, the role of museums in history education was made clear, with schools and teachers being urged to help children 'appreciate and evaluate, through visits where possible, the role of museums, galleries, archives and historic sites in preserving, presenting and influencing people's attitudes towards the past' (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2007, p. 117). Indicative of the Labour Government's overall approach to learning and their recognition of the value of learning outside the classroom as evidenced through OFSTED's report 'Learning Outside the Classroom' (2008), by the earlier Manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom (Department for Education 2006) and through the establishment of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom in 2008, the Labour government continued to illustrate their commitment to such learning through the parliamentary report by the Children, Schools and Families Committee of the House of Commons 'Transforming Education Outside the Classroom' (April 2010).

## Conclusion

The museums of the twenty-first century remain true to the original purpose of the museum in its earliest incarnations: as places of learning. Whilst they offer the student of History an opportunity to gain knowledge of the past – a key priority for the present government – museums also provide the prospect for learning through questioning, through reflection and sharing ideas with classmates and teachers. The ways in which schools choose to employ the variety of venues which can be classed as a museum in the delivery of the 2014 history curriculum is an area for further investigation. Whilst OFSTED (2008) recognised deficiencies in both primary and secondary approaches to the use of the school visit, in this article taken to mean visits to museums in their broadest definition, how schools have moved on since 2008 needs to be ascertained. It is the intention that having established the long and illustrious history of museums in educating the British public, attention will now turn to a closer examination of how primary and secondary schools employ the school visit to the museum in teaching about the past. The aim is not only to establish how schools use such venues but also to build upon previous research as to how children learn history in such an environment, and whether or not the use of museums, both physical and virtual, continue to provide an effective learning experience for pupils.

## Correspondence

Christine Smith  
[smithc@hope.ac.uk](mailto:smithc@hope.ac.uk)

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## THE POTENTIALITIES OF USING HISTORICAL FICTION AND LEGENDS IN HISTORY TEACHING: A STUDY WITH PRIMARY EDUCATION PORTUGUESE STUDENTS

Glória Solé, Diana Reis and Andreia Machado, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal

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### Abstract:

*This study is in the line of research in History Education that has revealed the importance of the pedagogic use of narratives for teaching and learning social studies, demonstrating that it improves historical understanding (Egan, 1986; Hoodless, 1998; Levstik & Pappas, 1992; Levstik, 1992). Our paper investigated how historical fiction literature and legends may contribute to the construction of the historical knowledge of primary school Portuguese students.*

*The narratives that were used related to the process of Christian Reconquest of territories from Muslim and formation of Portugal. They were the main sources for implementing various activities, which were complemented by the use and intersection of other sources (historical, historiographical and iconic), enabling individual and creative dialogue in the learning process of History. Two teachers training in their 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes (20 students with 9-10 years old) in one northern Portuguese urban school implemented the programme. The purpose was to find answers to the following research questions:*

- *What are the potentialities of using historical fiction and legends in History teaching?*
- *What is the impact of these specific sources on students' narratives?*
- *What is the impact of historiographical and iconic sources on students' narratives?*

*The students were invited to read those sources (excerpts) and to write four narratives according to the following empathetic tasks:*

- 1) *Imagine that you are D. Afonso Henriques (king of Portugal). Write a letter to Egas Moniz (his tutor) telling about the latest conquests.*
- 2) *Imagine you have a foreign friend asking you to tell things about D. Afonso Henriques' times. What would you say?*
- 3) *Imagine that you would have to tell him the tale of the battle of Ourique (1139). What would you say?*
- 4) *Imagine that you are a Muslim soldier. Tell your version of the battle; or: Imagine that you are a Christian soldier. Tell your version of the battle.*

*Students' narratives were analysed and categorised based on Grounded Theory methodology to reveal progression in their levels of complexity. In summary, the findings show:*

- *a prevalence of fragmented narratives and mainly framed by an additive and chronological structure;*
- *some emergent narratives*
- *a few with multi-perspective point of view.*

*Evident is the influence of fictional narrative and/or legends on their historical thinking when compared with the other types of sources.*

**Key words:**

Grounded theory, Historical cognition; Historical fiction and legends, History Education; Legends – historical, Narratives, Portugal, Primary

**Introduction**

History tries to understand and explain the past of man in society. Humans have a genuine need to know their ancestors, how they lived in their day-to-day lives in their environmental context and with others and how they thought. This desire explains the importance of “traces” from the past that we have and their interpretation. The narration of History is signified by a discursive structure where there is a sequential organisation of past events. The narrative is an appropriate type of linguistic structure to explain historical events.

In the process of interpretation, the historian tries to understand and explain the past events, trying to place them in a context. Currently we cannot accept as valid a single narrative of history, i.e. a single interpretation. Therefore, even about specific situations, there can be numerous valid historical narratives, as long they are supported by the evidence. The historical narrative can be considered a form of design and adequate production to the description/ explanation of events, situations and historical processes. Narrative is advocated as a “narrative model” favored by Gallie (1964) and Atkinson (1978) who argue that History is a self-explanatory narrative, integrating author’s assumptions (personal, social and philosophical). This “narrative model” of History was inspired by Collingwood (1946) ideas. According to Collingwood, the historian tries to build an historical ‘frame’ which is part a narration of events, a description of situations and analysis of characters. The historian has to build a coherent framework that is endowed with disciplinary meaning and truth.

The philosopher Jörn Rüsen (2001) also discussed the complexity of the narrativist paradigm. Rusen considered that the historical narrative is synthesised in a structural unit that reflects the constituent mental operations of historical consciousness. Accordingly, this enables the formation of human identity, reinforcing the idea that historical narratives give meaning to experiences in time. So it is important that writers / historians distinguish fictional narrative from none fiction narrative. However, we need to be aware that in historiography there are also fictional elements that result in both different interpretations of the evidence and the memories, keepsakes and experiences of past times.

For Bruner (1986) narratives imply a different kind of thought from logical argumentation. Each provides a specific schema for the construction and organisation of data. Real or fictions stories follow specific criteria in their construction, including logical argumentation. In their final form they are similar being used for convincing their audiences; however “arguments convince of their truth, stories of their likeliness” (p. 11). An ever-present idea is to link the stories to realistic situations or events, especially through the characters who act in them. Bruner considers that it is important that the narrative “deals with the vicissitudes of human intentions” (1986, p. 16), highlighting the role of the “characters”, because a good story lives through them.

Bruner (1986), based on Amélie Rotry’s ideas, distinguishes between characters, figures, people, self and individuals in a narrative. According to Amélie Rorty these characters have the functions of categories, which may be more suitable for the analysis of historical narratives, especially fictional. However, it is uncertain whether the story in a narrative is more liable to errors, inaccuracies, logical and rational than more systematic methods. Bruner ends by saying that we beautify the “hard anal, converting them into chronicle and finally into historical narrative

(in Hayden White's words). And we constitute the psychological and cultural reality in which participants in that history live. And in the end, the narrative and paradigmatic end up living side by side" (p. 43).

