

professional journalists like to play the card of “applied history” —<sup>33</sup> analyzing historical precedents and highlighting analogies for illuminating current issues.<sup>34</sup> In other words, pressing social issues and the quest for usable (or instrumental) knowledge seem to chase historical inquiry partly out of the ivory tower of Academia into the public arena. In recent decades, dealing with historical injustice – painful and often silenced histories – has become a greater priority, as if current generations wished to disclose and do justice for what earlier generations have done. In many cases special research taskforces were set up to give voice to forgotten/neglected minority groups and/or disclose hidden/painful stories about looted art collections, political suppression in the past, the colonial past, child murder in church-run homes, systematic abuse of children (e.g. the state-organized practice of *Verdingkinder* in Switzerland). Many of these projects aimed at disclosing these stories and processing a historical trauma (for victims as well as perpetrators) – have resulted in generations removed from the events themselves apart in public consternation, political apologies and sometimes financial compensations. Here, historians play the role of societal trauma counselors. And their public role doesn’t end there, as they are now also asked for their candid opinion with regard to – what we would call – the wave of modern iconoclasm (e.g. exchanging street names named after controversial figures, removing statues of questionable figures from public spaces) resulting from public shame and indignation. So, as a heritage worker too, the historian takes part into the public debate. *le*

## A Public History of Education Manifesto: Looking back and forward

After having read the volume’s rich variety of essays – covering a number of broad topics (e.g. case-studies, experiences, reflections) – the idea of presenting a kind of manifesto grew stronger. A public history of education manifesto that, on the one hand, values the work done so far in our field and, on the other, looks forward – by considering the reflections shared by the various authors. We find this genre to be extremely fitting, because its earlier, revolutionary uses (announcing “new” *manifesto*)

<sup>33</sup> Stephen Dowling, “Coronavirus: What can we learn from the Spanish flu?” (March 3, 2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200302-coronavirus-what-can-we-learn-from-the-spanish-flu>.

<sup>34</sup> Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, Applied History Project. Retrieved from: <https://www.belfercenter.org/project/applied-history-project>.

dawns)<sup>35</sup> as well as its popularity within artistic circles during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where the genre was used to delineate and “perform their principles”, while its imaginative power was used to express new/different opportunities.<sup>36</sup> We are certainly not the first ones to do so.<sup>37</sup> However, we take a slightly different stance here – rather than defining public history of education, fixing the methods to be applied or describing the functions it should fulfill – we choose for a “radical openness”, breaking away from the current situation within our field. So, our “manifestoing” should be understood as setting out a few markers to think with. These markers – think of them as principles –<sup>38</sup> as they appear in the short manifesto underneath, are randomly ordered and none of them is dominant or obligatory – except the first one.

Public history of education is . . .

- 1) making available histories of education, nothing more, and nothing less.
- 2) a tautology, because it is already everywhere.
- 3) not new, because we have always done it.
- 4) not to be claimed solely by academics/historians of education but should be based on organic relationships between academia and multiple audiences.
- 5) less about writing and mediating historically accurate or correct stories, but all the more about allowing stories to become, to be remediated and appropriated.
- 6) not about leaving behind the métier of the historian, but all the more about using these skills during adventurous and creative engagements with pasts, presents and potential futures.

<sup>35</sup> The best example is the Futurist movement with their manifesto “The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism” published in *Le Figaro* in February 1909.

<sup>36</sup> Alex Danchev, “Introduction: Manifesto, Manifestoed, Manifestoing,” in *100 Artists’ Manifestos: From the Futurists to the Stuckists*, ed. Alex Danchev (London: Penguin Books, 2011), xxi–xxii.

<sup>37</sup> Using the concept manifesto was also rather popular with the new public history associations founded in Spain in 2015 (see, e.g., “Historia Pública: Convertir la historia en una herramienta democrática,” [www.historiapublica.es](http://www.historiapublica.es)) and Italy in 2016 (see, e.g., Walter Tucci, “The Italian Public History Manifesto,” accessed September 23, 2022, <https://aiph.hypotheses.org/5442>). Moreover, Gianfranco Bandini published already a Public History of Education Manifesto in Italian in 2019. See: Gianfranco Bandini, “Manifesto della Public History of Education. Una proposta per connettere ricerca accademica, didattica e memoria sociale,” in *Public History of Education: riflessioni, testimonianze, esperienze*, ed. Gianfranco Bandini and Stefano Oliviero (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2019), 41–53. Also see: Gianfranco Bandini, “Educational Memories and Public History: A Necessary Meeting,” in *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, eds. Cristina Yanes-Cabrera, Juri Meda, and Antonio Viñao (Cham: Springer, 2017), 143–155.

