

Historical empathy in future primary teachers: the child labor in the 19th century

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Abstract

This piece of research studies how the emotional factor is entailed in the development of the historical empathy and, therefore, in the understanding of history, in a sample of 164 future teachers. This is a highly contentious issue between those in favor of the role played by affections and those against it. Thus, a contradictory activity about the child labor in the 19th century is strategically used since the affective component is implicated in the interpretation of the context. To fulfill this goal, the research is based on a qualitative paradigm, specifically an interpreting process of the narratives of the informants with the ATLAS.ti software. The systematization of the answers is carried out in four progressive categories from a conditioned perspective by the present to an understanding, or even a recreation, of a different social world. The results show that only a small group of students provide contextualized explanations. Conversely, the rest of participants link their interpretation to a presentism emotional framework. In conclusion, the emotional factor, when it contravenes the current system of values, it does not encourage the understanding of historical circumstances that explain child labor in past times.

Keywords

Historical education – Historical empathy – Child labor – Teacher training.

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Introduction

Awakening an interest in History in classrooms implies, among other factors, appealing to historical empathy by practical tasks open to different interpretations about the historical knowledge. Activities based on historical empathy promote the willingness to understand the actions of agents in the past, adopting the perspective of others and strongly favoring the understanding of history (LEE; ASHBY, 2001).

Since the 1970s, when the project *History 13-16* drew attention to this issue as a key aspect in the renewal of History education (SHEMILT, 1984), there has been a great variety of experiences carried out in different countries according to both didactic and research innovative approaches.

This article only includes the research in the Spanish context which has offered results based on systematic analysis pattern, adapted from the previously stated by Dickinson and Lee (1978), Shelmit (1984) or Ashby and Lee (1987).

Apart from the interesting investigation by Calderón-López and Arias-Ferrer (2017) conducted among 98 children in 5th year of the Spanish Primary Education, most studies have been undertaken in the Secondary Education. They have highlighted the serious difficulties students have in order to reach suitable levels of contextualized emphatic understanding. In the pioneering work by Jesús Domínguez (1986), in which students need to put in the Paris Major's place -Bailly- at the beginning of the French Revolution, the results of the control group revealed a level 2 of emphatic understanding (stereotypical empathy) out of the five proposed by Shelmilt, and a level 3 (everyday empathy) in the experimental group, which had received a previous conceptual training.

Years later, in 1993, Domínguez (2015) broadened the scope with a proposal about the crisis in the Spanish absolute monarchy of Ferdinand VII. On this occasion, information was collected through multiple-choice questions with three possible answers and categorized adding two levels to the five proposed by Ashby and Lee (1987). The results showed that the control group had not improved in a statistically significant way since they were in levels 1 and 2, whereas 75% of the experimental group, which had received a previous training, reached the highest levels (3, 4 and 5).

With a systematics organized in three degrees of empathy: presentism, experiential and simple historical, González et al. (2009) developed a piece of research with 57 students of 1st and 2nd year of the Spanish Secondary Education. They designed a didactic sequence focused on the cohabitation and conflict of the three social groups in Spain in the Middle Ages: Christians, Muslims and Jews. The analysis of the results demonstrates that the experiential historical empathy is the predominant among these teenagers, using present values to economic welfare, political and military power, and the rejection of other cultures.

For this same educational stage, Sáiz, (2013) implemented a didactic experience in a sample of 50 students in 2nd year of Spanish Secondary Education based on a historical empathy exercise about the Christian conquest of the Muslim Valencia in 1238. Among the four proposed levels, the majority of students are in the two lowest ones, revealing a very deficient empathic understanding.

Three years later, Guillén (2016) designed a research project based on an empathic historical activity with a group of 28 students in 2nd year of Spanish Secondary Education. The practice is based on the study of the Spanish monarchy in the 16th Century through the actions of an Aragonese highwayman. The answers are categorized in five levels of empathic immersion defined by the contextual dimensions handled by the students. They range around 1. Answering without mentioning the trained dimensions and 5. Seeing different dimensions and connecting them. Most were within intermediate levels.

Among teacher training experiences, two recent works can be cited. Firstly, one carried out by the University of Oviedo, published in 2017, with 79 students of the Degree in Primary Education. San Pedro-Veledo and López-Manrique (2017) pretended to confirm, as they have, if historical empathy exercises about the Spanish Civil War exiles contribute to develop tolerant attitudes towards current refugees in Europe.

