Remembrance education and history teaching in Italian schools: didactic practices and current researches
History and the Rise of Memory

- global and digital memory management
  - Not only local and national
  - Non only public actors (*professional vs popular history*)
  - Formal/informal/not formal education

What happens in Italian schools:

- contested histories → the Risorgimento’s counternarrative
- national memorial days and didactic practices

Current research: issues, topics, problems

- EU and Remembrance education in the global education policy context
- «Youth and History» in the age of Multiple Pasts
- Towards a comprehensive history and memory literacy

Claudia Villani - Bologna, 10 dicembre 2021
WHO DEFINES THE RELEVANT PASTS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Claudia Villani - Bologna, 10 dicembre 2021
Current dilemmas...

• which is "the best, most convenient past“ in the age of contested, multiple past?

• functional memory/heritage ➔
  • public discourse on shared memories ➔ peaceful coexistence of different collective identities
  • from “cancel culture” to “puzzle culture” (post-modern multiperspectivity)
  • protection/enhancement of local heritage
What happens in Italian schools?

- The Risorgimento’s counter-narrative
- Memorial days and didactic practices
The Risorgimento's counter-narrative...
Research group on neoborbonist narratives...
1) NINETIES-EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

- Didactic lab on brigandage with iconographic sources, edited by Luciana Bresil (Officina della storia, vol. 2)

- «The Trial of the brigands», didactic lab and simulation game, by Luciana Bresil and Antonio Brusa
2) 2010-2020

Neo-Bourbon success →

- «Traditions»
  Role-playing team-game

• Savoy tradition cards
• Neo-Bourbon tradition cards
• Historical revision cards
• didactic labs for «historical memory literacy» ➔

the ability of handling memories and public uses of the past

1. «Brigandage at school»

2. «Neo-Bourbonism in the classroom»
«Brigandage at school»

- Introduction: brigand iconography
- Dossier of Iconographic Sources
- Sources of proceedings
- Division into groups (brigands, peasants, women, priest, Italian soldier, doctor ...)
- Writing a diary page
- Debriefing

«What would happen without historians in an ideal country where each family keeps only its memory and its personal view of the facts?»
"... there would be a great confusion among men: each one has his/her own history, his/her own perspective. Without the careful analysis and acute selection of historians, we would live in confusion..."

"...we would be in chaos. Each family would believe its own story and, above all, compete to be right."

"...we would not know history."

"...we would never know what really happened in the past."

"...we wouldn't know where we came from."

"...there would only be so many wars, because of mankind...“

Claudia Villani - Bologna, 10 dicembre 2021
«Neo Bourbonism in the classroom»

- 2 icebreaker videos + brainstorming
- Dossier (sources, articles, etc.)
- Division in two teams (for/against)
- Debate

"A day of remembrance for the Southern victims of the Risorgimento: for or against?"

- Debriefing

**DOSSIER:**
1. Sissco Dossier
2. For the Pro team: passages taken from the books of P. Aprile «Terroni» and «Carnefici»
3. For the Cons team: historiographical texts written by A. M. Banti, G. L. Fruci and C. Pinto
4. Selection of historical sources
5. Text of the motion of the 5-star Movement

Claudia Villani - Bologna, 10 dicembre 2021

students have proposed to establish a national day of the Italian victims of the Risorgimento ('because we are all Italians in the end')

('you are always someone's Southerner')
WHAT HAPPENS IN ITALIAN SCHOOLS ...?
• where teachers are asked to celebrate an overwhelming series of memorial days
• where remembrance education is supported as one of the best way to teach human rights respect and to create “good” citizens

RESEARCH PROJECT ON “CIVIL CALENDAR, CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND HISTORY EDUCATION IN THE 21st CENTURY”

(1) explore the effects of some memorial days celebrated in Italian schools (Miccichè, Ambrosi, Angelini)
(2) analyze “Remembrance, Citizenship and History education” policies (UN, UNESCO, Council of Europe and EU) and compare them with national/regional trends (Boschetti, Colla, De Michele, Villani).
Claudia Villani - Bologna, 10 dicembre 2021

Cantieri di Storia
Sissco 2021
15 - 17 settembre 2021

Calendario civile, educazione alla cittadinanza e formazione storica nel XXI secolo: esperienze e ricerche in corso

Venerdì 17 settembre - SESSIONE IX, ore 14.30 - 16.00

EUROPE, UE AND THEIR HISTORIES
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND TEACHING PRACTICES
Jean Monnet Chair, Univ. Bari, 21-22-23 October 2021