<sup>38</sup> Or answers to questions about what, where, when, who, why, and how of a public history of education.

- 7) not about instrumentalizing, educationalizing<sup>39</sup> or politicizing and thus (ab)using the past, but allowing it to become one of the frames of reference that might make a difference in people's lives (e.g. by addressing the painful, voicing the unspoken, questioning the unquestioned).
- 8) an incentive to reflect about how one discloses, e.g. tells, exhibits, musealizes the past, without reducing its (potential) performativity and plurality.

## 1) Public History of Education is Making Available Histories of Education

Making histories available, presumes having some subject matter at hand in the first place, which in turn implies the time-consuming research endeavors and often slow writing processes done before coming up with a – so to speak – “finalized” story. So, before we can offer the public a cup, we first need to “drink an ocean and piss a cupful” – to use Gustave Flaubert's telling description of the painstaking labor of historians. So, the first marker is simple, historians should stay faithful to their trade and do proper research . . . otherwise what stories would they have to offer to the public? The idea of then making these histories available, might sound a little strange as historians were never writing for themselves alone and have always made their work public for other historians or students – and in different forms and shapes (manuals, research papers or presentations, etc.). And in some cases, these academic works eventually found their way to the public and started circulating outside the walls of academia . . . Of course, the notion of making them available in the first marker, implies reaching out to a much broader audience by making use of traditional as well as more innovative formats to tell the stories and to transfer subject matter. Moreover, it also refers to the insecurity one might feel as author at this stage, not knowing who will pick up the story, how it will be used, retold, etc. In other words, one accepts the loss of “ownership” – and thus the power to steer the narrative – by releasing the story. This is exemplified, for instance, in the fact that the usual academic rules for citing the authors of original works apparently no longer seem to apply when educational histories appear in popular blogs or on social media sites or when previously published

<sup>39</sup> Educationalizing refers here to the transformation of research/history into learning units which is often accompanied by reducing complexity, stressing certain dimensions over other ones, etc.

research done by academics gets appropriated by novelists, without referring to the sources they have been using. In such cases, there is reason for concern.<sup>40</sup>

## 2) Public History of Education is a Tautology

As is clear from the introduction, the history of education – be it historical objects and images, memories, or imaginations – seems to be everywhere. Representations of classrooms of the past not only appear in history museums, but also on commercial streets. Moreover, in our daily lives we are surrounded by objects that might evoke memories of the time we spent in school: school exercise books, diaries, fountain pens, quill ballpoints pens, reproductions of wall charts, and globes. A highly popular object from the past are facsimile editions of textbooks. In Spain, as of the 1990s, one can still buy the richly illustrated textbooks for elementary education that children used widely in the Franco era.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, the textbooks that were in use during the Second Republic, including the ones in use during the Civil War, have also found their way back into commercial bookstores, and once reaching the houses of Spanish families.<sup>42</sup> In France compilations of school images and school material have become the successful bases of many French gift books, offered for Christmas to the grandparents.<sup>43</sup> We can still buy small blackboards for decorating our homes. Memories of schooling are shared by many and seem to be timeless and space-less. We have added this marker for several reasons. On the one hand, it highlights a point of departure or a touchpoint with the public. Indeed, as the

<sup>40</sup> Rudolf Dekker, *Plagiarism, Fraud and Whitewashing. The Grey Turn in the History of the German Occupation of the Netherlands 1940–1945* (Amsterdam: Panchaud, 2020).

<sup>41</sup> Examples of popular reprints of textbooks in Spain are: Antonio Álvarez, *Enciclopedia Álvarez: Segundo Grado* (Madrid: EDAF, 1998), reprint of edition 138 of 1962. Antonio Álvarez, *Enciclopedia Álvarez: Primer Grado* (Madrid: EDAF, 1999), reprint of edition 81 of 1964.

