



<http://www.diva-portal.org>

This is the published version of a paper published in *Education Inquiry*.

Citation for the original published paper (version of record):

Thorp, R. (2014)

Historical Consciousness and Historical Media: A History Didactical Approach to Educational Media.

Education Inquiry, 5(4): 497-516

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/edui.v5.24282>

Access to the published version may require subscription.

N.B. When citing this work, cite the original published paper.

Permanent link to this version:

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:du-14120>

Historical Consciousness and Historical Media - A History Didactical Approach to Educational Media¹

Robert Thorp*

Abstract

This paper presents a theoretical approach to analysing educational media using the concept of historical consciousness. The concept of historical consciousness is defined and operationalised and its relevance for analysis of historical media is discussed. One aspect of the theoretical framework proposed is then applied in an analysis of a history textbook account. The analysis finds that while the framework may be applied in analysis of textbooks, its results regarding historical consciousness are tentative and in need of further investigation from the perspective of how its users perceive and appropriate the textbook account. Still, it is argued that the framework proposed may be useful since it specifies how a historical consciousness may be manifested and what methodological approaches that can be used when analysing it.

Keywords: historical consciousness, historical media, textbook analysis, historical culture, uses of history, educational media, history education

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to propose a theoretical framework of historical consciousness and discuss what parts of it may have relevance for the analysis of historical media regarding their propensity to manifest and develop a historical consciousness. The relevant parts of this theoretical framework will then be applied to textbook analysis which will be followed by a discussion of how the uses of history in a textbook relate to the concept of historical consciousness and its development. Highly interesting and relevant research has already been done in this field, but I would like to propose an understanding of the concept of historical consciousness that pushes the analysis of textbooks towards what has been called the practical turn in textbook analysis. Put very briefly, it states that the use of the textbook affects how its meaning is negotiated (Christophe, 2010: 4).

Historical consciousness is a concept that has become one of the centrepieces of history didactics, and researchers from across the world deploy the concept in a variety of approaches to history didactical research (Ahonen, 2005: 697–699). One of the difficulties connected with the use of the concept is that it is perceived to be quite complex and vague in character (Duquette, 2011: 259; Nordgren, 2006: 15)

*Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden; Dalarna University, Falun, Sweden; Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Braunschweig, Germany. Email: robert.thorp@umu.se

©Authors. ISSN 2000-4508, pp. 497–516

and that it has been perceived as difficult to apply in analysis (Aronsson, 2004: 69). The concept has become increasingly important in history education as well: in Sweden, for instance, history curricula state that the primary aim of teaching history in schools is to develop the historical consciousness of pupils since it influences their identities and conceptions of morality (Skolverket, 2011: 66). Some researchers in the UK and North America have also come to the conclusion that pupils' pre-conceptions of history influence the way they learn the subject, urging teachers and researchers to focus also on what the pupils bring into the classroom in order for them to learn more and also because this has a bearing on what kind of views pupils can acquire of the world and people therein (Cf. Shemilt, 2000: 97–100; Duquette, 2011: 1).

Since research has shown that textbooks are a common tool used by history teachers at least in major parts of Europe (Borries & Angvik, 1997: 57–60; Vinterek, 2010) an analysis of textbooks in relation to the teaching of history from the perspective of historical consciousness seems relevant. For these reasons, I will propose a theoretical framework of historical consciousness that can be used to analyse how individuals understand history in relation to historical media.

The paper will begin with a theoretical section that outlines a theoretical framework of historical consciousness and a discussion of what parts of the framework are relevant in textbook analysis and what kind of analysis can be done considering the framework proposed. I will then relate this approach to previous research. The relevant parts of the framework will then be tested empirically and this will be followed by a concluding discussion of the results.

Theoretical Framework

Historical Consciousness

The aim of this section is to present a theory of historical consciousness that can be used to understand how individuals make sense of history, how they express a historical consciousness, how a historical consciousness can be developed, and how this interpretation of the concept can be understood as a methodological approach, outlining its possibilities and restrictions regarding the analysis of historical media in general and history textbooks in particular. I will then discuss how this framework can be applied in textbook analyses.

Definition and Application

Historical consciousness can be defined as a concept that deals with people's understanding of the relation between the past, the present, and the future; an understanding of how past, present, and future relate to each other in history (Cf. van der Leeuw-Roord, 2000: 114). This ability has been dubbed multi-chronology by the Swedish history didactical researcher Niklas Ammert (2008: 56) and that is

the term I will use henceforth when I refer to this ability. When an individual applies multi-chronology to history it can be claimed that she makes a different kind of meaning of the history she encounters than a person who does not make these temporal connections (Cf. Rüsen, 2008: 190–191). Hence, I want to argue that the understanding of multi-chronology that was stipulated as a definition of historical consciousness should be applied to individuals' meaning-making in history.

Manifestations

A historical consciousness can be manifested from at least three different perspectives: (i) narration, (ii) uses of history, and (iii) historical culture. At the most fundamental level, a person manifests her historical consciousness when she creates narratives (Rüsen, 2004: 128–129). In order to convey historical matters (and others), we need to narrate them (Carr, 1986: 50–53).