On the teaching of History, it is important to help students to understand what is History and its usefulness. For this, History Education must create strategies that enable students to acquire knowledge of History through the most suitable didactics/pedagogy. Historical narratives are a pedagogic resource that enhance more enjoyable and easier historical learning.

This article aims to demonstrate the pedagogical potential of fictional narratives in History teaching through a study of 4<sup>th</sup> year Portuguese students [9-10 years old] learning about the Christian Reconquest and the Formation of Portugal through historical fiction and a legend. From the exploration of these narratives and other iconic and textual historiographical sources the research intended that students could construct their own historical accounts. So, we tried to identify the influence of fictional narratives in these students construction of historical knowledge.

### **The narratives and teaching of history**

In the last decades, several national and international studies have demonstrated the relevance of the use of narratives as a resource for the teaching and learning of History, particularly works of children's historical literature fiction. This is an appropriate strategy and facilitator of historical understanding since historical fiction present a more accessible language and a plot to illuminate an historical context. From the 1980s of the use of fiction has been an aspect of research in the use of narratives generally for teaching Social Studies and particularly for History, especially in the United States (Freeman & Levstik, 1986; 1992; Levstik & Pappas, 1992) and UK (Cooper, 1995; 2006); Cox & Hughes, 1998; Egan, 1986; Hoodless, 1998, 2002; Husbands, 1996). Some of these studies have a great impact in Portugal in History Education research related to this subject, (Roldão, 1995; Fertuzinho, 2004; Freitas & Solé, 2003a, 2003b; Parente, 2004; Solé, 2004; 2009; 2013a, 2013b; Solé, Reis & Machado, 2014) and recently in Brazil (Nascimento, 2013; Zamboni & Fonseca, 2010).

Several historical education investigations have highlighted the various possibilities for using historical narratives in the school environment. Kieran Egan (1986), has played a leading role in explaining the role of narrative in the classroom, "the story is not just some casual entertainment; it reflects a basic and powerful form in which we make sense of the world and experience" (p. 15). Through narrative students more clearly understand historical events and/or concepts. They use the field of imagination to deepen understanding about societies and people from other places and times as well as the societies in where the child livess. Contact with historical stories (narratives) often allows students to broaden their experiences and their horizons. The narrative structure both encourages and enables readers to identify aspects of the story, such as events, characters and phenomena.

On the same lines, Husbands (1996) points that in recent historiography there are claims that the story through the reconstruction of a "narrated" past, i.e. organised, around the experiences and representations of common or unknown historical actors enables "(...) the mediation of the past through the experiences recounted by those ..." (p.47). Husbands notes that the relationship between history and narration has been difficult, as the very definition of narration sits on the border between fact and fiction, between truth and falsehood, between the emotional and causal logic. Perhaps for this reason it affirms that historians and teachers still remain somewhat sceptical about the place of narrative in learning history. Accordingly, the

perspective of narration in recent historiography becomes restructured. The narrative forms are used for more comprehensive and complex ideas in order to stimulate “ways of thinking” about the past and the way it was experienced, “through the narrative, it becomes possible to address more abstract ideas about the assumptions and beliefs of past societies, on how they worked or not, and how people represent their relationships with others” (Husbands, 1996, p. 48).

Husbands warns the teacher to take care in the use of storytelling and narrative in the classroom, for example care in the selection of narratives that build. The teacher must be careful to avoid wild reactions or of emotional support for a certain account. Narration highlights powers that the storytellers and their own narratives have: to capture the imagination; of ‘giving life’ to describe characters; of creating moments of excitement and great interest. Storytellers make us laugh and cry, make us want to follow the story, conjure mental images that shape the way we think about the past: they stimulate our curiosity. The fictional elements of the narrations raise questions, require us to seek more, that we broaden our conceptions of the interpretations that the evidence allows. Used this way, the narrations raise curiosity, draw the texture of the tale, provoke and frustrate encouraging further investigation (Husbands, 1996, p. 49). The children are more excited by History content when they are presented in a narrative with villains, bad guys, battles, loves, etc. The shape of the narrative causes them to establish a more personal connection to the History content (Cooper, 1995).

Levstik and Pappas (1987) tried to analyse the ability of students to demonstrate historical understanding from the retelling of a fictional story in their study carried out with elementary school children. They identified two distinct patterns: one is associated with differences of degree, children explain and elaborate pronouncedly better the historical content; on the other there is a difference in kind, sometimes younger children (second grade) include details that older (sixth grade) had not included, both people involved and more historical information. The authors draw attention to results of studies that showed the great frequency with which the children during the analysis of narratives said that their interest in History, for a given topic was to know the truth, what really happened, the point of historical research at their level. With this study, they concluded that second grade children understand and are involved in history from the use of these narratives, especially when exploring historical fiction. They were “impressed with the children’s enthusiasm, sincere interest, and depth of historical understanding as we shared historical fiction, with them” (p. 14). They also concluded, as Levstik’s (1986) study demonstrates, that the relevance of the “context in which history is presented, examined, and discussed may be a crucial factor that will decide whether elementary children come to understand and engage in history” (p. 14).

According to Barton (1996) children better understand history content in the form of narrative. He found that students are more likely to remember the events narrated in a story than the ones shown on factual documents, as the language is more accessible, not having the rigor of writing that history requires. This same idea, is conveyed by Freeman and Levstik (1988), who argue that it is very important when working with fictional narratives in the classroom to allow time for further investigation by consulting other sources, promoting new analysis, group discussions comparing the story and what they learned from investigating from other sources. They defend and reinforce the use of fiction in elementary school as an appropriate strategy, because it enables children to imagine and recreate the past as it was, to get involved and to vibrate with the characters, their conflicts and feelings. For these authors, historical fiction should also be analysed as a recreation of the past from the standpoint of historical accuracy, questioning the accuracy of the data on which the fiction is based. This investigative dimension is crucial because, as Zamboni and Fonseca (2010) said “the literary work has not committed to



explain the real, not to prove events. To interpret them, rebuild them the author appeals to the imagination, creativity and fiction” (p. 340).

According to the approach defended by the authors, literature is not intended to report the reality, but it can integrate into the fictional plot structure and narrative of real facts and can therefore serve as a source, enabling a different look from the past. Nascimento (2013) corroborates this idea of literature as a source for knowledge of the past, potentially “can serve the historian as the story did not happen, but it could have been, that is, the literature allows a different way of looking at the past” (p. 42), and perceive the reality where we live result of the construction of the man. In this same line of, Solé (2013a) states that the literature, with special emphasis on the historical fictional “explains historical contents, but where the imaginary constructed by the author of fiction, lets fill in the blanks spaces that history itself is unable to do” (p. 366). In historical fiction narratives, the authors, based on historical facts, explain the reality using an imaginary and symbolic universe, transporting the student to the fictional environment, wrapped in a plot, and managing to capture the full attention of students. They, in turn, feel involved and enthusiastic about historical fiction being, more motivated in wanting to discover additional aspects to those described in the fictional narrative. When in reading fictional stories, the students contact with longer descriptions about the past enable them to recognise that that history is open to interpretation.

