

## 3rd IRAHSSE Conference – TIME AND SPACE IN HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION

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**Title:** Possibilities and problems of teaching the history of the present time through media and information literacy.

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Karl Popper (1991) established that the world we lived in was the best of historically-known worlds; despite the fact that for many male and female thinkers about the intra-history that Unamuno referred to, any past time was much better. Thinking about the past from the present was a way of positioning yourself and counting achievements and failures; it was a way that the man-present could claim his superiority over these *others from the past*. The subject assessed and narrated the object's history from his historical perspective; they assured that there was enough time-space to be able to judge certain specific events; since they think about the maxim that the more distant events are, the more objective we can be. A wall is raised between the subject-present and the object-past. As Gadamer would say, there is a "pretension by historical consciousness to see the past in its very existence, not from our contemporary prejudices and standards but from our own historical horizons". This way of acquiring historical consciousness reached our schools and ensured that the future generations

thought about past history so much that students ended up being isolated from the history of the present in which they found themselves, and ignored their own history(ies), in a historical bubble of the past; and were happy to play the leading role in the period that they were living in, as if this was never going to turn into just another stage. The education system ensured the continuance of a positivist, orderly, unilateral and universal history, the “single track” that Fontana referred to; by incorporating its traditional chronological division into four stages: ancient history, medieval history, modern history and contemporary history. However, what would happen when the subject of post-modern society was observed as an object in history? Would it be feasible for students to study their own present? Could we try to teach the different historical periods while we taught our present? The problem lies in the fact that there are as many histories as there are multiple interpretations that these mean, for some historians, that it is impossible to deal with recent history. Our proposal aims to show that, as Jorge Saab puts it, the present is the “departure and arrival point for the teaching of history, so it establishes how we go back and forth to the past”. The way that education is approached is comfortable; it establishes a continuous clear line. There are no questions, and no discussions. However, this view of history, in which the western white man plays the leading role, falls within the project of modernity, and ignores the fact that we face the fragility of rationalism, in an era of a questioning, suspicious post-modernism. Taking as a starting point the problems involving the extreme degree of audiovisual contamination that teachers and students face each day, we need to reflect on the paradox that teaching history based on four periods proves to be and the lack of a history of the present that tackles the influence of the media and the apparition of new technologies, and how these are changing the pace of history and the life of humanity at the present time, as well as reflecting on what impact they will have and what the historical scenarios will be in the future. For this reason, we believe in the need to deal with the didactics of present history, and in order to do this, we must make use of media and information literacy. The post-modern society that we live in requires critical reflections that should be dealt with in classrooms on the effects of the media. We need a kind of teacher training with an emphasis on teaching present history in close relationship with the past, in Gadamer’s words (1975), “the past and present are in continuous mediation” and this allows us, in turn, to understand and think about future history(ies). We think that if students understand the complexity of their world and the numerous characteristic approaches of postmodern society, they will be more tolerant and empathetic than if they only learn traditional linear history that cannot be questioned.

**Keywords:** Didactics of present history – media and information literacy – audiovisual contamination– postmodernism – reception of history – Hans-Georg Gadamer – Gianni Lipovetsky

**Mots clés:** La didactique de l'histoire présente – maîtrise des médias et de l'information - la pollution audiovisuelle – la postmodernité – l'histoire de la réception – Hans-Georg Gadamer – Gianni Lipovetsky

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