<sup>42</sup> Antonio Angulo and Antonio Berna, *Leo, escribo y dibujo* (Santander, CRIEE, 2021), reprint of 1931, originally published in 1930; Joaquín Seró Sabaté, *El niño republicano* (Madrid: EDAF, 2011), reprint of edition 4 of 1932; Fernando Sáinz, *Cartilla escolar antifascista* (Valencia: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes, 1937), reprint 1979; Fernando Sáinz and Eusebio Cimorra, *Cartilla escolar antifascista* (Valencia: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes, 1937), reprint 2021; Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes, *Cartilla aritmética antifascista* (Valencia: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas, 1937), reprint in 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Examples are: *Sur les murs de la classe. Textes de François Cavanna et de nos auteurs de la Commune* (Paris: Hoëbeke, 2003); Philippe Rossignol, *Rossignol: L'École de notre enfance* (Auvergne: De Borée, 2012). A French example of a photo book is: Robert Doisneau and François Cavanna, *Les doigts pleins d'encre* (Paris: Hoëbeke, 1989).

educational past is part of our collective memory – and makes it a “public thing” –, everyone seems to become an “expert” by experience.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, in our opinion it highlights one of the major tasks public historians of education are facing, namely nuancing, pluralizing, and diversifying the stereotyped, clichéd, romanticized memories about the educational past.

### 3) Public History of Education is Not New

As mentioned before, the concept “public history” started to become popular in the 1970s and 1980s. Historians of education in these years were concerned with the history of pedagogical ideas, while social history, including doing oral history interviews, also grew in popularity. Nobody was speaking, however, about “public history of education”. But this does not mean that historians of education were not interested in reaching out to the public. In fact, they were already doing it; their activities, especially the ones related with the establishment of school museums, were just not yet referred to it as public history. In several European countries there were already pedagogical museums at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>45</sup> Their task was to show the latest educational objects, methods, and technologies to the educational world. Starting in the 1980s, parts of these collections were displayed in museums for the history of education – sometimes in the form of reconstructed classrooms like the ones shown in Figures 1 to 6 – to tell stories about the educational past. Although these stories were not necessarily told by historians of education working in universities or colleges, the revitalization of the 19<sup>th</sup> century museums of education in the 1980s does mark the moment when the history of education became “public” history of education. After that moment historians of education became involved

<sup>44</sup> In other words, everybody knows about history of education because everybody has experiences about education. This statement does not apply to other sub-disciplines of history, like political history or economic history. Is that why the former in the eyes of many academics has less status than the latter?

<sup>45</sup> France had a national museum of education in 1879 in Paris. The collections were moved to Rouen in 1980. Spain had a national pedagogical museum in 1882 in Madrid. The first university museum of Education, the *Museo/Laboratorio Manuel Bartolomé Cossío* opened in Madrid in 1990. The Netherlands had its first school museum in 1877 in Amsterdam. It reopened in 1981 as a national school museum in Zoetermeer, it moved to Rotterdam in 1989, and to Dordrecht in 2015. According to Pablo Álvarez the first pedagogical museum was opened in London in 1854, Hamburg (Germany) followed in 1855, and Toronto (Canada) in 1857. See: Pablo Álvarez Domínguez, ed., *Los Museos Pedagógicos en España. Entre la memoria y la creatividad* (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2016), 22.

with exhibitions, documentaries, and many other (digital) ways for engaging with the public. Interestingly though, historians of education seldom classified their work as “public history”. But they were doing it all along. In our opinion the authors in this volume are the proof of that. So, this marker – and the volume at hand – invites historians of education to look back and to reflect on earlier endeavors in the dissemination of the history of education.

### 4) Public History of Education is Not Solely an Academic Discipline, but should Be Based on Organic Relationships between Academia and The Public

If one takes marker two seriously and accepts that everyone is an “expert”, then the next statement shouldn’t come as a surprise. We should not depend solely on academics – as the only ones that have the expertise and possess “objective” tools to get the stories right. In fact, we should strive for a “shared authority” between academics and the public.<sup>46</sup> This goes beyond using the public memory as a mere source. It implies a permanent dialogue/negotiation and search for synergies between the researcher and the public, one which allow the latter to play an active role in the research process and outcome.