The fictional narrative booster incorporates ‘a game’ with meanings exercising the imagination that will trigger in the child / reader a reflexive attitude and critique of reality. Hoodless (1998) recognizes that with the use of fictional narratives, students tend to develop a detailed knowledge about a particular period in history.

Stories which make use of time as a device are certainly an excellent stimulus and a good resource for extending children’s understanding their potential needs to be fully exploited in the classroom, encouraging children to think carefully about what is happening in the story (Hoodless, 1998, p. 110).

Legends, integrated into the oral tradition literature, are also fictional narratives, whose main function is to preserve the past narratives from generation to generation, providing to the reader the preservation of local and regional memories. This literary genre, associated with ancestral past, draws upon and values the embeded understanding and memory, as it was how society preserved its beliefs, values and culture. The opportunity for children to experience this literary genre provides them with a journey through the imagination and the impossible, an important key in the construction of memory from both a cultural and social standpoint. There are several authors who defend the use of legends also in the teaching of history, referring that allows students a better historical understanding (Cooper, 2006; Mattoso, 2002; Solé, 2013b). Cooper (2006) points out that “myths and legends help children to decode the mysterious and sometimes threatening life they are growing into” (p.124), preserve, also memory and tradition of our ancestors, and can be associated with heroic figure of a saint, martyr or hero (Solé, 2013b). According Mattoso (2002) legends should take advantage of the fascination that the children feels when read this type of narratives. It should, however, “take care to spend the fictional discourse set in a mythical time, that is an imaginary time and no history, for reporting in the historical and datable time, reconstructed from documents and registered in memory, whether contemporary, is of ancestors (Mattoso, 2002, p. 71).

Several possibilities are pointed out by many researchers, some cited above, in relation to the use of narrative in the teaching of History. We can systematize some tasks, from them that we can realized as:

- (a) ordering historical events; searching for the information that contains historical insight into life at the time;
- (b) investigating facts and focused content in the text and reading other sources;
- (c) investigating characteristics of certain characters in the period and relating this to the way they act in history;
- (d) making distinction between fact and fiction; looking for evidence in other non-fiction texts;
- (e) using these stories as models for writing, recounting certain episodes but, more important is recounting a different point of view, for example of one of the characters, or your own point of view.

The literature review, showing the relation of Literature and History, is a support for the teaching of history from the early years. The use of narratives in classrooms contribute to the construction of a critical and multi-perspective view of History and historical knowledge. Narrative promotes different points of view and approaches to the past, according to the perspective of the narrator / author of the book.

Below we present a study of two teacher-researchers on the use of historical fiction narrative (children's literature of historical fiction and legends) related to the *Christian Reconquest* and the *Formation of Portugal*. The research occurred in the fourth grade (9-10 years old) of a primary school in Portugal.

## The Study

### Methodology

This study is based on research-action-research approach integrated into an interpretative perspective applied to the study of teaching and learning processes in the classroom context (Elliot, 1993). Through this approach, the aim was to implement educational activities based on the use and exploration of fictional historical narratives for learning and historical understanding. Such action-research potentially generates practical working knowledge from the research process. Based on principles of constructivist learning perspective (Fosnot, 1999), the teacher is also a researcher. We applied in the classroom the model of class-workshop (*aula-oficina*) defended by Barca (2004) because this model helps students to understand the historical topic, since the teacher pays attention initially to the ideas /prior knowledge of the students and promote challenging tasks, using diverse strategies, aimed at building up, i.e. the construction, of knowledge.

### Sample

The study was carried out in an urban school of northern Portugal, a group of 4th grade, with 20 students, 10 male and 10 female, aged between 9-10 years.

### Research questions

In this study we aimed to expose the primary students (4<sup>th</sup> grade) to the use of fictional narratives and legends in the teaching of History so as to construct their own historical knowledge. We also examined the relevance and impact of this type of strategy for the development of historical knowledge and historical thinking in students. The research also aimed to highlight / emphasise the didactic / educational potential of fictional narratives for the acquisition of historical knowledge and the development of historical understanding. The following research questions focused the research:

- *What are the potentialities of using historical fiction and legends in History teaching?*
- *What is the impact of these specific sources on students' narratives?*
- *What is the relative impact of historiography and iconic sources on students' narratives?*
- *What does it contribute to the understanding of multiperspectivity in the process of Christian Reconquest in the formation of Portugal?*

## **Research – Description of Activities, Procedures and Data Analysis**

### **Introduction – the fictional narratives**

This paper incorporates two studies, study A (Reis, 2013) and study B (Machado, 2014), of two teacher researchers on a masters programme. Both studies evaluated the role of stories as means of teaching the content of an Environmental Studies syllabus which incorporates Portuguese History. The first study (study A) used the fictional narrative *Era uma vez um Rei conquistador* [*Was Once A Conquering King*] of José Jorge Letria (2009) and the second study (study B), the *A lenda do milagre de Ourique* [*Legend Of Ourique Miracle*] by Gentil Marques (1997).

The first fictional narrative of José Jorge Letria *Was Once A Conquering King* tells the story of D. Afonso Henriques, the first King of Portugal, from his birth until his death (1112–1185 AD). The book tells of the challenges that he had to overcome to achieve his dreams, in particular the struggle he had with his mother Teresa; describes his childhood under the guidance of the nobleman Egas Moniz, his educator, some of the achievements and important battles in the creation of Portugal. The narrative is of great value when it comes to historical fiction as it reveals details of the sentiments, feelings and thoughts of D. Afonso Henriques, with relevant historiographical connections to this formative period of Portugal's history.

The second fictional narrative, *Legend Of Ourique Miracle*, Gentil Marques' version (1997), focuses on the Battle of Ourique, 1139, which was fought between Christians and Moors in the Alentejo (South of Portugal), during the Christian reconquest process. D. Afonso Henriques had planned to conquer land in the south of Portugal and also seize cattle, slaves and other booty. Despite being out numbered by Muslim forces, according to legend, the Portuguese were able in the battle, with God's help, to capture five Moorish kings and their troops. After this resounding victory D. Afonso Henriques proclaimed himself King of Portugal (or was acclaimed by his troops still on the battlefield). Accordingly from 1140 he used the denomination Portugallensis Rex (King of Portugalian or King of the Portuguese).

### **Procedures – student writing activities**

Students for studies A and B studied the fictional narratives and a dossier containing a range of iconic, historical and iconic sources upon which each was based before writing their own compositions, i.e. fictional narratives.