When an individual narrates something historical, she can be said to make a use of history. It can thus be through the uses of history that we can access an individual's historical consciousness. In this paper, there are two dimensions of uses of history that are central. The first dimension is what I call the *what*-dimension; these uses of history can be existential, political, scientific, et cetera, according to a commonly used typology developed by the Swedish historian Klas-Göran Karlsson (2009: 59). These kinds of uses of history illustrate how history can be used to achieve different things, i.e. if history is used politically, it is used in political debates or something similar to achieve a political goal.

Another interesting dimension of uses of history is what can be called the *how*-dimension. Here the analysis focuses on *how* individuals use history to achieve these things. Jörn Rüsen's typology of historical narratives can be an appropriate way to illustrate this dimension of uses of history since historical narratives, according to Rüsen, are used to achieve various things. A *traditional* narration makes use of history to maintain or uphold tradition. An *exemplary* narration uses history to generate rules of conduct; history teaches us how to lead our lives. The *critical* narration uses the historical example to criticise historical and contemporary societies and cultures, while the fourth type of narration is the *genetic* one and here history is used to explain continuity and change in historical and contemporary societies and cultures (Rüsen, 2012: 52–54). All uses of history can be analysed according to *what* kind of use of history they are and *how* history is used in these examples.

The third manifestation of historical consciousness that I want to highlight is historical culture. I want to argue that historical culture can be regarded as an agglomeration of uses of history. With this view, a historical culture is upheld by the uses of history of its individual members, but at the same time it also affects what kinds of uses of history there can be since it *a priori* determines how individuals interpret historical events or facts. This is because a historical culture is

always present when an individual is born into or otherwise enters a certain society (Cf. Aronsson, 2004: 61–62). Furthermore, uses of history can be found in the artefacts of a certain historical culture. How these uses of history are interpreted depends on what historical culture they adhere to and what kind of historical consciousness the interpreting individual has.

Epistemic Qualities

If historical consciousness deals with individuals' understanding of multi-chronological connections in history, it seems important to be able to say something about *how* they understand these connections, i.e. what epistemic qualities a historical consciousness can have. Research has shown that the epistemic beliefs of individuals influence how they interpret history and historical accounts (Bråten et al., 2011: 54–55). For this reason, I want to propose a typology that allows us to analyse how an individual makes sense of history. Jörn Rüsen's (2006: 72) commonly used typology of historical consciousness has been extended by Peter Seixas (2006) and I think these extensions could be used to illustrate these qualities.

If an individual has a *traditional* historical consciousness, the typology states that she regards history and its accounts as either true or false in themselves without taking any notice of their historical context. She has a rudimentary and binary approach to historical accounts and the truth-value therein and encounters difficulties when exposed to two (or more) contradictory historical accounts. An individual with an *exemplary* historical consciousness still has a rudimentary and binary approach to truth-value in history, but she acknowledges that we need some kind of method for ascertaining the truth-value therein. Here history is regarded in a positivist (or Cartesian objective) manner: by applying the right kind of method, we can find out what is true and false history. The next kind of historical consciousness, according to Seixas' typology, is the *critical* one, and a person with this kind of historical consciousness regards the truth-value in all history and its accounts as relative to their contexts, resulting in the view that there can be no (objective or inter-subjective) truth-value regarding history. The last epistemic quality is the *genetic* one, and this is a step beyond critical historical consciousness since it regards the contextual contingency of history not as an obstacle, but rather as the only way of reaching an objective or inter-subjective truth in history. If we take the context of historical representations into account (including the context of the experiencing subject) we can come to know something about history (Seixas, 2006: 145–149). What distinguishes these different types of historical consciousness is the individual's ability to contextualise historical accounts. A person with a traditional historical consciousness does not contextualise historical accounts at all whereas a person with a genetic historical consciousness contextualises both the historical account and herself as a "meaning-making" individual.

It has been shown in research that the pre-conceptions of and attitudes towards history that individuals have affect how they understand the texts they read; a person with strong pre-conceptions is unlikely to sympathise with a historical account that presents a rivalling image of history (Porat, 2004: 964). Hence, it can be claimed that the kind of historical consciousness an individual has can be relevant to how she interprets historical accounts and/or history.²

Finally, on the basis of the view presented here, it can be argued that a certain use of history is the effect, or symptom, of a certain kind of historical consciousness. For instance, a traditional historical consciousness can result in a use of history that does not consider context whatsoever, i.e. a traditional use of history. A person with a genetic historical consciousness, on the other hand, analyses both the context of the historical account and the meaning-making subject, taking the full context into account when using history, thus making a genetic use of history.

Development

Since the view of historical consciousness presented above stresses the epistemic dimensions of the concept (an ability to contextualise history is perceived to be what distinguishes different types of historical consciousness), it is important to specify how individuals do in fact come to contextualise history and representations thereof. Such a theoretical approach is afforded by the concept of historical thinking where the aim of applying first and second order concepts to history is to enable the individual to appreciate the representational aspects of history, i.e. to have a meta-historical approach to history (Cf. Lee, 2006: 134–135; Shemilt, 2000: 97–98). For the sake of brevity, I will not go into specifics here on how an individual comes to appreciate these aspects of history through historical thinking, but I want to stress that research has shown that some kind of method seems to be required in order to develop individuals' abilities to contextualise historical accounts (Wineburg, 1998: 337–340).

