

Exploring The Intersection Between Literacy And Historical Consciousness: Reflections From The Studies Of Isabel Barca And Ana Claudia Urban And Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt.

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Abstract:

The text addresses the intersection between literacy and historical consciousness, highlighting the importance of developing historical consciousness through historical literacy competence. Isabel Barca's research examines how university students and future history teachers deal with different versions of the past, while Ana Claudia Urban and Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt explore how historical consciousness can be developed in the educational context. The analysis of these perspectives shows how historical literacy contributes to the formation of historical consciousness, offering valuable insights for pedagogical practice and research in History. Barca's study reveals the importance of developing critical skills in students to analyze different historical narratives, recognizing the complexity and diversity of perspectives on the past. These reflections emphasize the importance of integrating historical literacy and historical consciousness into the teaching and learning process of History, contributing to the formation of more aware, critical, and contextualized citizens regarding the past and the present.

Keywords: Historical literacy; Historical consciousness; Historical education; Historical perspectives

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I. Introduction

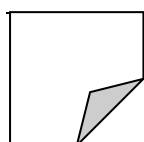
The intersection between literacy and historical consciousness is a central theme in the field of Historical Education, addressed by renowned researchers such as Isabel Barca, Ana Claudia Urban, and Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt. In the article "Literacy and historical consciousness," Barca explores the importance of developing historical consciousness through the competence of historical literacy, analyzing how university students and future history teachers deal with different versions of the past. On the other hand, the work of Urban and Schmidt, titled "Learning and formation of historical consciousness," highlights the research possibilities in Historical Education, investigating how historical consciousness can be developed in the educational context. By combining Barca's and Urban and Schmidt's perspectives, this text seeks to explore how historical literacy contributes to the formation of historical consciousness, offering valuable insights for pedagogical practice and research in History.

II. Methodology

The research methodology adopted in the elaboration of this article involved the analysis and synthesis of information contained in Isabel Barca's article "Literacy and historical consciousness," as well as in the work "Learning and formation of historical consciousness: research possibilities in Historical Education" by Ana Claudia Urban and Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt. Through careful reading of these texts, relevant excerpts addressing the relationship between historical literacy and historical consciousness were identified and selected, highlighting the theoretical perspectives and conclusions presented by the authors. The analysis of these contents allowed the elaboration of summaries and quotations that underpin the information presented in this text, aiming to provide a comprehensive and informative view on the discussed theme.

III. Results

First, let's introduce the author Isabel Barca and her research area. Isabel Barca is a renowned historian and educator. She holds a doctorate in History Education from the University of London, a master's degree in Social Science Education from Boston University, and a bachelor's degree in History from the University of Porto. She is currently an associate professor at the University of Minho, where she coordinates the scientific area of History and Social Sciences Methodology. She also oversees the Master's program in Pedagogical Supervision



in History Education. Barca's work is deeply rooted in the philosophy and theory of history, which has led to a new paradigm in the nature of research about learning and teaching history. This has characterized the field of history education. She has made significant contributions to the field of historical education, particularly in exploring conceptions of historical change beyond presentist analyses. Her work emphasizes the importance of teaching history in a non-linear way, enabling students to relate distinct times and understand the world in depth.

The article "Literacy and historical consciousness" by the Portuguese professor and historian Isabel Barca aims to analyze, through Peter Lee's (2004) proposal for the development of historical consciousness, how university students and future history teachers develop their historical literacy skills. The study was conducted with 18 Portuguese students from the 4th year of the History Teaching Methodology course, and it was carried out through the analysis of two historical texts by the students, one by the Portuguese historian Luís de Albuquerque and the other by the Indian historian Sanja Subrahmanam, both texts about the first Portuguese maritime voyage to India and both supported by various sources. From this, the following research questions were explored: 1) What criteria do future History teachers use when deciding between different historical versions? 2) How do these future teachers justify their arguments for or against a particular version?

Barca begins the discussion by stating that literacy goes beyond linguistic comprehension "[...] within the current discussion about the need for the development of historical consciousness, the idea of literacy appears associated with it, as an indispensable aspect for such development to occur (BARCA, 2006). The discussion underscores that historical practice, whether from a teaching or historiographical standpoint, involves a contextualized interpretation of evidence left by diverse sources. The notion of a single, universal history has long been discredited; depending on the focus and approach, similar questions can be answered in varying ways. However, the existence of multiple narratives does not imply accepting all of them. Criteria exist for justifying these versions, distinguishing historical narratives from fictional ones.