To make the tension between academic researchers and the public a little more concrete, we present a typology with different combinations of academic and public activities embodied in five ideal-typical individuals. The first three types of individuals are academics, while the fourth and fifth occupy positions that are not strongly rooted in academia. And although we refer to all types as being “public historians”, we want to emphasize that the third type will be called the “model” public historian by many due to the organic relationship between academia and the public.<sup>47</sup> The five types are:

- (1) The *ivory tower public historian* is an academic who publishes books and articles but who is not concerned about how and by whom his/her work is used. In principle, however, the research outcomes are physically present in (university) libraries, and insights and ideas are disseminated through lectures.
- (2) The *traditional public historian* is an academic that does research and teaches, but that is also actively engaged in making findings known to a

<sup>46</sup> Michael Frisch, *A shared authority: Essays on the craft and meaning of oral and public history* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

<sup>47</sup> Also see: Michael Burawoy, “For Public Sociology,” *American Sociological Review* 70, no. 1 (2005): 4–28.

wider audience through book presentations, external lectures, exhibitions, and special courses.

- (3) The *organic public historian* is an academic that engages with various interest groups inside or outside of the educational community, is involved in a dialogue with all kinds of associations, organizations, and communities.
- (4) The *influencer public historian* is an academic or non-academic that tries to make visible and public what normally remains invisible and private, engages in political, social, and economic activities to achieve that goal, and takes an ethical position with respect to concepts about right and wrong in individual and social conduct.
- (5) The *artist public historian* is a non-academic who tries to make visible and public what normally remains invisible and private, engages in artistic activities to achieve that goal, and takes an aesthetical position about concepts like beauty and harmony.

The role of the public historian can change over time. For instance, an early career researcher in the 1980s is an ivory tower historian if she does nothing more than publish a scientific article about a schoolteacher who is unknown at the time. She becomes a traditional public historian if she writes a few pages about this schoolteacher in a pedagogical textbook in the 1990s. She transformed into an organic public historian if she collaborates with an association of educational practitioners to publish a book about this schoolteacher that will serve as a script for a documentary in the 2010s. The non-academic members of this association could be classified as influencer public historians in the 2020s, if they are involved in designing an exhibition about the schoolteacher, including writing texts on panels, and taking political action to name a street after this teacher. And the non-academic member that color black & white photographs from archives to create vivid, lifelike realities of the past, and exhibits them on social media sites, could be called an artist public historian.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> This is not a hypothetical example. The early career researcher was María del Mar del Pozo Andrés, co-editor of this book, the schoolteacher was Ángel Llorca, the association was the *Fundación Ángel Llorca/Acción Educativa* (<https://www.fundacionangelllorca.org/>), and the artist was Tina Paterson (Twitter @latinapaterson).

## 5) Public History of Education is about Allowing Stories to Become, to be Reanimated, and Appropriated

Public history of education is not about fixing the histories of the educational past once and forever. Academically trained historians are already familiar with the idea that “the” history of something cannot be written. There will always be multiple histories, and never a definitive one. Viewed from a philosophy of science perspective, historians have a preference for philosophical frameworks like social constructivism or postmodernism.<sup>49</sup> Nowadays, not many historians share the positivist idea that there is an external reality out there, or that anyone can claim to “show [the past] as it actually was”, to quote Leopold von Ranke, with the help of objective tools and primary sources.<sup>50</sup> Historical sources do not speak for themselves; there are always multiple interpretations. So, even in the case of the same subject, there are different histories to be told, using different lenses, all of which assume the existence of multiple realities, narratives, and counter-narratives. This is not so much a disadvantage as an advantage. There is not only room for new histories in line with new academic historical turns, there is just as much – and perhaps even more – room for the wishes and desires of a broad public, one that may have its own personal or political motives for supporting historical research (see also marker 4).

Now that history has definitively left the ivory tower, and storytelling and exhibiting have become a public affair, historians’ ability to choose topics has become partly dependent on the potential popularity of a theme. Being in the right place at the right time has become an important feature for doing public history. The historian of education who writes a book on a topic that has no publicity value at the time will remain in the shadows, but the same author may find him/herself in the spotlight when the time is right, and when “the public” wants to listen to the story.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, Fourth Edition (London: Sage, 2018).

<sup>50</sup> Leopold von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History* (London, New York: Routledge, 2011), 86 (Edition and Introduction by Georg G. Iggers).