Previous Research

This paper presents an analysis of a section of a history textbook and it should therefore be regarded as an example of one kind of textbook analysis. Since this is a rather vast and diverse area of research (Lässig, 2009: 4; Foster, 2011: 5), in the analysis here I will only focus on textbook analysis that has deployed the concept of historical consciousness. One assumption in that research seems to be that the content of the textbook is essential for the kind of historical consciousness the individual develops: through reading history textbooks individuals develop their historical consciousnesses (Ammert, 2008: 151; Bushuev, 2013: 244; Eikeland, 2002: 4; Nordgren, 2006: 186, 218). It is claimed, for instance, that history textbooks that include multi-chronological (or reflexive) historical accounts that deal with values (such as freedom or benevolence) have a greater possibility of

developing an individual's historical consciousness since it engages the individual on a personal level (through values) and forces her to analyse the accounts multi-chronologically by applying genetic and genealogical perspectives (Ammert, 2010: 25–26).

Furthermore, historical accounts in textbooks need to be varied (in the sense that they include text, images, statistics, etc.), fascinating, multidimensional (i.e. they apply both synchronous and diachronous perspectives), and multi-perspectival (i.e. present historical accounts from different perspectives) (Eikeland, 2002: 7–8). The Norwegian researcher Halvdan Eikeland writes, for instance, that “various perspectives in historical accounts can be an important key to developing the historical consciousness of pupils: they have no choice but to reach balanced and rational conclusions [about history]” (Ibid., 8). He furthermore finds that the textbooks he studied cannot develop pupils' historical consciousnesses because the narratives therein are too one-dimensional and closed (Ibid., 158).

Historical Consciousness as Methodological Approach

Given the view of historical consciousness and its manifestations presented here, it can be possible to construct a methodological approach to interpreting educational media from the perspective of historical consciousness along these lines:

- the narrative of the historical media itself can be analysed as an artefact of a historical culture;
- the uses of history portrayed in these narratives can be analysed from the *what* and *how* dimensions presented above, and the cultural aspects of uses of history and historical educational media can be analysed from an inter-discursive perspective: how do the uses of history in the media in question relate to the larger historical culture surrounding it (Cf. Klerides, 2010: 32–39)?;
- through the *how*-dimension of uses of history, we can access and assess historical consciousness as a level of contextualisation in narratives that make use of history.

A research plan for historical media analysis based on the theoretical framework presented above needs to employ a variety of methods and be specific about what the aim of the research is. If the aim is to analyse the uses of history in historical media, it seems relevant to analyse the narrative structure and narrative strategies or uses of history in the media. It also needs to be specified *whose* uses of history we are analysing: those of the author or those of the consumer (if we are aiming at the consumer, some account of how she experienced the uses of history in the media seems necessary). If the aim is to analyse the media as an artefact of a historical

culture, it seems relevant to deploy some kind of (critical) discourse analysis, and to relate it to the contemporary societies of its authors and consumers.

If history textbooks are analysed in accordance with this logic, for instance, we will find a variety of uses of history in the textbook that we can analyse from the *what* and *how*-dimensions stipulated above. These uses of history will be the author's since it is she who has constructed the narrative in question. The *what*-uses will tell us what kind of use of history the textbook displays: political, commercial, et cetera. The *how*-uses will tell us how this history is used politically, commercially, et cetera. The *what*-uses can tell us what the textbook author may have wanted to achieve with her account or has thought appropriate or important to include in the textbook, and the *how*-uses could give us information about what epistemic beliefs the author has: a traditional use of history could be regarded as a symptom of a traditional historical consciousness, et cetera. A traditional use of history could be regarded as presenting the textbook narrative as something that is free of interpretation, that we are witnessing a true account of history, whereas a genetic use would present the textbook narrative as something that is tentative and a result of careful interpretation. It could be argued that a traditional use of history cannot develop the historical consciousness of individuals in the same way as a genetic use of history can.

However, considering the theoretical framework proposed, research that aims to analyse whether a historical media can develop a historical consciousness in an individual needs to go beyond the historical accounts of the media and analyse the uses of the media from the perspective of its users, for instance, the teachers and the pupils. How does the teacher interpret the accounts in the media and what effects does that have on its interpreted meaning? Consequently, and perhaps more interestingly, we can ask *why* the teacher interprets the accounts the way she does. If the teacher uses the accounts traditionally (and perhaps has a traditional historical consciousness), it seems unlikely that the historical consciousnesses of her pupils could reach a genetic level with the help of the teacher. To be able to assess any developments on the part of the pupils, their use of history will have to be analysed and, furthermore, to be able to answer the question *why* there has been progress, the classroom activities or assignments given to the pupils would most likely have to be analysed from a perspective similar to that afforded by historical thinking in relation to what the pupils have brought into the classroom, what other sources of influence they have had, and what epistemic beliefs they have (Duquette, 2011: 63–68).