Secondly, a very recent work, an adaptation of the one by Foster (1999) about the Chamberlain Policy of Appeasement between 1935 and 1939, carried out by the authors of this article with a sample of 119 future teachers at the University of Valladolid (CARRIL-MERINO; SÁNCHEZ-AGUSTÍ; MIGUEL-REVILLA, 2018). In this case, a codification of four levels adapted to the different stages of the empathic progression by Dickinson and Lee (1978) and Shemilt (1987) has been followed for the analysis of the content of the gathered narratives. It is deduced from the results that only 19.3% understands Prime Minister's actions in its context, using only the present-time perspective.

This lack of research in teacher training has encouraged us to investigate the empathic capacity of this collective, setting the goal to determine the implication of the emotional factor in the development of historical empathy. A highly contentious issue between those who claim the active role of affections in historical empathy (ENDACOTT, 2014) and those who question it (LEE; SHEMILT, 2011).

Methodology

To accomplish this objective, a piece of research has been designed according to the qualitative paradigm by a process of interpreting the informants' narratives, analyzed with ATLAS.ti software. The created task to gather information is a contradictory activity which challenge the students in both affective and cognitive ways (DOMÍNGUEZ, 1986; SHEMILT, 1984; TREPAT, 1995). This type of activities is arranged in two stages. In the first one, students are exposed to a daily life situation of people living in the past which is taken from sources. Subsequently, this is interrupted before the ending in order to let them deduce it in the second stage.

In our case, the used resource is the second chapter, "La compuerta número 12" of the book *Subterra*, written by Chilean Baldomero Lillo in 1904 with autobiographical overtones and Lota coal mines in Concepcion province in Chile as its surroundings. This is complemented by a fragment of the 2003 film adaption. Both sources tell a usual situation in the life of mine proletariat in the 19th century: the first day of a child in a mine.

The investigation was carried out in the University of Valladolid, with 164 students of the Degree in Primary Education, 46 men and 118 women, divided in three groups during a 2-hour session with each one. At first, we handed in the unfinished second

chapter of the book *Subterra* so as to read it individually and then, we saw the film fragment which corresponds to that part of the book. Both sources were interrupted to ask the participants which the father's reaction would be at seeing his 8-year-old son, Pablo, scared, not willing to work in the mine and begging going back home.

Four different options were presented: a) the father goes to work leaving the child crying; b) the father ropes him to avoid his escaping; c) the father takes pity on him and lets him go back home; and d) the father stays with him and goes with him to the mine on his first day. Students need to choose one and explain the father's reasons for his chosen decision. Once collected, the initial sources are shown again, but, on this occasion, with the chapter and film ending.

The analysis of the collected arguments about the contradictory activity is undertaken following a progression in stages according to the chosen ending, ranging from a perspective conditioned by the present to an overcoming of the presentism and a recreation of a different social mentality (see Table 1).

Table 1- Historical explanations

1st: Presentism interpretations disconnected from the social and economic context. Anachronistic expressions. They like the father without understanding the life determinants of the working class. They consider him compassionate, projecting present-time attitudes of modern relationships between fathers and children.
2nd: Right assessment of the socioeconomic situation in context but identifying the father's reaction is marked by presentism overtones. They empathize with him expressing modern feelings that are in contradiction with life determinants of the working class at that time.
3rd: Explanations with a clear perception of the social and economic reality of families. They sympathize with the father from parameters of the past, although they are not able to predict the cruelty of his reaction.
4th: Interpretations with historical perspective according to the circumstances and mentality of the 19th century. They draw inferences based on the information given in the sources. They sympathize with the father understanding his decisions and actions, though they hurt our current sensitivity.

Source: Elaborated by the authors for this study.

Results

After sorting the future teachers' answers according to the chosen answer, we find out, as Table 2 shows, that the most selected was letter (d) "the father stays with him and goes with him to the mine on his first day" (level 2 of historical perspective); followed by (a) "the father goes to work leaving the child crying" (level 3); and (c) "the father takes pity on him and lets him go back home" (level 1). Only four respondents reach level 4 of the historic perspective, choosing option b "the father ropes him to avoid his escaping".

