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History Education in the Digital Age

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History Education in the Digital Age

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Advancement of Digitalization

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

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

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

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

Understanding the Past in a Critical and Reflective Way

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Uses of Digital Media in the Learning of History

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Digital Scenarios for Colonial Tensions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Video Games and History Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

Films as Tools for Historical Dialogue

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contents of This Book

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

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

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

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

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

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