Table 1. Activities implemented in study A and study B – student writing tasks: fictional narratives	
Study A	Study B
On <i>Was Once A Conquering King</i>	On the <i>Legend Of Ourique Miracle</i>
1) Imagine that you are D. Afonso Henriques (king of Portugal). Write a letter to Egas Moniz (his tutor) telling about the latest conquests;  2) Imagine you have a foreign friend asking you to tell things about D. Afonso Henriques' times. What would you say?	1) Imagine that you are a Muslim soldier. Tell your version of the battle; or Imagine that you are a Christian soldier. Tell your version of the battle or Imagine that you are a Christian soldier. Tell your version of the battle.  2) Imagine that you would have to tell him the tale of the battle of Ourique (1139). What would you say?

### Analysis and discussion of the data

#### Data Analysis: Study A

We used inductive content analysis, a model of categorising narratives, to evaluate the student's compositions. Inductive content analysis is inspired by a study presented by Samarão (2007) and Parente (2004). The narrative constructs were grouped according to the content that had a progressive logical pattern that enabled classification according to their degree of sophistication.

The categories we identified were:

1. *Fragmented Reporting*, the construction of narratives that present a story without a narrative plot, with few facts or little relevance and ordained.
2. The *Chronological report*, the information shows the events in the form of a list without an interconnection between them as well as some chronological inconsistencies.
3. The *Emerging Report*, already has a visible narrative structure with an internal logic and some historical, simple but explicit argument, describing some actions and leaving by explaining the causes of events.
4. Finally, the *Complete Narrative* presents internal logic through a coherent organizational sequence denoting historical understanding and argument based on sources provided.

#### Overall Findings: Study A

In terms of the structure of the two student compositions, the students collected information from the fictional narrative and the sources in the dossier. Through their working sessions they discussed and cross-reference information from the fictional narratives and their sources. Nevertheless, their compositions revealed that they were incapable of producing their own texts. Instead, they copied and pasted information from the sources.

In their narratives students revealed concern about timeframes and accurate detail, particularly in their second narrative. For example, a student asked in what years were born the Count D. Henrique and D. Teresa (father and mother of D. Afonso Henriques – 1<sup>st</sup> king of Portugal, explaining that it was important to know this to complete the story he was writing. In all compositions, the students selected in all compositions key elements present in the fictional narratives for example, the battles of S. Mamede and Ourique and Afonso Henriques childhood with Egas Moniz rather than other equally important events from their dossier of sources.

Although most students compositions were either *Fragmented Reports* in task 1- nine students and in task 2- six students or *Chronological Reports* in task 1- five students and in task 2- seven students, some presented valid items of historical knowledge but could not provide a coherent, connected narrative. These students presented historical events, integrating aspects of fictional narrative with what happened in the past. But because they could not present that knowledge in an articulated and contextualised manner, overall in their accounts they showed some confusion, loose and fragmented ideas.

Four students wrote *Emergent Reports* for tasks 1 and 2. Two or three students for both tasks wrote *Complete Narratives*, indicating that some of this age range can think at a sophisticated level when skilled in working upon historical evidence.

#### **Analysis of a student narrative**

The student narratives took the form of an epistolary letter, i.e. its genre. There was great variety in the chronological elements of the narrative, time, for example, where students 'invented' a date, without regard to specific criteria unless it coincided with the date of a battle. The analysis revealed that the students were not only restricted to what was requested, but added other elements to enrich their developing narratives such as:

- the secondary protagonists involved, with mention of the Moors;
- in their second compositions, the students referred to episodes such as the independence of the kingdom or the passage of the government to D. Afonso Henriques.

We concluded that the students, despite presenting simple and somewhat fragmented accounts, are able to present both historical knowledge and understanding and reveal their ideas when building a narrative based the workshops, either in the information in the dossier's source or in the fictional narrative.

Next, we analysed in greater detail and depth one narrative construction answering the second question that asked to the students:

2) *Imagine you have a friend of another nationality and he asks you to tell the history of Portugal in the time of D. Afonso Henriques. What would you say?*



The analysis below reveals the elements in a third category *Emerging Reporting* composition:

Table 1. Analysis of the structure of a narrative of a student

<b>Introduction</b>	D. Afonso Henriques was the <b>first king of Portugal</b> . He was born in <b>1109</b> and died in <b>1185</b> . D. Afonso Henriques won the <b>battle of S. Mamede</b> against his mother and the Galician armies of Fernao Peres de Trava next to <b>castle Guimaraes</b> , he also won the <b>Ourique</b> against the five Moorish kings. D. Afonso Henriques became a Knight when he was 14 years old, and he won his first battle when he was 19 years old	Historical-event reveals historical knowledge. Precise notion of time and space-use of <b>temporal and spatial markers</b> . Uses historical information from the fictional narrative.
<b>Development</b>	<b>His childhood was spent with Egas Moniz</b> . The conde D. Henrique died when Afonso Henriques was only 3 years old. Egas Moniz was like <b>a second father to him</b> , since his mother D. Teresa went to Galicia. Egas Moniz gave him advice as to the battles in the future in which he would conquer and <b>offered him a wooden sword while still a child</b> . Formerly the kingdom was called Condado Portucalense. D. Afonso Henriques <b>signed the contract of Peace with D. Afonso VII</b> . The Pope took 36 years to acknowledge D. Afonso Henriques King of Portugal.	Uses information from the fictional narrative emotive expressions. Establishing <b>causal relationships</b> . Lists relevant historical events. Integrate information from classroom discussion expressed by a student.
<b>Conclusion</b>	D. Afonso Henriques lived for 76 years <b>and contributed much to the history of Portugal</b> .	Presents a <b>personal thought</b> and historical arguments.

This narrative is rich in many aspects. The student selects information from various sources, first, making some links with the fictional narrative (Egas Moniz was like a second father to him [...] and offered him a wooden sword as a child.). Second, the author collected information from a statement by a student in one of the project's sessions ("D. Afonso Henriques married Mafalda or Matilde, because at that time Mafalda and Matilde was the same."). Finally, the remaining factual information in the construction of the narratives referred to some sources from the dossier, revealing the descriptive use use of evidence. In the construction of his narrative, the student was able to organise information and finally present the main points in response to the question, although copying information coming from various sources.