Table 2- Distribution of the sample in relation with the father's reaction

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid ThPercentage	Accumulated Percentage
The father ropes the child (b)	4	2.4	2.4	2.4
The father leaves the child crying(a)	55	33.5	33.5	36.0
The father stays with the child (d)	67	40.9	40.9	76.8
The father lets him go (c)	38	23.2	23.2	100.0
Total	164	100.0	100.0	

Source: Elaborated by the authors for this study.

The qualitative analysis of texts and the study of the different perspectives revealed by the participants are later carried out, inductively identifying four interest topics: socioeconomic conditions, child labor, conceptualization of childhood, and of schooling.

Level 1: Presentist interpretations disconnected from the social contextual

Almost all of the students' explanations for their choosing of the father lets him go home (23.2%) are full of interpretations polluted by the present time, without any connection with the socioeconomic conditions in the late 19th and the beginning of 20th century, which explain the necessity of child labor. These students (13 men and 25 women) put in Pablo's father place, but they are incapable of overcoming the present perspective and analyze his attitude at that time and in that place as he was a present father. They perceive him as a sensitive person who takes pity of him and let him go home, dissociating themselves from the socioeconomic context which explains the situation. Ruiz explains well the reality of these children of working class in the years of the industrial development:

The deep bottom of the issue mainly lay in an economic reason, since the working class, broken by poverty, had to succumb to the money clumsily earned by children of early age for years. (RUÍZ, 2013, p. 54).

Effectively, low salaries and large families made that income contributed by children, though minimal, prevented the family from begging and charity. And society tolerated it as natural.

However, a large number of students within this group (18) projects in the father a feeling of pity that made him change his aim that the child starts working in the mine, reasoning that he is very young and physically fragile for the job This sympathy is expressed in sentences such as "he's only a boy" [IF,5]³, "still a boy and growing up" [IF,

3- I (informant), F (female), Nº (identifying number).

18], an “8-year-old boy is too young to carry out such a nasty duty” [IM, 102]⁴, or “he’s so weak and small” [IF, 163].

These arguments show a conceptualization of childhood suitable only for the 21st century, unknowing that in the traditional society children once autonomous (about at age of 8) quickly joined the adult world on both the farms and workshops in which adults and children shared games and work. The division between them was so unnoticeable that the infants were immediately taking part in family duties contributing with their effort into the household economy (BORRAS, 1996).

On the other hand, another large group of students (16) claims that the father let Pablo go home because “a child of that age should be at school” [IF, 5; IM, 15; IF, 43; IF, 114; IM, 137, 145; and IF, 153], without taking into account the educational reality of the time. Although the Spanish “Moyano” Act in 1857 established compulsory education between 6 and 9 years old, this was hardly accomplished. In 1908, 70.82% of 6-12-year-old Spaniards was enrolled in a school, but only 52.7% regularly attended the lessons (GUEREÑA, 1996). The Chilean case was similar or even worse. In Chile, the Compulsory Primary Instruction Act was enacted in 1920, and in that same year only 2% of children finished the 6 years of compulsory education established in the above-mentioned Act. This school absenteeism, the lack of school infrastructure and teachers explain this complex scenario (SOTO, 2000).

Greater presentism is reflected, however, in those explanations that conceive schooling as a mechanism of upward mobility. The school is the last hope for freeing Pablo from a world as hard as his father’s, expressing this idea with sentences such as: “going to the school and so get the job he really likes” [IM, 81], “he (the father) had no opportunity to choose and now wants his child to have one if he goes to school” [IM, 105], or “he is going to have a better future if he goes to school; thus, he could get a better job and have more economic resources to help his family” [IM, 106].

These students do not acknowledge that the school of that time was so inadequate that its goals were merely learning how to read, write and simple math’s rules. In that Spain, the Primary Education depended upon city halls, which had small budgets to provide buildings and pay salaries, even very low ones. The failure to comply these duties were a matter of numerous reports (SÁNCHEZ-AGUSTÍ, 2002, p. 178). Unsurprisingly, this is the origin of the popular saying in Spain and Chile: “you’re as starving as a school teacher”. In the latter, the Primary Education also depended on the city halls or religious congregations up to 1860; from this year, a sector Act was enacted to finance the existing schools in charge of the public funds whose main item was paying so meager salaries that a common piece of news on the papers at that time was to advocate for better ones (IRIARTE, 1902).