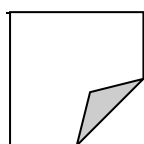
Applying these notions to historical education issues, it is currently considered that, in a world of plural information, it will be desirable for students to gradually learn to compare and select divergent narratives and sources about a certain past. However, some authors defend this proposal within an approach - attractive but somewhat simplistic - of deconstruction of different versions (JENKINS, 1991), leading students to analyze only issues related to the authorship of messages: "who produced the source, in what context, with what intentions, care, and limits?" (BARCA, 2006, p. 96)

In her text, Barca conducts a study with university students/future History teachers. Of the 18 participants in this study, 15 were students approximately twenty-one years old, and 3 were mature students. 8 were female and 10 were male. The research questions emerged from a task that consisted of exploring the criteria that students would apply in a concrete teaching situation. This prior task consisted of selecting five out of six historical sources to be used in a basic education class and justifying the selection made. The six historical sources were related to Vasco da Gama's voyage to India and included: three visual sources (a map of Vasco da Gama's route, a figure about spice harvesting in the East, and a portrait of Vasco da Gama) and three written sources (excerpts from the logbook, from a text by the Portuguese historian Luís de Albuquerque, and from a text by the Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam). In the students' responses, it was observed that they mostly rejected Subrahmanyam's text, and some of them considered that this source contained the same information as the other written sources. After that, a task was carried out regarding the three written sources made available based on the following guidelines: a) Identify succinctly the similarities and differences in the substantive messages provided by the two historical texts; b) Place the texts in order of importance, in terms of validity as an explanation for the diplomatic failure of Gama's voyage, and justify the ranking assigned.

From the analysis of the results, a global categorization was created, consisting of five levels of elaboration: (1) information, (2) bias, (3) contextualized authorship, and (4) objective grounding. Regarding information, some students perceived only differences in details, and not any significant difference between the two texts. Regarding biases, some students perceived the overall differences between Subrahmanyam's and Albuquerque's versions as related to a given author's position they emphasized that the cultural context implicit in a given version constitutes a source of value judgment, the source was Subrahmanyam's text, considered to be biased, built on a prejudice against the Portuguese, while for them Albuquerque's text was judged as objective. Regarding contextualized authorship, some students emphasized that the national context influenced the author's perspective in the production of each version. Finally, regarding objective grounding, analyses like that of student Mário emerged:

Source A reflects a perspective centered on the Portuguese, although it is an attempt at an objective analysis of Gama's encounter with the king of Calicut. But it is only one side's perspective, giving the idea of perplexity about the Indian reaction to the Portuguese gifts. Source B is extremely important because it gives us the Indian perspective on the first encounter between the Portuguese and the king of Calicut. (...). It gives the view from the 'other side', but this also "deconstructs" the image we have of this first encounter and the climate of tension that could have happened at the time" (BARCA, 2006, p.105).

The research conducted for this article contributes significantly to understanding how students and future



education professionals engage with knowledge and textual criticism concerning historical narratives and sources, a fundamental aspect of the historian's craft. While the results are not generalizable, the study offers a concise overview of how some professionals-in-training approach the posed questions. It can serve as an inspirational model for other educators seeking to understand their students' perspectives more deeply.

Over the years, the field of research in Historical Education has been defining itself with its own particularities in many countries, including Brazil. In an article entitled "Historical Education: the constitution of a research field," Germinari (2012) provides an analytical summary of this research field, emphasizing its importance for the knowledge of historical ideas for children and young people, with a major focus on the teaching and learning of history. This theme has also been addressed by authors such as Barca (2005), Schmidt (2009), and Rusen (2010), whose research essence is based on the epistemology of history, more specifically on a theory of historical consciousness.

To discuss the work that we will address next, it is important to understand a little about who Ana Claudia Urban and Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt are. Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt is a prominent figure in the field of Historical Education. She has made significant contributions to the research on History teaching, with her investigations grounded in philosophy and the theory of history. Schmidt's work has led to a new paradigm in the nature of research about the learning and teaching of History, which has characterized the field of History Education. Her research has been instrumental in shaping the way history is taught and understood, particularly in Brazil. One of her notable works includes an analysis of 13 theses produced within the Postgraduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraná. These theses are indicative of the investigations that have been carried out in Brazil and are examples of the renovation in the field of History Education. Her research has raised several issues to be taken into consideration, particularly regarding the learning of children and youths, whether in school or other learning environments. Furthermore, her work has highlighted new investigative issues in the field of History Education. In turn, the researcher Ana Claudia Urban is a distinguished researcher and educator in the field of History and Education. She holds a bachelor's degree in History from the Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa (1988), a master's degree in Education from the same university (2002), and a doctorate in Education from the Universidade Federal do Paraná (2009). She has served as a History teacher in the State Education Network of Paraná and as a professor in Higher Education in Private Institutions. Currently, she is a professor in the Department of Theory and Practice of Teaching (DTPEN) - Education Sector (UFPR), where she teaches the Methodology of History Teaching and Practice of Teaching and Supervised Internship in History. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Urban is also involved in the Postgraduate Program in Education (UFPR) and the PROFHISTÓRIA/UFPR Master's program. Her research interests lie in the areas of History Teaching, Historical Education, teacher training, and the Didactics of History.