What I have written above imposes restrictions on how we can assess historical consciousness in textbooks: what we find in textbooks are uses of history that can be regarded as symptoms of historical consciousness. Furthermore, the only uses of history that we find are those of the textbook author. Hence it is difficult to say anything about the historical consciousness of the reader by analysing the textbook

itself. The benefits of the approach suggested here are rather that the approach proposes a theoretical framework of historical consciousness that (i) suggests how a historical consciousness and its manifestations can be connected, (ii) suggests how progression or development of historical consciousness can occur, and (iii), since it focuses on uses of history as the key concept in activating and assessing an individual's historical consciousness, suggests where to look for a historical consciousness, and, finally, (iv) suggests how a historical consciousness can be studied through an individual's use of history.

Below follows an analysis of a textbook according to the framework presented above. Since I will only analyse a textbook account, I will try to illustrate how parts of the proposed framework can be used to analyse uses of history in a history textbook, and from these uses of history draw conclusions about historical consciousness.

Textbook Analysis

This section will present a brief textbook analysis whose main purpose is to illustrate some possibilities for textbook research that have been outlined in the theoretical framework presented above.

Aim and Method of the Analysis

The study presented below analyses the uses of history in the Swedish history textbook *Historia: För grundskolans senare del* by Göran Körner and Lars Lagheim (2002) for pupils aged between 13 and 15 years, i.e. Swedish lower secondary school, with the purpose of assessing what kind of historical consciousness the textbook portrays, and to discuss the relation between that representation and the historical consciousness of an individual. I studied the same section in a number of Swedish history textbooks and what is presented here could be considered a typical account of Swedish post-war society. The account of the post-war era was chosen for analysis since it is a recent phenomenon and something most members of Swedish society presumably have some kind of relationship to.

I analysed the narrative structure and frameworks in the textbook account and their relation to historical culture by highlighting quotations that illustrate the topics dealt with in the textbook account and how they are presented.³ The assumption here was that a structure and framework of a narrative can be regarded as being related to historical culture since what is included in the narrative is presumably perceived to be relevant (i.e. it is the result of a conscious choice), and the frameworks applied are what creates coherence and meaning in the narrative (i.e. it establishes common sense) (Cf. Lee & Howson, 2009: 241). Historical culture is understood as having at least two dimensions: as historical context and as meta-historical conceptions of what is historically meaningful and important. How the narrative refers to the larger historical cultural context concerning the history textbook was analysed by contrasting it to other history textbooks on a general

Swedish scale. Since there is recent research on Swedish history textbooks, I will compare my results with Ingmarie Danielsson Malmros' (2012) study concerning this aspect.

The next step was to analyse the uses of history in the highlighted quotations from the perspectives of *what* uses of history there are, and *how* history is used according to Rösen's typology presented above. I claim that the uses of history we can find in the textbook are those of the textbook authors since it is they who have created the narrative that portrays the uses of history in the textbook. Finally, the *how*-uses of history were used to analyse the historical consciousness portrayed in the narrative regarding what traces of historical consciousness there are and what can be said of the propensity of the narrative to develop an individual's historical consciousness.

Some Theoretical Specifications

A historical medium is a medium that disseminates something historical. Hence, a history textbook is a historical medium. There are, however, constraints to how history can be presented in textbooks: it has to comply with the history curricula of schools and it has to be a desirable product on the textbook market. My assumption is that for these reasons, history textbooks have to take the historical culture of a society into account from at least two perspectives: a history textbook has to incorporate the official historical culture portrayed by the history curricula, and it has to relate to the historical cultures of the teachers, primarily, and the pupils they are going to teach. In a multi-cultural society (such as contemporary Sweden), many aspects need to be taken into consideration.⁴ Moreover, research has shown that what is included in a textbook depends on when the textbook was written since contemporary events tend to influence what authors focus on, further stressing the importance of historical culture and context regarding history textbooks (Danielsson Malmros, 2012: 261–164).

Furthermore, when writing a history textbook, authors make conscious selections and interpretations of the historical cultures surrounding them in order to render the narrative a meaningful whole. Thus, it can be argued that the authors proceed from the historical cultures that surround them regarding what is perceived about history as a linguistic and symbolic entity, and what is regarded as belonging to its genre (Cf. Aronsson, 2004: 86–87; Danielsson Malmros, 2012: 253). Accordingly, it could be argued that history textbooks thus strive to present what can be regarded as common sense in history since it seeks to attract rather than repel its presumed readers and/or consumers.

For these reasons, I argue that a history textbook can be regarded as an artefact of the historical culture of the society in which it was conceived, and that the narratives therein can be perceived as relating to the historical culture of its surrounding society in some way or another (Cf. Åström Elmersjö, 2013: 148–151). This means that history textbooks can be claimed to portray what is regarded as more or less

common sense in history in a society (Cf. Haue, 2013: 80–89; Virta, 2012: 55–60). It can, however, be difficult to analyse that common sense since there is probably an infinite number of perspectives that can be applied in the analysis. Finally, although textbooks can be regarded as offering meaning to its readers, how that meaning is interpreted may depend on how the textbook is used (for instance, if it is used with a critical or non-critical approach) and the epistemic beliefs and values of its readers.