Therefore, if “one has to make the best of one what one has” and families were suffering deprivation, it is difficult to expect that the proletariat would free from the labor yoke receiving this kind of education. Only two future teachers seem able to understand it in this way, when they state that the father decides to let him go back home “to go back

4- I (informant), M (male), N° (identifying number).

to school and when he were older, get back to work “ [IF, 35] or “to follow his studies until he’s old enough to get back to the mine” [IM, 36]. In this time, the only way to be freed would be the seminary, as the anarchist trade union leader, Ángel Pestaña (1974), evokes in his memories in which he remembers how his father pretended (unsuccessfully) he studied to be a priest and, thus, prevented him from the hardship of a miner’s life.

Level 2- Adequate socioeconomic interpretations, with presentism overtones

All the informants (16 men and 51 women) who choose the option in which the father stays with him and goes on this first work day (40.9%) show a better understanding of the economic situation of the working family in the 19th century and, therefore, the need of the children’s work. However, their choice contravenes these perceptions of the historical context when trying to predict the ending. They are aware of the urgency of the family to earn money besides the father. In fact, a large number of participants (37) take into account the economic difficulties grown by the number of children or Pablo’s siblings. “The situation at home was difficult; there were a lot of children to be fed and rents to be paid” [IM, 2], “the father realized that there wasn’t enough money to feed everybody” [IF, 82] or “he needs the child work to sustain the rest of the family” [IM 155], are some of the statements that show the participants’ knowledge of the high natality rate at that time.

On the other hand, the reasonings about the need of schooling are practically vanished (6). Only one, with a similar presentism perspective of the level 1, mentions the school as a shelter for the children and the place where they should be: “it is not right because the child should be registered and in a safe place with his peers” [IF, 91]. Other two talk about the social reality of the time characterized by the irregular school attendance of working class children for a short period of time in the 19th century (RULE, 1990): “but along the days (...) he realizes and let him go back to school” [IF, 65] and “the child will stop working to go back to the school” [IM, 84]. The rest is conscious of the failure to comply with the compulsory attendance in, those years or the lack of opportunities to access a good school: “children started very early to do this job instead of going to school” [IF, 22] and “because they won’t have access to a State-funded education to help the child to get another job” [IM, 135].

The few references to child schooling imply a development in the understanding of the childhood by most members of this group comparing with the first one. While nine have the same perspective as the first group, since they consider the child weak, fragile and, consequently, unsuitable for the mine work; for example, the following informant says “besides, an 8-year-old boy is not mature enough to understand he has to be separated from his family to fulfill some duties that even he doesn’t know if he is able to do” [IF, 22]; other 8 informants understand that an 8-year-old boy is old and strong enough to be part of the work world in tune with the understanding of that time. Among them, these sentences are to be highlighted: “at that time, men had to show courage and to transmit certain values, they could not seem weak” [IF, 73] or “he wants him to work to make him

harder, he doesn't want him to be a crybaby always hiding behind his mother's skirt (...) he believes this is necessary for him to become a man" [IF, 139].

Thereby, this group is halfway between the idea of childhood in the 19th century and one in the 21st century. Even a reasoning of an informant is able to embrace both perspectives:

If we take a current viewpoint, without any doubt I'll say he should let the child go back home because being 8 years old he should be at school and not at work. If we take a viewpoint of the 19th century, children went to work if at home this was necessary to survive. [IF, 123].

Despite the wrong choice of the ending, it must be underlined the picture that 27 informants out of the whole group give about the child labor in the mines. This has a different perspective from the present-time and the logic of the past in their words could be guessed. Therefore, the daily life of a working boy at the end of the 19th century is recognized clearly and precisely by the future teachers with sentences such as "they would find more kids like him in the coal mine" [IM, 2] or "the father sees there are more kids working in the mine so he doesn't feel so bad leaving him working there" [IF, 61]. Indeed, children of the working class were employed in auxiliary tasks that they could do according to their size and strength, but always on long working days and under unhealthy conditions. In mining, these tasks could be opening the gates that separated the tunnels (as the main character of the novel *Subterra* does) or the manual cleaning of mineral; in factories, they could be used in tasks in which their height and dexterity were considered useful like joining splices in looms. Such is told in numerous testimonies. In the mines placed in the Spanish region of Murcia, 10-year-old children are known to be employed until after the beginning of the 20th century (PÉREZ; PASCUAL; SÁNCHEZ, 2013), and even 6-year-old children worked in the Andalusian village of Linares (TIANA, 1987).