#### Data Analysis: Study B

In the second research study (study B), the researcher teacher requested the construction of two narratives (task 1 and task 2) taking into account the *Legend of the Ourique Miracle* and, based on the legend itself, a dossier of various historical, iconic and historiographical sources

for the students to consult/study during the sessions. The first task to write a narrative asked the students to create an imaginary story about the Battle of Ourique, choosing a participant army and describing its role in the battle. They had to choose one of the following questions:

- *Imagine that you are a Moorish soldier, tell your version of the battle? Or*
- *Imagine that you are a Christian soldier of the army D. Afonso Henriques, tell your version of the battle?*

For the first narrative (task 1), they wrote from the perspective either a Moorish or a Christian soldier involved in the battle:

- *Imagine that you are a Muslim soldier. Tell your version of the battle; or: Imagine that you are a Christian soldier. Tell your version of the battle Imagine that you are a Christian soldier of the army D. Afonso Henriques, how you tell your version of the battle?*

Their second empathic task was related to the Legend of the Ourique miracle:

- *Imagine you have to recount the Legend of the Ourique Miracle to a foreign boy of a different nationality, what would you say?*
- In both narratives, we tried to analyse the fictional impact on the construction of historical knowledge, looking for evidence on which the students based the construction of their narratives.

As with Study A, the two narratives were subjected to an inductive content analysis to identify, quantify and group them at different levels of narrative sophistication:

1. *Fragmented*;
2. *Copy-paste*;
3. *Descriptive*;
4. *Complete-Explanatory*.

The analytical criteria we used to classify the narratives were:

1. *Fragmented* that are
  - without logical structure, consisting of loose and / or incomplete sentences;
  - little historical accuracy – the fictional dominates the historical;
  - they include material disconnected from the historical subject matter.
2. *Copy-paste*
  - Incoherent and incomplete narratives ;
  - little coherent structure with unrelated phrases;
  - some loose/incomplete sections;
  - limited historical detail;
  - copying from the provided historical documents, information or legend
3. *Descriptive* texts without links between the events with
  - a visible logical structure;
  - some incomplete expressions
  - little organized information;

4. *Complete-Explanatory* with
- an internal logic structure;
  - historical information well organised;
  - a coherent sequence;
  - good historical understanding of the event, with visible distinction between the real and the fictional.

### **Overall Findings: Study B**

Analysis revealed the extent and nature of sophisticated thinking in the students' two narratives.

In the first task – writing an account from either a Moorish or Christian perspective – *Descriptive* narratives dominate (10 students) while for task 2 telling the *Legend of the Miracle of Ourique*, most compositions fell into the category of *Complete-Explanatory* narratives (7 students).

There was an increase in the number of students who achieved more sophisticated levels of historical thought in the second task. This suggested a more complex construction and elaboration of ideas, which may be explained by the ease of integrating this narrative with the evidence from different sources (legends, historiographical texts, iconic sources), proceeding with the crossing fertilisation of information in the construction of accounts, clearly distinguishing the historical from the fictional.

Nine students chose to tell the battle as Moorish soldier, while seven chose the Christian soldier role. Three compositions did not take any perspective either implicitly or explicitly. Analysis took into account the presence of fictional elements of legend and imagination of students in portraying the battle.

Narratives were in three categories; *Fragmented*, *Descriptive* and *Complete-Explanatory* – the category *Copy-Paste* did not apply.

### **Analysis of student narratives**

The majority of narratives were *Descriptive* (10 students), exemplified in the following excerpt from the narrative constructed by a student from the Moorish soldier's perspective:

I am Zechariah and fought in the Battle of Ourique. In this battle I have slain twenty-two warriors. They gave a good fight, but I was able to better them. I survived with immense wounds. ( ... ) My kings, when they saw that we were losing, fled. I was, along with the armies of the kings, behind them. Unfortunately for me and for the kings, we have lost the battle but I managed to escape. (Student H)

In this narrative is visible a coherent organizational sequence of ideas and apparently good historical understanding as:

- the student chooses a Muslim name for identity.
- recounts the horror of war, mentioning injuries and deaths, using euphemisms: 'They gave a good fight, but I was able to better them'.
- reports historical facts about losing the battle by Muslims: 'My kings, when they saw that we were losing, fled.'

The author demonstrates understanding and interpretation of the Ourique legend and the sources explored in the sessions, making an allusion to the fictional account.

The only two *Complete-Explanatory* narratives have a visible internal structure with a coherent structure. They distinguish the real from the fictional, as can be seen in the following example of a version from the perspective of a Christian soldier:

My name is Eduardo. I am a Moorish soldier and lost the battle of Ourique against the Christian soldiers of King Afonso Henriques. I lost because one of our kings, Ishmael, ran away and his soldiers left behind also fled. "We" were alone and had no courage to face them because they had faith in God and we do not. D. Afonso Henriques won this battle of Ourique and the S. Mamede.

"We" thought about getting even when they were asleep, we would kill them with rifle butts. And so was the battle of Ourique for us in history. I killed 24 Christian soldiers but I was sad that we lost with so much effort. I was wounded in the arm; on the leg; in the stomach and head. And so, I will take refuge in an abandoned house somewhere yonder and I will never join the Moorish armies. And so ends the life of a Moorish soldier. (Student E)

The second narrative produced by the students answered the following question: *Imagine you have to recount the Legend of the Ourique Miracle to a boy of a different nationality, what would you say?*

For this exercise, the students had to mobilise the knowledge acquired during the sessions, selecting what was most meaningful and relevant from the legend and perhaps adding other elements to their narrative.

Considering the categorisation model of the narratives presented above, in this activity there were more narratives in the *Complete-explanatory* category (7 students) emphasising that the students interpreted the sources provided (legend and dossier), producing valid inferences, thus making a visible distinction between the fictional and historical, as we can see in the following narrative:

In the summer of 1139 D. Afonso Henriques conquered Ourique from the Moors but we do not know for certain where the battle was. When D. Afonso Henriques was asleep, John Fernandes de Sousa agreed to tell him that he had a visit to lift their hopes. The visitor was an old man who told him that alone he had to leave the camp to visit the adjacent hermitage. D. Afonso Henriques came out of his tent and saw Jesus and the angels who told him that he would win the battle. When he returned to the camp told his soldiers to prepare for battle. D. Afonso Henriques had already won the battle of S. Mamede and was waiting to win this one. That day D. Afonso Henriques was victorious. He saw his army defeat the enemy kings who fled with their armies. D. Afonso Henriques was proclaimed King by his soldiers for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. D. Afonso Henriques was able to add five coronets to the flag of Portugal that represent the five defeated Moorish kings. (Student E)

In this narrative, the student managed to combine the essential parts of the legend, referring to the various doubts about the exact location of Ourique and add fictional elements associated with Ourique miracle myth that tells us that D. Afonso Henriques was helped by God (see Jesus, angels ...). In this narrative, the student interprets the various sources, produced inferences, revealed an appropriate use of historical evidence, explains decisions taken during the battle and subsequently, for example, when he said: *D. Afonso Henriques was able to add*

*five coronets to the flag of Portugal that represent the five defeated Moorish kings.* N.b. in reality the coronets were integrated in the flag of Portugal by D. Sancho I.