Analysis: Swedish Post-War Society

Textbook Narrative: Structure and Frameworks

The narrative about Sweden begins by stating that:

The Swedes had survived the 2nd World War as a small peaceful island in an ocean of violence. Our cities and industries were unharmed, which gave us a giant headstart. We could deliver wood, steel, machinery, and other commodities to a Europe that lay in ruins. The incomes of companies, state, and families increased (Körner & Lagheim, 2002: 340).

Sweden was in a special situation after the war since it was left practically unharmed by it and Swedish companies could produce goods for the European market when the war ended. For Europe on the other hand, the situation was worse. The use of the pronoun “we” in relation to what Sweden could do is probably used to make readers engage with the narrative on a personal level, but could at the same time be perceived as exclusive: we were well-off, they were living among ruins.

The next part of the account deals with social reforms in post-war Sweden:

The Dream of the Good Society

The coalition government of the war years was replaced by a Social Democratic one. They claimed that the time had come to get rid of poverty in Sweden. We are going to build a *people's home*, a country with social security, full employment, and higher salaries for the worst off.

But was there enough money for all this? Yes, the first years after the war the GNP increased by more than three per cent per year and in the 1960's by more than five per cent per year (Ibid., 341).

The coming to power of the Social Democratic Party is here strongly associated with the wish to transform Sweden from a poor society into a modern welfare state. The Social Democrats managed to build the Swedish welfare state in a short time thanks to an annual growth in GDP of between 3 and 5% during the 1950's and 1960's. A new human ideal started to permeate society: citizens should not have to ask for help when ill or poor; instead every person should have a right to get help from society. The social security system that was built after the war included almost everything, and it was a system that everyone should contribute to:

All these reforms were to be paid by income taxes or payroll taxes and you should pay taxes according to your ability to pay, the rich should pay more and the poor less. This is called *policies of economic re-distribution* (Ibid., 342).

During the 1960's, the welfare state was established:

The 1960's – the Dream Becomes Reality

During the 1960's, money was flowing into Sweden and the Swedes. The policies of economic re-distribution enabled more and more people to afford things they earlier could only dream of. Almost everyone had a telephone and more and more people got a car, refrigerator, freezer, and a television set. Those who did not have a summer cottage went on a chartered trip to the Mediterranean for a vacation in the sun. By the end of the 1960's, Sweden, along with Switzerland, had the highest standard of living in the world (Ibid.).

In less than 20 years, Sweden had gone from a land of poverty to one of the richest countries in the world. The average Swede could afford to either buy a summer cottage or go on vacation abroad and all of this was because of the system of economic re-distribution that was launched by the Social Democrats. This also marks the peak in the narrative about Sweden: henceforth the narrative shifts its focus to problems in Swedish society. It begins with the "Million-Programme" that was launched in Sweden in the middle of the 1960's:

The Golden Years and the "Million-Programme"

Overcrowding was remedied during "the golden years" of the 1960's. The so-called "Million-Programme," that aimed at building one million homes in ten years, was launched between 1965 and 1974.

In the city centres, excavators were wreaking havoc. Beautiful, old buildings had to be pulled down to make space for office buildings and multi-storey carparks made of concrete. Many of the new housing areas were like giant blocks of concrete (Ibid., 343).

The shift is already emphasized in the headline of the section: the phrase "the golden years" has positive connotations whereas the "million-programme" has negative connotations. To many Swedes, it represents ugly housing areas where nobody wants to live. This is further accentuated in the quotation where beautiful buildings were torn down to make room for concrete carparks and office buildings. The million-programme also marks the transition into the 1970's in the narrative.

Then, in summary, the account states that the bolstering Swedish economy after the 2nd World War enabled the Social Democratic government to pass a number of welfare reforms that aimed at giving the average Swede a higher living standard. Through the welfare reforms that were initiated by the Social Democratic government, Swedes were able to afford various commodities and their material standard of living increased. The price to be paid for these welfare reforms was the demolition of city centres with beautiful, old buildings. The society described here is a progressing society.

This changes with the transition to the 1970's; now the focus is shifted towards a general decline caused by economic crises:

The 1970's – Crisis for Large Corporations

More than half of the production was exported. Export companies grew richer and richer and workers demanded higher salaries. But Swedish goods became increasingly expensive and foreign companies became tough competitors on the world market. Furthermore, world trade decreased, one reason being the Oil Crisis (-).

Swedish companies started selling less and less and economic growth waned. The state spent billions of Swedish kronor on protecting large corporations and avoiding unemployment. But shipyards like Kockums and Götaverken were beyond rescue. Many steel and textile industries were also discontinued (Ibid., 344).