Some informants mention the danger of the mining work with expressions related to "a precarious job, people are seen to die every day" [IF, 17] or "a hard place, so dark and unknown for him" [IF, 40]. At that time there were some calls for the need of a legislation ruling labor child, because no fight against it would be possible without more protecting law. This legislation primarily focused on forbidding children in dangerous or unhealthy posts, on the minimum age to enter the work world and on establishing more adequate working schedules (RUÍZ, 2013).

Another interesting issue related to child labor in mines is the matter of wages. More than 14 informants point out that the children's earnings complement and support the family economy in sentences such as: "His family needs the little money Pablo can earn" [IF, 17], "his family needs both salaries, even they regret it greatly" [IF, 58] or "the father needs that his son works to provide for their wife and the rest of children" [IM, 131]. It must not be forgotten that hiring children in the Spanish and Chilean mines in the 19th century was part of mine owners' strategy to reduce labor costs and, at the same time, a key factor in the survival of families (PÉREZ; PASCUAL; SÁNCHEZ, 2013).

However, the choice in which the father goes with the child on the working day exposes that the informants of this group are not aware that the idea is quite incoherent in

that period. The following expressions show how some participants (6) mark by presentism the initiation of children in the work world. A pair of informants are conscious of the dangers of this, but even they opt for this choice “for helping him as much as possible even risking being sacked” [IF, 20] or “the father decides to ask the foreman for a day off, which is granted” [IF, 161]. Another participant talks about the father as a present-time father going with his son on the first period of school adaption, “the school adaptation process is going to be fruitful and quick” [IF, 22]. And, finally, the reasoning’s of three students must be underlined because they adopt present-time concepts like having more than one job, protection or tutelage, “the job is temporary, once the father find another job the child will give up working” [IM, 84], “always with the help, watchfulness and protection of his father there” [IF, 91], “he will be accompanied and under the safe protection of his father on this hard first day” [IM, 100].

It cannot be said that parent were indifferent to the inescapable destiny of children, as this group says, but diseases and tragedies let love and affections on a second level, and every family member has an assigned role that gradually should be fully played (BORDERIES-GUEREÑA, 1996).

Level 3: A clear perception of the social and economic reality of families

The participants that make up this third category are about 33.5% of the whole sample (16 men and 39 women) and, in this case, we find interesting aspects that unify most of them and show a better understanding of the historical context.

All understand that child labor in the mine is linked to a difficult economic situation of the family and, as a result, it is relevant to the household budget. The statements of the following informants illustrate this aspect of the mining economy: “he has no option but to make his son work” [IF, 48], “the need that the child works and they have something to eat is stronger than (...)” [IF, 56] or “with only the father’s salary cannot live well (...) the child’s wage is very important” [IM, 122].

In Borrás words, “(...) wages earned by two children between 10 and 14 years old could pay more than half of all the expenses of the main family” (2013, p. 21). Their incorporation in factories caused the reduction of workers’ wages, since a child doing the same job as an adult earned a lower one (MARTÍNEZ, 2011). In Chile, during the whole 19th century and until the 20th century, the child labor was quite common in factories, salt mines and mines. In fact, the percentage of working children was about between 30 and 35%. In this time, being a child was an advantage to get a job, because they were paid less and, besides, they learned quickly so they were very appreciated for factory work (GOICOVIC, 2001).

The group, not yet reaching the best choice -the one with the greatest social cruelty-, is coherent with the chosen alternative, the father let his post and let the child crying, showing a perception of attitudes of that time in their statements. For example, they state that if the father goes with the child on the first working day, he will lose one-day pay. Others point that “it was senseless if the father loses one working day to take care of the child” [IM, 57], that he would “lose one day pay for staying with the child” [IF, 30]

or that “he needs the money, so he cannot lose one working day” [IF, 158]. Indeed, one main claim of miners in Riotinto (Spain) in 1888 was that their wages were not reduced if they could not work for any reason unconnected to them. The conflict ended in a harsh repression by the Army and the Spanish Civil Guard leaving 48 dead miners and dozens of injured (SARASÚA, 2006).