III. EUROPE, EU AND THEIR HISTORIES. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND TEACHING PRACTICES
TEACHING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP
The European Civic Calendar and Historical Culture in Schools
1. The memorial day for the victims of massacres and mafia murders (21 March): analysis of didactic practices and outputs (Andrea Miccichè)

2. The memorial day for the victims of political terrorism (9 May): analysis of didactic practices and outputs (Luigi Ambrosi)

3. The memorial day for the victims of Holocaust (27 January): teachers questionnaire (Margherita Angelini)

Case studies →

- Absence of historical narratives and historiographic references
- An absolute centrality of memory, fully identified with the knowledge of the past
- Witnesses and victims → Iconic and symbolic dimension (WITHOUT history)

- Centrality and innocence of the victims, without distinctions (victims of terrorism, victims of the State ...)
- Reference to an abstract scheme of “violence vs. State”, “violence vs. democratic institutions” (without questioning “State’s violence”)
- Justicialism

- 80% believe it is essential to give voice to the witnesses=victims, using an emotional approach to address the subject of the denial of rights
- Historical videos and films are used almost as if they were direct testimonies
- All the teachers talk about European concentration camps, 40% do not deal with the subject of Italian concentration camps
- Weak awareness of the importance of explaining the ‘consensus’

Claudia Villani - Bologna, 10 dicembre 2021
Current researches: issues, topics, problems

- EU and Remembrance education in the global education policy context
- «Youth and History» in the age of Multiple Pasts
- Towards an history and memory literacy
The relationship between human rights education and memory policies have replaced (and partly undermined) the relationship between citizenship and history education.

So we wondered:

• how to historicize these trends in relation to the main international organizations’ education policies

• whether there is a relationship between memory and education policies and current trends in history and citizenship education / both at international and national level
Global education trends and the EU education policies
(XIX-XXI century)

Approach:
Exploring the relationship between two processes:
- Nation-States answers to globalization
- Citizenship and education policies

Education policies’ main concerns
(XIX-XXI century)
1) National identity
2) Labour Market
3) Development
4) Multiple senses of belonging
5) Non formal/Informal education

EU PROMOTED (1990s –XXIst CENTURY):
• policies aimed at becoming the most competitive knowledge society (incorporating many OECD surveys and indicators)
• its own Charter of Fundamental Rights
• its own vision of key competences
• its own instruments for building an European Educational Area
• an European policy of remembrance: up to 2000 EU proposes itself as the main interpreter, guardian, heir of a world history marked by the tragedy of the Holocaust → moral/normative pedagogy of memory

Claudia Villani - Bologna, 10 dicembre 2021
after the statements by UN General Secretary Kofi Annan, only two witness statements were heard before the debate: Elie Wiesel and Brian Urquhart → VICTIM + LIBERATOR
Here we have the spreading all over the world of a **new victims-liberators paradigm** (Absolute Evil/Absolute Innocent) (without history/without compensation)

- it is a policy of remembrance to **honour** 'victims' and 'liberators'
- It is a politics of emotions that can amplify identity policies, simplifications, the absolutisation of places and events.
- human history is based on a **narrative of fall and rebirth** after the absolute evil of the Holocaust
- the significance of the EU is linked to this new version of 'never again'

Claudia Villani - Bologna, 10 dicembre 2021

'a certain representation of a past event so that it has a certain impact on the collective imagination', so that it arouses a 'certain type of emotion' according to a 'certain type of educational effect'
What do this kind of memory politics and remembrance education have in common with the main topic of international education policy, the so-called politics of competence?

In this view, for an affluent society, it is necessary to acquire general competences (which respond to current perceptions of emergencies), instead of the ability to handle specific areas of knowledge.

→ they ask both for general attitudes of active citizens and workers, who are considered individually responsible towards current social and political challenges.

THE (EDUCATIONAL) PROBLEM IDENTIFIES ITSELF WITH THE PROPOSED (EDUCATIONAL) SOLUTION.

In this view, for an inclusive, democratic society, it is sufficient to remember the worst to avoid it, instead of the ability to handle the complexity of human actions and choices in history.
HISTORY as «POWERFUL KNOWLEDGE» shifts the issue of responsibility from the field of criminal justice, from the assessment of individual ethical/legal guilt, to that of collective historical and political responsibility.