One interesting feature here is how the narrative shifts agency: earlier, the Social Democrats and their policies of re-distribution are presented as the things that made Swedish prosperity possible, whereas in the quotation above, they seem to be what causes the problems: workers demanded higher salaries and that made Swedish goods too expensive on the world market. Now the Swedish government is helpless and economic decline is what propels the narrative and portrays agency. This continues into the 1980's and 1990's as can be illustrated by the headlines of these sections: "The 1980's – Loaning Craze and Bank Crisis" (Ibid., 345) and "The 1990's – Unemployment and Decreasing Welfare" (Ibid., 346). About the loaning craze and ensuing bank crisis we learn that:

In the end the [financial] bubble burst. Real estate companies went bankrupt and also banks, who had granted giant loans on overpriced real estate, were on the verge of bankruptcy. They had lent enormous amounts of money that they were never going to get back. Yet again the government, i.e. the tax payers, had to come to the rescue. The Swedish tax burden became the heaviest in the world (Ibid., 345).

Once again, the economy is what provides agency and the government is more or less portrayed as a victim of incompetent bankers. Furthermore the government is equated with the tax payers, further accentuating a sense of othering: the economy and banks beset us, the people, and we have to pay the price for their foolishness. Now Sweden no longer has the highest standard of living in the world, but instead the heaviest tax burden.

The last section of the account about Sweden deals with the social history of Sweden from 1950 to 2000. There are three sub-sections called "Women in Society," "The Environment – the Price of Economic Growth," and "The Swedish Population." The sub-section about women in society states:

Formerly it was customary that unmarried women did simple work in offices or health care. A married woman's role was traditionally to "stand by the stove and give birth to babies." The husband was the sole provider of the family.

During the good years of the 1960's, an increasing number of women joined the work force but they still took main responsibility for domestic chores and children. (-).

Through the work of the *women's movement*, public debate, and legislation attitudes changed slowly. Women were able to get jobs that were traditionally male (-). Men started taking more responsibility at home. Daycare centres and schools took care of children. (-).

Not until 1980 was the *Gender Equality Act* passed in the Swedish parliament. (-). However, despite this, the mean income of women remained lower than that of men and still women are clearly under-represented among higher executives (Ibid., 347–348).

Swedish women went from being tied to the stove and giving birth to children to becoming members of the regular work force, but they then had to perform double workloads since they had to work both at home and away. This was remedied by public debate in the 1970's. However, despite the Gender Equality Act, the mean income of women was still lower than that of men, and more men are CEO's. The framework applied is once again that of progress (from being child bearers and rearers to members of the work force), and decline (although women were still unequal). The shift in agency is also similar to that above: in the beginning, women are in control of the situation but then control is lost to some abstract entity. The fact that women started to work is presented in a positive manner.

In the sub-section about environmental issues, it says that the enormous economic growth caused severe pollution and exploitation of natural resources. To remedy this, new laws were passed and companies and municipalities had to comply: "*Everyone* has to learn to think environmentally" (Ibid., 348). In 1980 there was a referendum about whether nuclear power should be abolished in Sweden:

After a referendum in 1980, the Swedish parliament decided that Sweden's nuclear plants should be phased out one by one and that the phasing-out should be done by the year 2010. This date gets increasingly closer, but no alternative (clean) energy sources that can replace nuclear energy fully have popped up ["dykt upp" in Swedish] (Ibid.).

Once again the framework of progress and decline is used: laws are passed and referendums are held, but nothing happens. The shift in agency is also similar to those above: people and the government act to solve problems but are stopped by some abstract entity (alternatives to nuclear energy have not popped up, for instance).

The last sub-section deals with the social transformation of Swedish society in the post-war era. To illustrate the profound transformation of Swedish society in the latter half of the 20th century, an account of an imaginary neighbourhood in an imaginary Swedish town is used:

The Corner Shop that Disappeared – and Came Back!

In the 1950's: On one corner is a milk store and next to it a vegetable store. Kind women serve the customers. On the other side of the street there is a butcher, a shoemaker, and a barber. Around the corner, a petrol station lies next to a laundry service and next to that is

the small bakery of the Anderberg [a Swedish surname with middle-class connotations] family. Early in the morning, seven days a week, the lovely smell of freshly baked bread can be felt in the street. Those were the sights and smells of a residential quarter in the 1950's.

In the 1970's: The milk store and the vegetable store have closed. The shoemaker and the barber are dead. None of their children took over their businesses. They got educated and found, as they thought, "nicer" jobs. The premises have been turned into offices. The laundry service has become a solarium.

In the 1990's: Many Swedes have become fed up with industrial food and impersonal service. Many immigrants contribute to the changing residential quarters. Now you can find a tailor from Sarajevo and a baker from Beirut. There is a pizza restaurant (–) and the old milk store has become a corner shop that is open 12 hours a day. It is energetically run by Amir and his wife Susan, from Iran, with the help of relatives.

Where you once found the petrol station, there is now a sports and bicycle repair shop run by Börje from Borlänge [a Swedish working class name and an industrial town]. He is one of many unemployed Swedes who – like immigrants – have started their own enterprises (Ibid., 349–350).

A striking characteristic of the passage above is the idealised image of the 1950's, followed by the gloomy 1970's, and a more complex image of Sweden in the 1990's. The corner shops have returned but they are not what they used to be: they are run by hardworking immigrants and formerly unemployed Swedes, not by artisans as in the 1950's.

In conclusion, I want to stress that the most basic framework in the section analysed seems to be that of progression and decline: the positive development of Sweden after 1945 is halted by economic difficulties in the 1970's, and since then Swedish society seems to be more or less degenerating.