Regarding the school, the references and allusions to the need of schooling are vanished. Only one participant projects in Pablo a very similar world to ours: “a future could be more promising if he could go to school” [IM, 97]. On the contrary, many explicit quotes are found (22) that show the start of the work world at an early age as a necessary, but not extraordinary, measure, taking into account that childhood finished being 8 or 9 years old. In upper classes, children were to enter military academies or boarding schools; and in lower classes, children were to enter the work world.

Thus, the following examples illustrate the father’s mentality, showing the idea that a strong child has to start to work, to mature, and to fulfill his duties as any other worker: “he shows he is not a boy anymore; he have to do things for his sake, even he doesn’t want to; he must be a strong man and provide for his family” [IF, 48], or “the father tries to make his son feel like a man” [IF, 10], “the sooner he leaves behind his childhood and become a man, the sooner he learns. Learning, as it is said, with blows; blows of reality” [IF, 48] or “the father tries to makes his son be a man... The father lets him cry so he learns how to be on his own in the darkness of the mine and he can understand this is his new life” [IF, 160]. As John Rule (1990) claims when diseases or unemployment appeared, working families could culminate in extreme poverty. Consequently, it was necessary to secure the wages by incorporating children at an early age.

Level 4: Interpretations with social mentality of the 19th century

This last category is only made up by four students, three women and one man. This is the only group who make explanations taking into account the mentality of people from a mine village at the end of the 19th century. A situation, totally inadmissible for our values and principles, roping a child to avoid his escaping becomes acceptable and logical for these students. As Endacott and Brooks (2013) in their model for promoting historical empathy claim these informants commit themselves with the past cognitively and affectively. They clearly try to understand the historical context of this time and, as a result, the action of Pablo’s father.

As it is shown in the following lines, the reasoning of one of these four university students succinctly incorporates all the explicative variables of the situation, referring to the socioeconomic conditions, to child labor, to non-schooling and the idea of childhood of that time in one single paragraph:

During this time, it was very common children of an early age held hard jobs such as working in a mine. Because of their height, they could carry out certain tasks that adults could not. It was irrelevant if the child was registered at the school because once they were old enough to carry out the tasks, the children left the school to contribute to the household budget. The father acts

so because of the “family tradition”; he doesn’t know any other thing beyond the mine and he thinks it’s convenient for his child to follow his steps. [IF, 119].

Other informants make similar explanations, placing in their texts a clear and explicit distinction between present and past: “Given the time is...” [IF, 52], “During this period...” (IF, 119) or taking into account the way of thinking at that time...” [IF, 141]. As the later states, the most significant aspect of this level of historical perspective is that not only the socioeconomic conditions which explain the child labor and the school absenteeism are understood (as the students of the other two groups) but they can get into the social psychology of popular environment of the 19th century. Thus, they can predict the expeditious action by the father to ease his son’s fear and a possible flight from the working post; because it was not an individual action but a customary practice at that time for security, as it is explained by one of the future teachers: “According to the time, I imagine that he would be typical to lock children on the first days for their and others’ safety” [IF, 52].

Among four students, only one makes the father pity the child; the other three unemotionally project a father figure understanding the child’s unease but also that the sense of duty, the economic needs and family tradition carry more weight.

For these students the sources have revealed social and economic information about mining families and the need to work at an early age in the Chilean city of Lota, but it can be exported to other geographical contexts.

The difference between this small group of informants and the other categories, especially the first and second, exist because the students of the first and second category have projected their feelings of pain or pity towards the father (EISENBERG, 2000). They have been sympathetic to the character, and thereby, they have applied to explain the past one of the items that Stuart Foster (2001) synthetically names as sympathy; but it is not historical empathy.

On quite the contrary, the group three and mainly this one, come in contact with the scene from the start with perspectives based on inferences obtained from the given sources (SEIXAS; MORTON, 2013); this is part of a pathway needed to rise to the challenge of the historical ending, appraising the scope and consequences of the father’s behavior.

Discussion and conclusions

As having seen above, the reasonings that the level 1 students have put forward to sustain the (mistaken) choice for the ending of the story are marked by presentism ideas of childhood and education. Allusions to the economic situation are hardly made, and when made, they are anachronistic since they award to the father the capacity of finding new alternatives to provide for his family. A student even says that it would preferable the family “is hungry and lives in poverty to making the boy work at that early age” [IF, 103], showing an ethical approach difficult to understand. They are unable to connect this particular case with the contents about the Industrial Revolution learned in History during 4th year of Secondary Education and in their last year at high school.