Implicated subjects occupy positions aligned with power and privilege without being themselves direct agents of harm; they contribute to, inhabit, inherit, or benefit from regimes of domination but do not originate or control such regimes. An implicated subject is neither a victim nor a perpetrator, but rather a participant in histories and social formations that generate the positions of victim and perpetrator, and yet in which most people do not occupy such clear-cut roles. Less “actively” involved than perpetrators, implicated subjects do not fit the mold of the “passive” bystander, either. Although indirect or belated, their actions and inactions help produce and reproduce the positions of victims and perpetrators. In other words, implicated subjects help propagate the legacies of historical violence and prop up the structures of inequality that mark the present; apparently direct forms of violence turn out to rely on indirection. Modes of implication—entanglement in historical and present-day injustices—are complex, multifaceted, and sometimes contradictory, but are nonetheless essential to confront in the pursuit of justice.
HISTORY as «POWERFUL KNOWLEDGE»

As Young writes:

“The ‘power’ of historical concepts lies not, as in the sciences, in their ability to replace everyday concepts, but in their use to challenge conventional views of the past and present ... Without the opportunity to acquire historical concepts, a student’s intellectual capacity can be impoverished; they may be unable to make the best decisions for shaping their future because futures are always extrapolations from the present and the present always has an embedded past”.

Claudia Villani - Bologna, 10 dicembre 2021
In the age of memory policies, of mediated memories and of the politics of memory, it’s important to explore how students and youth make sense of history, how school and public uses of the past affect their historical consciousness and how history teaching works in this context.

As part of the activities of the Jean Monnet Chair HICOM 2018-2021, a pilot study was carried out at the University of Bari with 30 questions of the Youth and History questionnaire and some new questions and items, submitted to 600 20-year-old university students.

This survey investigates historical consciousness, understood as a form of self-positioning and a central part of individual and collective identity, having a bearing on values and interests, influencing attitudes and actions.
The first results were presented during the Conference on EU Mediterranean Memories and Challenges (21-23 October 2021):

- disorientation with respect to contemporary history and its complexity (see appeal/trust in history textbooks)
- canonical interpretations of the (European) past up to the first half of XX century (modernization paradigm)
- more uncertain perceptions of the present and expectations for the future (but deviations among individual, national, European=EU future expectations)
- present-oriented regime of historicity, but rather disenchanted
- multiple and kaleidoscopic identities
- good awareness on mediated past narratives trustworthiness
Network on European and Mediterranean History and Memories (NEHME) - Declaration of Purposes

Signed at the Conference “Historical Challenges and Politics of Memory of EU Mediterranean Countries”, Bari, 21-23 October 2021
How can history education give students the tools

- to better orient themselves in historical time?
- to let them make sense of the past in a self-reflexive way?
- to emancipate them from being only passive consumers/users of historical narratives, at all levels?
As Nordgren wrote:
- “an engagement in everyday life uses of history cannot primarily be to judge what is right and what is wrong but to provide tools to participate in and balance the uses of history”

- “the answers are not to be found beyond subject-specific education and disciplinary thinking, but rather in finding connections to the tensions within the historical culture”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HISTORICAL CULTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(PROFESSIONAL) HISTORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“codified knowledge” → cognitive approach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIRST LEVEL SKILLS**

**handling the past (professional) re-construction:**
- Analyzing particles of the past from original sources
- Contextualizing particles of the past
- Connecting re-constructed History to the own present and future (historicity of professional history)

**handling the past (non professional) re-construction:**
- Confronting past memories with context-related sources
- Contextualizing past memories and their actors
- Connecting past memories to their own present and future (historicity of memories)

**SECOND LEVEL SKILLS**

**handling (professional) history de-construction**
- Analyzing particles of the past from historical narratives
- Analyzing contextualizations and scientific paradigms in historical narratives
- Analyzing historical narratives for their offers of orientation (historicity of historical thinking paradigms)

**handling uses of the past (de-construction):**
- Analyzing uses of the past starting with their actors/agents
- Contextualizing their mediated and subjective narrative formats
- Analyzing uses of the past for their offers of orientation (historicity of private and public uses of the past)

**HISTORY and MEMORY LITERACY**

Claudia Villani - Bologna, 10 dicembre 2021
Thank you for the attention!
Figure 3. Historical consciousness as an anthropological universal is intertwined with, but not reducible to historical culture. The process of orientation takes place in specific historical context. Historical consciousness affects and is affected by the epistemic practices in a given culture [Figure by author].
People often see history as a line in time. Which of the following lines would you think best describes historical development? Mark only one box!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1995 M\textsubscript{EU}</th>
<th>1995 M\textsubscript{ITA}</th>
<th>1995 M\textsubscript{ITAI-\textsc{licei}}</th>
<th>2010 Rombi’s Survey</th>
<th>2019 M\textsubscript{\textsc{licei}}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Things generally get better</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Things generally do not really change</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Things generally get worse</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Things generally repeat themselves</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Things generally go from one extreme to another</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>