Historical Culture

If we regard historical culture as historical context and what is perceived as historically meaningful and important, the framework of progress and decline that is applied to the Swedish welfare state seems to make sense: the book was published in 2002 and the authors were probably influenced by the harsh economic realities and the decline of the Swedish welfare state that occurred during the 1990's. How the authors choose to frame the individual sections in the passage also seems to harmonise with how these passages are generally presented in Swedish history textbooks: a strong trend since the 1970's is to regard the Swedish welfare state as emanating from the social reforms of the 1930's and to closely link it with politicians and political parties, according to Ingmarie Danielsson Malmros (2012: 191). The framing of women's history could also be regarded as typical. Recent textbooks tend to stress the failed hopes of the Swedish gender equality movement: despite the women's movement and public debate of gender issues in the 1970's and the law of 1980, Swedish women and men are still unequal (Ibid., 247–251).

Another aspect of historical culture that may be interesting is whether the narrative seeks to establish a view of history as something static and stereotypical, or

as something dynamic and multi-faceted. I regard the narrative to be static and stereotypical in character. We are presented with a grand narrative of Swedish society after 1945, and, as shown above, this narrative also harmonises with those presented in other Swedish history textbooks, suggesting that the analysed section seeks to enforce one historical culture in Sweden that could be called traditional and common-sensical.

Uses of History

There are many examples of uses of history in the studied account and I will concentrate on what I perceive to be the most dominant ones. The explicit uses of history that can be analysed from the account above are those of the authors. To be able to analyse the uses of history of teachers or pupils, we need to go beyond the text itself. The authors of the text deploy a variety of uses of history from the *what*-dimension. There are many examples of political uses of history when the authors make use of the historical example to explain the developments and changes in the political and economic organisation of Sweden after 1945, primarily in its focus on the Social Democratic Party as the primary political agent. Existential uses of history can also be found: the quoted segment about the transformation of the imaginary neighbourhood can be seen as the authors' attempt to convey an image of everyday history to make readers understand how profoundly Swedish society has changed. The list of *what*-uses in the segment could go on, but if we want to assess the account from the perspective of historical consciousness, it seems more relevant to analyse the *how*-uses of history in the textbook.

I find no evidence in the segment that the authors apply any critical approach to uses of history or attempts at explaining continuity and change in Sweden in the latter half of the 20th century. The most dominating use of history is what could be typified as a traditional use of history: the authors seem to be mostly occupied with disseminating what could be called a rather traditional account of recent history. There is one example that could be characterised as an exemplary use of history: in the passage about the bank crisis of the 1980's, the textbook states that "yet again" the government had to come to the rescue, suggesting that there is some kind of regularity concerning this and that this could be interpreted as a kind of rule derived from the historical example. The only example of what could be a critical use of history is the account about the women's movement: we learn that a lot has happened, especially during the 1970's, but that there is still inequality between the sexes. However, the reader is not invited to muse on why this happens to be the case.

Historical Consciousness

So what can be said about historical consciousness concerning the studied excerpt? As I have argued above, it is difficult to assess whether reading the text develops an individual's historical consciousness. What we can do is assess the historical

consciousness of the authors from the uses of history they have portrayed in the narrative. Judging from that, it seems that the historical consciousness of the textbook authors is mostly traditional or exemplary in character: the account we are presented with bears no evidence that the authors have an appreciation of the contextual contingency of history and its representations.

We should however be cautious in making assessments of this kind: from the framework presented above, we can say that a traditional historical consciousness most likely does not lead to a genetic use of history. Regarding the other types of historical consciousness matters are more complex, however. For instance, a person with a genetic historical consciousness can most certainly use history traditionally or exemplarily, and probably better than if she lacked a genetic historical consciousness. Furthermore, as was argued above, textbooks have to comply with certain demands, and this could mean that certain aspects of the uses of history of the authors have been excluded. Considering this, it is difficult to say what historical consciousness the authors actually have on the basis of the account in the textbook. To be more certain, we would probably have to interview them or ask them to write something more.

Finally, what is interesting about a textbook cannot be what historical consciousness its author has, but rather the character of the use of history that is manifested in it and whether it is possible to discuss what understanding or interpretation of the past that is facilitated by the textbook and how that in turn can affect the type of historical consciousness pupils can develop from using the textbook in different ways.

Concluding discussion

Considering the theoretical framework applied, it is difficult to say anything about whether a textbook account develops a historical consciousness; in order to say anything precise about that, we have to move beyond the text itself. It may certainly be the case that a textbook that deploys multi-chronological and multi-perspectival accounts develops someone's historical consciousness in a more reflected way, but we cannot be certain about that. As has been shown in research, a person's epistemic beliefs determine how the person reads a text and if a person has a traditional historical consciousness, there are no guarantees that she will appreciate the contextualised contingency of accounts she is presented with. Furthermore, a textbook account like the one studied in this text can be used as a prime example of a stereotypical traditional use of history and thus be used to illustrate the importance of context when constructing historical accounts and in this way further the development of a historical consciousness. For this reason, I want to argue that the use of the text determines its propensity to develop a historical consciousness.