<sup>51</sup> An example: historian of education Narciso de Gabriel wrote a book in Galician in 2008 about Elisa and Marcela, two female schoolteachers who married in 1901 by posing as a heterosexual couple. The book was translated into Spanish in 2010, and a Netflix movie, *Elisa and Marcela*, directed by Isabel Coixet, was made of it in 2019. The book was republished in 2019 with a prologue written by the director of the movie. See: Narciso de Gabriel, *Elisa e Marcela. Alén dos homes* (Gijón: Nigratrea, 2008); Narciso de Gabriel, *Elisa y Marcela: Más allá de los hombres* (Barcelona: Libros del Silencio, 2010); Narciso de Gabriel, *Elisa y Marcela: Amigas y amantes* (Madrid: Morata, 2019).



Stories can even slip out of the hands of historians (see also marker 1). Indeed, histories of education written by academic historians can be appropriated by anybody interested in telling these stories, adjusting them to their own frame of reference, for instance, by removing unwelcome facts. This is part of the public history game. A historically accurate biography written about a schoolteacher in a certain historical period can end up as a movie in public cinemas that, on the one hand, can deliver an inspiring educational message, but on the other, can turn a complex historical narrative into a simple, idealized story line. Public historians of education must learn to live with this phenomenon.

### 6) Public History of Education is about Being Equipped, but Adventurously Leaving the Beaten Tracks

Doing public history of education does not mean that the traditional ways in which historians used to do their research, such as working with primary documents found in archives, are suddenly abandoned, or replaced by new methodological approaches. It does mean, however, that public historians must be sensitive to public interests, trending topics, or whatever emotionally moves particular audiences. They should not be afraid to engage and collaborate with the public (see also marker 4) – and this is where the adventure can begin – to develop research projects, find stories, and develop them into shared public histories, meaningful for many. It also means that public historians must not be reluctant to delve into visual sources, material objects, and oral testimonies, in other words, non-textual sources.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, borrowing insights and/or methodologies from other disciplines, like sociology, semiotics, or communication and media studies, should also be part of the *modus operandi* of public historians. Above all, historians must find new ways to tell old stories. The issue of illiteracy in Afghanistan, for instance, is beautifully told in the Iranian movie *Buddha collapsed out of shame* by focusing on a 5-year-old girl who wants to go to school.<sup>53</sup> We think that presenting qualitative case studies about children living in times of the industrial revolution, for instance, would have more impact on audiences than presenting statistical data about illiteracy, school attendance, and infant mortality rates. It is the task of a public historian of education

<sup>52</sup> Catherine Armstrong, *Using Non-Textual Sources: A Historian's Guide* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

<sup>53</sup> Philip French, "Buddha Collapsed out of Shame," *The Guardian*, 27 July 2008.

to creatively connect methods and techniques of research with topics in the history of education to fully capture the attention of the public.

### 7) Public History of Education Might Become a Catalyst of Change, But Aims in the First Place at Offering "Thinking Matters"

As we have stated above, a public historian can play a role as an influencer. A political motive for writing certain histories – and deliberately *not* writing others – is at the forefront of these individuals' minds. In philosophical terms, this is nothing more than choosing critical theory as an interpretative framework.<sup>54</sup> In this world view, a transformative position is taken with respect to values. Some values are wrong, and others are right. Knowledge is not neutral, and constructing knowledge is to aid people to improve their lives, raise their consciousness, or to unshackle them from the constraints of unjust power structures. In this sense, doing public history of education might become a catalyst of change by means of participatory action, by active collaboration with marginalized groups, or by giving voice to the oppressed. Writing histories about inequalities and injustices can make a difference for the lives of people. It is equally important, however, to stress that public history is not about taking a transformative stance *per se*, but about offering a frame of reference to various groups. Public history has the potential to question matters that were unquestioned before, to address matters that were not addressed before, or to give voice to the unheard. In practice this can result in writing stories or biographies about unknown schoolteachers, silenced in times of oppression, on the one hand, and writing critical studies about famous educators or pedagogues who have become living legends, on the other. In other words, public history is about heroes and zeroes, about narratives and counter-narratives, about actively changing and thinking about change. In sum, public history is about the plurality of perspectives.