### Conclusion

The article presents a set of reflections that take into account the main objective of the study to evaluate the knowledge and understanding that Portuguese primary school students developed from their interpretation of fiction literature and historical legends about the process of Christian Reconquest in the formation of Portugal.

In the first case study (Study A) the teacher-research used the literary narrative *Was Once a Conquering King* of José Jorge Letria. The study illuminated the pedagogical potential of using this source type and how this strategy enables the construction of historical knowledge. Through fictional narrative, students attempted to compare the fictional with the factual, reflecting this in their narratives. Here students depart from fictional narratives and confront the historical information present in historical documentary sources. They identify what really happened, i.e. they distinguish the factual from the fictional.

Both student narratives denoted a concern to use the sources provided, although analysis of their narrative indicate that the majority cannot produce their own texts, i.e. they copy and paste the information from their sources in their compositions. In addition, in their work students pay close attention to their timeframes. Most students with an interest in Portugal's past wish to learn details of the various events in its history. However, when asked to construct their own accounts the students combine limited information with simple and imaginative ideas, apparently unable to draw upon historical knowledge they may have acquired from their sources. All of the student narratives include an imaginative dimension. However, they reveal some confusion, distortions and inaccuracies with regard to historical detail. Analysis of the construction of the student narratives reveals that they tend to remember best the key elements that are present in fictional narrative. In this case, the battles of S. Mamede and Ourique and Afonso Henriques childhood with Egas Moniz, rather than other equally important events.

We can conclude that despite the students' ideas being vague and sometimes incomplete, they are able to build and organize their historical knowledge in a shaped narrative from the fictional narrative and the dossier of sources provided.

Analysis of the second case study (study B), based on the *Legend of the Miracle of Ourique*, showed that most narratives in both the Moorish and Christian versions were in segments with little or no connecting argument. In the second narrative the student mostly copied from the sources, i.e. scissors and paste. However analysis showed that students could recognize and distinguish the real from the fictional. It was clear that the students were able to build their historical knowledge through exploration of the legend. Note that a considerable number of students were able to produce more complex second narratives at a more sophisticated level, and in the second narrative there was seven *Complete-Explanatory* compositions. However, the questions may have influenced the form their narratives took. We noted that type of task determines the complexity of the narrative construction. Empathetic tasks promote the inclusion of fictional elements (action, description, narration) as well as the retellings of historical events; historical explanation with the inclusion of historical facts drawn from textual and iconic sources. This enabled a significant number of students to construct *Complete-Explanatory* narratives.

In conclusion, the teacher plays a key role because he or she must create favorable environments for the learner to analytically interpret the emotional dimension of sources. Thus,



the teacher selection, use and exploration of fictional narratives when combined with historic, iconic or historiographical sources helps in the construction and operation of historical thinking, either orally or in writing.

So, the research study suggested that the use of fictional works in History teaching adds value to learning as it provides students with an enriched teaching-learning process. Contemporary teaching of History has a range of different approaches. So, the teacher can draw on new pedagogy and resources, adapting to their lesson plans accordingly to enable pupils to improve both knowledge and understanding, i.e. how to think historically. However, narrative composition in the form this paper suggest my not be appropriate to the teaching of all historical content as Egan (1986) suggests.

The use of stories / narratives is often perceived as being a superficial pedagogic approach and as such as been little explored as a learning process. Through this study we indicate that narrative composition has enormous potential for the teaching of history. But it is important in the use of complementary sources to identify what is a 'real' and what is a 'fictional' narrative. To VanSledright and Brophy (1992), children tend to build narratives based on what they liked in the fictional narrative, including or not historical facts. Imagination is present in the narratives that construct, involving fanciful texts, sometimes in an attempt to assess changes in their knowledge and historical thinking. Student narratives based on both historical information and information extracted from historical sources help develop the historical imagination. As such, it is a means of building historical understanding as shown in *Complete-Explanatory* compositions.

We can conclude that historical fiction literature interrelated several areas: history, fiction and literature Solé (2013a). It has enormous potential for the teaching of History, Social Studies and the Mother Language, drawing on stories, legends and related literature. However, we do not advocate the curriculum in the early years should be organised through stories as suggested by Egan (1986) and Bage (2003), although we recognize the enormous potential that this strategy has for developing the historical understanding of children. Historical fiction, with its strong historiographical component integrates and enhances students' understanding of the past, restores the landscape of history; informs students about the interpretive nature of history; shows how authors and artists [illustrators] deal with historical issues. Presenting multiple perspectives through the narrator's point of view or the characters, introduces children to the notion of multi perspective historical knowledge. It shows that history is not flat or uni-dimensional that in a single narrative integrates various interpretations. It also promotes historical significance and historical empathy as it highlights what the author of historical fictions considers to be most significant and important. This can be contrasted with the historiography of the historical topic as fiction can more easily represent other times, actions and thorough of protagonists for students to assimilate and understand.

### Correspondence

Glória Solé,  
[gsole@ie.uminho.pt](mailto:gsole@ie.uminho.pt)

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## CONSIDERATIONS OF PEDAGOGY AND DIDACTICS

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### ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES: A SURVEY OF WHAT 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> AND 5<sup>th</sup> GRADE STUDENTS' LIKE AND DISLIKE ABOUT SOCIAL STUDIES INSTRUCTION

**William B. Russell III**, University of Central Florida, USA  
**Stewart Waters**, University of Tennessee, USA

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#### **Abstract:**

*How do elementary students like to learn social studies? Utilising a survey research method, this study was designed to see what elementary school students (grades 3-5) liked and disliked about social studies instruction. In total, 139 elementary students participated in the study. The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of what instructional methods the elementary students prefer when learning social studies. By analysing the students' perspective of instruction, teachers can begin to design lessons incorporating methods that have been proven to maximise student interest in the social studies classroom. Survey results are provided and conclusions are discussed.*

#### **Keywords:**

Elementary students, Instruction, Pedagogy, Prior knowledge – elementary students, Skills – needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century, Social studies, Survey research, Teaching approaches, USA

#### **Introduction**

In the era of accountability that suffocates today's elementary classrooms, students often spend a large amount of instructional time preparing and taking standardised tests. From No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), teachers have been altering social studies instruction as a result of these mandates (Russell, 2010; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010). Research studies related to social studies instruction that have been conducted during this era regularly demonstrate a decrease or lack of social studies instruction (Russell, 2009; Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Bauml, 2015). Furthermore, when social studies instruction does occur in the classroom, students have often found it to be not interesting but boring (Chiodo & Byford, 2004; Russell & Waters, 2010) and lackin meaning and relevance (Schug, Todd & Beery, 1982; Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985).