The idea of childhood as a vital period that deserves to be protected and that human capacities must develop under the protection of the school is very recent; and it should not apply to popular classes in the 19th century. Although the idea of education had been influenced by Rousseau's doctrine, this was not so strong at that time to change the methods of teaching by both educators and parents who continued to rely on effort and punishment (ARIES, 1986). Besides, the perceptions of these future teachers about the school world are also polluted by present reality, ignoring that the high rate of absenteeism in Spain in the 19th century resulted in a high rate of illiteracy (56.2% of population). It is said two out of four Spaniards older than 12 could neither read nor write (HERNÁNDEZ, 1992).

The level 2 informants show themselves as future teachers with a better understanding of the families of the working class in the 19th century. Most of them are aware of the explaining circumstances for absenteeism and child labor. Nevertheless, when choosing the ending, they forget those socioeconomic and labor determinants previously described. Thus, they made the miner behave in an anachronistic way, like a present-day father on his son's first day at school developing attitudes of protection unthinkable in this social context. They do not take into account that if the father decides to go with the child on his first working day, he will be dismissed or, at least, lose a one-day pay so needed for the survival of the family.

The level 3 future teachers are so involved in the context that all references of the obligation of schooling have disappeared. Their ability to think regarding history allows them to understand that the lack of social conscience among the popular classes at the time made them unaware of the benefits of schools. Their interpretations are much firmer and more precise than the previous group, since they perceive the economic and social reality of Pablo's family with historical perspective. Thus, these students have made a qualitative and quantitative leap regarding the idea of childhood found out in the working sources.

They understand that these determinants have little to do with our present time. Consequently, most of them made comments with the codes of behavior of that time which they have previously deduced from the sources. They partly understand the father's role, being conscious of what a day off implies and try to show, as Shemilt (1984) claims, that things are logical in their past. However, despite accurate interpretations, they do not prevent the father from the cruel final decision, usual in Chilean mines at that time, roping him to avoid his flight and make him fulfil his duty and avoid accidents.

What is currently considered mistreatment, abuse or violence, the four students of the level 4 group recognize as a method of learning and safety proper of that time, made for the minor's sake. The child will learn how to fulfill his duty, overcome his fears and become a hardworking man. It should be taken into consideration that roping children, locking them in dark rooms or closets or slapping were daily practices at homes or schools in the 19th and the beginning of 20th century. As it is narrated by Toro Blanco (2008), Chilean educational institutions had, among other punishment tools, a trap in which a disobedient student was totally caught in; hands and feet on tow.

In conclusion, these results warn us about the limitations of the perspective taken when studying the past is not only necessary in teaching History in Secondary Education,

but also in teacher training due to the detected deficiencies. The difference in age and educational background between other previous Spanish studies about teenagers and ours made the comparison troublesome (DOMÍNGUEZ, 1986; GONZÁLEZ et al., 2009; GUILLÉN, 2016; SÁIZ, 2013). But even, as it could be presupposed, the development of empathic ability should be easily identifiable, this is not. In a considerable number of participants (23.2%), a presentism empathy (level 1) can be identified, 40.9% shows an everyday empathy (level 2) and 33.5% shows a partially contextualized empathy (level 3). Only 2.4% is able to reach a contextualized interpretation by empathy.

It is not possible either to compare our data with the ones provided by the work with future female teachers developed in Oviedo (SAN PEDRO-VELEDO; LÓPEZ-MANRIQUE, 2017), since this is aimed at measuring attitudes related to xenophobia and racism; and not at the appraisal of empathic immersion. The historical activity about the Spanish Civil War has been only used for didactic purposes.

The one carried out at the University of Valladolid (CARRIL-MERINO; SÁNCHEZ-AGUSTÍ; MIGUEL-REVILLA, 2018) should be taken into account because the comparison between the data of both studies allows us to acknowledge that once a historical situational is put forward with an emotional factor, such as the mining work of an 8-year-old boy, the results are more deficient than when the decisions analyzed are those by a more impersonal political agent, and accompanied with an analysis of different sources such as the Appeasement case. This will imply that, as Lee and Shelmit (2011) claim, the affective and emotional components do not favor the historical empathy; however, before reaching this conclusion, larger samples would be needed.

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