### 8) Public History of Education Needs Ways of Disclosing that Allow for the Past to be Performed

Writing stories based upon a systematic search of historical sources is still at the heart of a public history of education. What is new is the need to find other

<sup>54</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*.

ways of presenting narratives. The performance-concept in this last marker is chosen on purpose, as it hints at artistic and experimental approaches to disseminating and mediating histories, allowing to bring these stories into the fluid states where their connections with humans may make sense.<sup>55</sup> Charles Dickens and Karl Marx were writing at the same time in the same city about the same thing: the consequences of capitalism. Dickens was a novelist, Marx a social scientist. Determining which of these two gentlemen had more of an impact on the public, in terms of making people aware of the problems caused by industrialization and urbanization, is a matter of debate. But many will admit that writing a fictional novel can be a powerful tool to offer people “thinking matters”. The same would apply to a public history of education. Other ways of disclosing historical information instead of, or alongside writing books or articles needs to be strongly considered in order to increase the public impact of histories. Visualization of history fits well with living in the century of the Image.<sup>56</sup> Books can be turned into documentaries. And documentaries can be turned into movies or theater pieces. We took the “modes of presenting” – musealization, exhibiting, and storytelling – as addressed by the different authors as a backbone and structuring element for this volume.

## Case-Studies, Reflections, and Experiences about Public History of Education

### Musealization

In “Like a Voice in the Wilderness? Striving for a Responsible Handling of the Educational Heritage.” – which could be called an “experience report” –, **Marc Depaepe** looks back on and reflects about the expositions set up within the context of the school museum in Ypres (Belgium), allowing the reader to gain insight into the curation as well as in the organization and planning of themed expositions (e.g., driven by personal motives, used to display scientific/research findings). Besides these museum activities, this chapter also sheds light on how the museum was enmeshed in a bigger network of institutions – e.g.,

<sup>55</sup> Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 82. Latour refers to fiction and the arts as resource in a totally different context, namely as way to gain an insight into “material actors”.

<sup>56</sup> Fred Ritchin, *Bending the Frame: Photojournalism, Documentary, and The Citizen* (New York: Aperture, 2013), 160.

“concurring” *In Flanders Fields (IFF)* museum, local government, universities – and on the difficulties/struggles experienced while maneuvering between the various aspirations of these stakeholders. Highly interesting as well is the way in which Depaepe defines how the expositions should function as “instruments to think with and about the (educational) past”, rather than tools that foster a naïve consumption of ready-made, simplified (hi)stories.

In their chapter “Life after the Apology: Making the Unspeakable Visible”, **Lieselot De Wilde**, **Bruno Vanobbergen** and **Sarah Van Bouchaute** make a passionate plea for the musealization of the painful past or trauma. On the one hand, this serves as a recognition of and apology for those who have suffered in the past, and on the other hand, as an instrument for “past, present, and/or future presencing”,<sup>57</sup> allowing curators and audiences to engage – through the exposition – in a dialogue or debate about past, contemporary and future educational interventions. This includes the idea of dialogue, which in turn might trigger social change. The authors illustrate how the exhibition “Patch Places” (*Pleisterplekken*), kept in the Museum Doctor Guislain (1986, Ghent, Belgium) – a museum about the history of psychiatry, located in the buildings of an adult psychiatry ward – might have functioned as kind of laboratory for “adventures in cultural learning”.

**Iveta Kestere** and **Arnis Strazdins** tell – in their chapter “Between Nostalgia and Trauma: The Representation of Soviet Childhood in the Museums of Latvia” – three different stories about Latvian childhood during the Soviet regime. They tell these stories, which include the story of the schoolchild, the child as member of youth movements, the ethnic encultured child, by means of three “iconic” materialities often exhibited in museums, namely a school desk, a red scarf and a doll (*Baiba*). The authors explore how these materialities might have functioned throughout their life story as catalysts for the circulation, transmission, and production of meanings with regard to “Soviet childhood”. This chapter also provides insight into the polysemous character of these materialities which allows the museum visitors to make various connections between past, present and future and, thus, to (re- or counter) imagining. At first sight, these materialities may seem ordinary or well-known, but their musealization might also open a whole new/different repertoire of meaning-making, and even trigger a sense of alienation.

Whereas Depaepe has set his focus on the “life story” of one school museum, **Antonio Viñao Frago** reflects in his autobiographical chapter – entitled: “Public History between the Scylla of Academic History and the Charybdis of History as a

<sup>57</sup> Herman and Roberts, “Adventures in cultural learning,” 189–98.