However, the perception that social studies are a boring content area continues to be somewhat misleading. Consider this, a student will often characterise social studies content as boring and dull, but often cite historical based films as their favorite movies. Consider the popularity of the History channel, historically based movies, presidential/government elections, social issues, social studies related books, and the many other social studies topics intrigue and excite the populus. One can clearly conclude that it may not be solely the content that is boring and dull, but more the delivery (instruction) of the content that lacks excitement, engagement, meaning, and relevance. Shaughnessy & Haladyna (1985) concluded that:



It is the teacher who is key to what social studies will be for the student. Instruction tends to be dominated by the lecture, textbook or worksheets ... and social studies does not inspire students to learn (p. 694).

When a teacher utilises an array of instructional methods, techniques, and activities students' engagement and interest in social studies is greatly increased (Bonwell & Eisen, 1991; Chiodo & Byford, 2006; Byford & Russell, 2006; Mills & Durden, 1992; Slavin, 1994). The utilisation of a variety of instructional strategies is considered best practice and a common element of many social studies methods textbooks (Turner, Russell, & Waters, 2013; Parker, 2011; Chapin, 2012). Nonetheless, teachers tend to be creatures of habit and they often utilise a similar, if not the same, teaching method each day with little to no variety of instructional methodologies. These instructional methods often include a heavy reliance on the textbook, lecture, worksheets, and testing (Ellis, Fouts, & Glenn, 1992; Henke, Chen, & Goldman, 1999; Russell & Waters, 2010; Russell, 2010).

### **Purpose**

The researchers in this study wanted to gain more insight into what elementary students like and dislike about social studies instruction. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do elementary students like to learn social studies?
- 2) What do elementary students dislike about social studies instruction?

The researchers hoped that answering these questions would provide valuable insights into contemporary elementary students' perceptions, attitudes, and preferences towards social studies instruction.

### **Social Studies Instruction**

Henke and colleagues (1999) conducted a national study of the elementary and secondary instructional practices of teachers when teaching social studies. They concluded that social studies instruction typically does not include a variety of instructional methods. Especially when compared to other subject areas, such as math, science, and English. Specifically, social studies instruction was likely to include alternative instructional methods to whole group instruction compared to other content areas. The majority of social studies instruction reported included recall (91%) and talking with students (85%) on a weekly basis. However, only a small portion of social studies instruction utilised student led discussions (38%) on a weekly basis. In addition, a large majority of social studies instruction relied heavily on the textbook, requiring students to read from the text book in class (94%) and out of class (95%) on a weekly basis.

In 2010, Russell conducted a national study of middle and secondary social studies teachers (n=281). The results concluded that 90% of participants utilise the lecture method 50% of the time or more. 87% reported requiring students to take notes 50% of the time or more and 80% reported requiring students to complete written work from the textbook 50% of the time or more. 75% of participants reported that they require students to complete worksheets 50% of the time or more. These methods of instruction are considered more traditional and are considered inferior to the more authentic methods and practices that encourage active participation, yet teachers are still utilising these methods/strategies. Sadly, 0% of participants reported using video games as an instructional method. Only 7% of participants reported using film as an instructional tool 50% of the time or more. Only 32% of participants reported having students

participate in cooperative learning groups more than half the time or more.

The results of these national studies do not align with the skills needed for today's world. *The 21st Century Skills and Social Studies Map* (2008), which was released by The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in cooperation with the Partnerships for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, is a map that provides educators with specific examples of how 21<sup>st</sup> century skills can be integrated into classroom instruction and highlights the critical connections between social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The activities included in the map comprise instructional practices that are typically considered non-traditional. Examples included group discussion, cooperative learning, role playing, games, simulations, media use, analysis of primary/secondary sources, and other activities that require students to participate and think critically. None of the activity examples detailed in the map utilised traditional instructional strategies and methodologies, for example lecture, rote memorisation, and reading from textbooks.

In 2006, researchers concluded that 85% of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers who participated in the study (n=350) used whole class presentation (lecture) as a method of instruction in the last class they taught. As well, the researchers concluded that 64% of teachers had students read in textbooks and 54% had students complete a worksheet as part of the class activities (Leming, Ellington, & Schug, 2006). This data further exemplifies that teachers often utilise lecture-based instruction and non-engaging activities.

Furthermore, A study of 466 (n) middle school students concluded similar findings (Russell & Waters, 2010). The results showed that 74% of students reported they dislike learning social studies via lecture and note taking. While 80% of students reported they liked learning social studies when cooperative learning was utilised. 72% of students reported they liked learning social studies with technology and film and 66% reported that liked hands-on/active learning activities.

## Methods

Utilising a survey method of research described by Creswell (2005), this study collected data from a convenient sample of a rural k-8 elementary school with a total population of 459 students. Since the researchers were interested in elementary students' attitudes towards social studies instruction, we limited our data collection to grades 3-5, as these were the only elementary grades with dedicated social studies instructional time. This left a total population sample of 156 students in grades 3-5. The school is located in a rural area of a state in the Southeastern United States. This area has a high poverty rate and over 90% of the student population at this school is on free and reduced lunch. The demographics of the school lack a great deal of racial diversity, with 89% identified as White, 6% Hispanic, 2% African American, and 3% representing 'other'. Additionally, there are slightly fewer male students at the school (45%), than there are females (55%). In an effort to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the subjects, all demographic data concerning the students have been generally estimated. It should also be noted that results of this study might not be generalisable to other elementary school populations throughout the country.

- Every student in grades 3-5 was invited to participate in this open-ended survey. In an effort to increase participation and solicit reliable feedback from the students, several things were thoughtfully explained to the students before the survey was distributed. First, students were informed that no names would be needed on the survey because we wanted them to answer the questions freely and honestly, without worrying about recourse. Students were also told that there would be no negative consequences if they chose to participate or not participate in the study.

- The survey data was also collected without the classroom teachers present, in an effort to have students feel more comfortable answering truthfully.
- Additionally, it should be noted that the participants were clearly informed that this survey was not about evaluating their individual classroom teachers. Rather, students were informed that the focus was to help the researchers better understand the ways they enjoy learning social studies in the classroom so that instruction might be improved. Students were encouraged to write as much as they wanted on the open-ended survey questions. Of the 156 (N) total students in grades 3-5, a total of 139 (n) useable responses were collected in this study. The researchers read, analyzed, coded, and categorised each of the responses accordingly, making sure only to include relevant data.

## Results

The results of the research study were found to be both promising on one hand, yet discouraging on the other. Each open-ended survey question will be presented followed by the outcome for each category that emerged from the data.