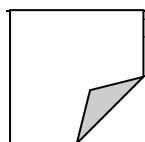
In the text "Learning and formation of historical consciousness: research possibilities in Historical Education" by Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt and Ana Claudia Urban (2016), it is possible to see how to work with historical consciousness within the classroom and how the authors explore a panorama of works that use such theme within research lines involving history teaching. In addition, these themes and researches are associated with theories of historical consciousness.

This study is based on a bibliographic review, primarily referencing the text "Learning and Formation of Historical Consciousness: Research Possibilities in Historical Education." Building on this foundation, the analysis delves into the concept of historical consciousness within history education. The goal of this work is to contribute to the existing body of literature on these topics and provide a valuable resource for further research in the field of history education.

The article "Learning and formation of historical consciousness: research possibilities in Historical Education" was written by Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt and Ana Claudia Urban and published in the journal *Educar em Revista*, in the year 2016. With it, we follow, in a first part, how the issue of historical consciousness begins to be addressed in academic circles - first in psychology - and later how it begins to be explored in history itself, mainly based on Rüsen's theories, reaching the teaching of history. Another moment in the text delves into the relationship between historical consciousness and teaching in Brazil and of researches focused on the theme. Moreover, we also see how historical consciousness begins to be the object of study in academies and history courses in Brazil, with Schmidt and Urban delving further into the research conducted in Paraná.

When we talk about historical consciousness within the aspect of learning, we must emphasize the research done in the European context, in favor of discovering the definition of this consciousness amidst the continent. From these researches, it was possible to conclude that this is an area still in development, whose initiative given by Europe, is motivating research in other countries, including Brazil and Portugal, where we have Isabel Barca (2000) as the author of the first studies published in Portuguese on this theme, emphasizing the meanings that young people give to history.

In the latter part, the authors present thematic frameworks, where we see the researches that were carried out involving history teaching, teacher training, and historical consciousness. It is with these thematic frameworks that we can glimpse how possible it is to exercise and use historical consciousness in the classroom with students.



According to Rüssen (2001), historical consciousness makes the change between the present, the past, and human action. And it is this action that modifies natural time, into human time. Action needs the guidance of historical consciousness. Historical consciousness is allied to the past, action is done in the present. And within these possibilities, when using historical consciousness in the classroom, we find its power, the ability to show students the possibility of their historical action.

With the frameworks, we also have the opportunity for History teachers to be inspired to expand possibilities for interventions in classes with the aim of working with memories, identities, interdisciplinarity among other approaches. Thus, the text goes beyond just exposing the panorama of the theme of historical consciousness, becoming an object of academic and historiographical study, it also encompasses practical possibilities in the teaching of History for basic education.

We observe how viable it is to work with such themes in the classroom, an example of this is the research shown in the thematic frameworks found in the text by Schmidt and Urban (2016), both working in the university environment as well as in schools.

We can conclude by saying that working with historical consciousness in history teaching is of significant relevance, since through this approach we can work with and exercise this consciousness with students. However, it is worth remembering that no one gives historical consciousness to anyone (CERRI, 2011), but we can exercise and stimulate students' perception of historical agents.

Hence, the significance of learning and developing historical consciousness is apparent, as is the potential for educational research with a focus on history. The investigations conducted by the postgraduate program at UFPR have underscored the value of research grounded in historical education and its relevance to children and young adults as they undergo a process of knowledge construction and formation. One of the approaches emphasized highlights a brief correlation between historical culture and the educational process, represented by the elements that shape school life.

IV. Conclusion

By analyzing the works of Isabel Barca and Ana Claudia Urban and Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt on literacy and historical consciousness, it is possible to extract several relevant discussions for the field of Historical Education. The interrelation between the ability to understand and interpret historical sources (historical literacy) and the awareness of the role of the past in the present (historical consciousness) emerges as a crucial aspect in the teaching and research of History. From these studies, it is possible to reflect on the importance of developing in students and future teachers critical skills to analyze different historical narratives, recognizing the complexity and diversity of perspectives on the past.

Furthermore, the research addressed in the development of this article points to the need to promote a reflective and contextualized approach in History teaching, stimulating students to question, compare, and select divergent sources critically. The ability to base arguments on different historical versions and to consider the context of source production are essential aspects for the development of a solid and critical historical consciousness.

Thus, the discussions presented by Barca, Urban, Schmidt, and other researchers highlight the importance of integrating historical literacy and historical consciousness into the teaching and learning process of History, contributing to the formation of more conscious, critical, and contextualized citizens regarding the past and the present. These reflections open up space for new investigations and pedagogical practices aimed at improving historical education and the training of teachers committed to a reflective and pluralistic approach to History.

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