### Question 1: How do you like to learn social studies?

- Of the 139 students, 77% stated that they like to learn social studies using games. This can include electronic/web-based learning games (e.g. Oregon Trail), individual or whole class review games (e.g. Jeopardy), or other in class games. 72% of elementary participants stated they like cooperative learning activities as a method for social studies instruction. This finding corresponds with Stahl (1994), who explains that using cooperative learning requires students to become active learners and ‘cooperative learning provides opportunities for students to learn, practice, and live the attitudes and behaviors that reflect the goals of social studies education’ (p. 4-5).
- 64% of participants stated that they like learning social studies via teacher read-aloud.
- 58% of participants like learning social studies through field trips. Nabors, Edwards, & Murray (2009) state that ‘field trips in the formative years are one of the most important things teachers can provide for their students’ (p. 661).
- Learning social studies with film is a preferred method for 55% of participants. Film has been found to be an engaging and interesting resource for teaching social studies in K-12 classrooms (Russell, 2012). The findings in this study indicate that even young learners in grades 3-5 are interested in social studies content when presented through the dynamic visual medium of film. Interest in visual forms of social studies, like films, could also be related to the struggles that many young learners have with reading and decoding content in written form (such as textbooks).
- 51% of participants stated they like to learn social studies through discussions. Discussion is a powerful and meaningful strategy with a high upside because it encourages student participation and active learning.

### Question 2: What do you dislike about social studies?

- Of the 139 elementary student participants 82% stated they dislike the heavy use of textbook related assignments and they do not like learning social studies from the textbook (reading, defining terms, answering chapter questions).
- 78% of participants stated they dislike learning social studies from worksheets. Note-taking had a similar rate of dislike with 68% of participants stating they do not like to learn social studies by taking notes.
- 61% of participants said they dislike learning social studies with homework. See Fig. 1 below.

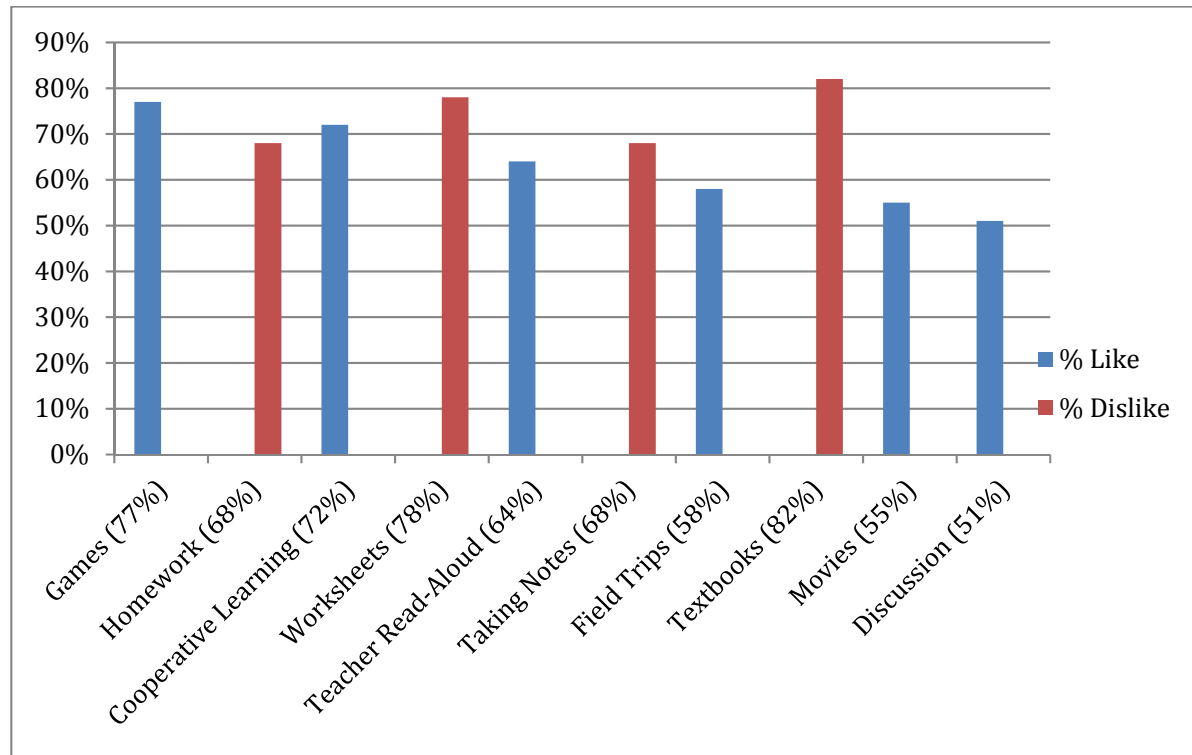


Fig. 1. What elementary studies like and dislike about social studies instruction

## Discussion and Conclusion

The variety of student responses to the open-ended survey questions is promising, considering that many of the participants' attitudes toward how they like to learn social studies directly aligns with research-based practices. The data results of the first question clearly indicate that students do like to learn social studies with multiple instructional methods that encourage engagement and active learning. Social studies instruction that utilises an array of teaching methodologies and techniques aligns with what many scholars considers best teaching practices (Bonwell & Eisen, 1991; Russell & Byford, 2006). The results of the data conclude that elementary school students want to use technology, go on field trips, play games, work in cooperative learning groups, and be actively engaged with meaningful content.

The data results of the second question are not promising. Question two data results indicate that students dislike learning social studies passively. Lecture, note-taking, worksheets, reading/working from the textbook and other rote memorisation activities are the instructional methodologies students dislike about social studies. Unfortunately, this is not surprising. However, the results directly contradict what middle school teachers are doing in classrooms according to scholars (Leming, Ellington, and Schug, 2006; Russell, 2012; and Parker, 2015). The results of data clearly illustrate that students want to be actively involved in learning social studies. In addition, the theory of instruction is still trailing behind actual classroom practice.

It should be noted that the survey was anonymous and open-ended, which enabled students to write inappropriate and/or unusable responses. Approximately 10.8% of the survey responses

were deemed unusable. It must be stated that the discussion of the findings raises many questions based upon a small study, but the outcomes are interesting and complex, highlighting new and different realms of inquiry and variability. Remember that the results of this study help researchers understand a student's response in a specific situation, and contribute to scholarship on elementary school students' attitudes toward social studies instruction and learning. Thus, allowing researchers to make comparisons with research that has been previously conducted. These findings do not provide a comprehensive understanding that can be generalised to apply to the population, but do provide insight into the importance of dynamic social studies instruction.

Elementary students like social studies and want to learn social studies. However, they want to be active, engaged, and entertained. Utilising a variety of non-traditional teaching methods and resources will help ensure that elementary students continue to 'like' social studies. Avoiding passive learning strategies that lack engagement and entertainment will help ensure elementary school students do not continue to "dislike" social studies instruction and grow accustomed to meaningful social studies instruction.

The study has its limitations, but does allow for a more in depth understanding of elementary school students attitudes toward social studies instruction. The results of this study ideally will help teachers become reflective educators and encourage dynamic social studies instruction that meets the needs of all elementary students.

### Correspondence

William B. Russell III  
[Russell@ucf.edu](mailto:Russell@ucf.edu)

Stewart Waters  
[kswaters@utk.edu](mailto:kswaters@utk.edu)

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