Hopefully, the method outlined above and the textbook analysis will have illustrated both the difficulties and potential of applying the framework of historical

consciousness in analysis. The primary difficulty with applying the framework is that it, more or less, inevitably pushes us beyond the textbook towards the practices surrounding it. If historical consciousness is related to how individuals understand history, and if individuals' epistemic beliefs (as portrayed by the epistemic qualities of a historical consciousness) determine how they interpret texts, it becomes essential to focus on the experiencing subject when determining what he or she learns from reading a certain textbook account. The quality of the historical consciousnesses of the pupils will affect how they interpret the textbook.

Perhaps the most significant person in teaching is the teacher and with the model presented here, the focus is also shifted towards the teachers as meaning-making subjects. If the pupils' historical consciousnesses are essential to how they understand a textbook, there is no reason to think that the historical consciousness of the teacher would be of less importance. It is, in fact, to a great extent the teacher who decides *how* the textbook is going to be used in teaching. If the teacher has a traditional historical consciousness, the chances seem slim that she will be able to teach the importance of context in determining the truth-value of historical accounts, and she will thus most likely fail to develop the historical consciousness of her pupils in any other direction.

Finally, since an understanding of the concept can be that it deals with how individuals create meaning in history through the narratives and uses of history they portray, it enables us to move beyond the textbook account when analysing the impact textbooks have on learners. The framework presented here urges us to go into the classroom and engage with the pre-conceptions teachers and pupils have of history and how that influences the learning process.

I am well aware that the theoretical assumptions and methodological approach presented in this paper perhaps raise more problems than they answer questions about textbook research, but the methodological approach outlined here may still be useful since it presents an operationalisation of the concept of historical consciousness that allows us to apply it in analysis of both historical media and the uses thereof in relation to individuals' understanding of history and it seeks to specify how to deal with some methodological issues connected to historical consciousness. For these reasons the issues raised in this paper could be regarded as possible to overcome by further investigations into how historical media are used and appropriated in a learning situation along the proposed theoretical framework.

Robert Thorp is a PhD candidate at Dalarna University and Umeå University. He is a fellow researcher at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig, Germany, where he participates in the international research project *Teaching the Cold War: Memory Practices in the Classroom*. Robert Thorp is also a principal researcher in the international *Comparing Our Pasts* project headed by the HERMES research network, which is concentrated at the University of Newcastle, Australia. He has previously published *Historical Consciousness, Historical Media, and History Education*.

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank Tomas Axelson at Dalarna University and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this text.
- 2 For further arguments on how epistemic beliefs or qualities may affect our consciousness and perception, see the American philosopher Pete Mandik's interesting paper "An Epistemological Theory of Consciousness?" (2008, 152–156).
- 3 All quotations have been translated from Swedish to English by the author of this text.
- 4 Since 1990, there has been no official governmental control of textbooks in Sweden. It is entirely up to the market to determine what textbooks are to be used in teaching in Sweden and what they should include.

References

- Ahonen, Sirkka. (2005). Historical consciousness: A viable paradigm for history education? *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 37(6), 697–707.
- Ammert, Niklas. (2008). *Det osamtidigas samtidighet: Historiemedvetande i svenska historieläroböcker under hundra år*. Uppsala: Sisyfos.
- Ammert, Niklas. (2010). To bridge time: Historical consciousness in Swedish history textbooks. *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, 2(1), 17–30.
- Aronsson, Peter. (2004). *Historiebruk: Att använda det förflutna*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Borries, Bodo von. & Angvik, Magne. (1997). *Youth and History: A Comparative European Survey on Historical Consciousness and Political Attitudes Among Adolescents. Vol. B, Documentation: Original and Combined Measures for Dimensions in Historical Consciousness*. Hamburg: Körber-Stiftung.
- Bråten, Ivar, Britt, M. A, Strømsø, Helge I. & Rouet, Jean-François. (2011). The role of epistemic beliefs in the comprehension of multiple expository texts: Toward an integrated model. *Educational Psychologist*, 46(1), 48–70.
- Bushuev, Aleksey. (2013). Contemporary history for the modern generation: the specificity of schoolchildren's historical consciousness formation in post-Soviet Russia. In *Cultural and Religious Diversity and Its Implications for History Education*, Wojdon, Joanna (ed.), 239–252. Schwalbach: Wochenschau Verlag.
- Carr, David. (1986). *Time, Narrative, and History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Christophe, Barbara. (2010). Remembering communism - making sense of post-communism. An analysis of discursive strategies in Lithuanian textbooks. *Eckert. Beiträge*, (2010/10).
- Danielsson Malmros, Ingmarie. (2012). *Det var en gång ett land ... Berättelser om svenskhet i historieläroböcker och elevers föreställningsvärldar*. Höör: Agering.
- Duquette, Catherine. (2011). *Le rapport entre la pensée historique et la conscience historique. Elaboration d'une modèle d'interprétation lors de l'apprentissage de l'histoire chez les élèves de cinquième secondaire des écoles francophone du Québec*. Québec: Université de Laval.
- Eikeland, Halvdan. (2002). *Et laereverks bidrag til historiebevissthet og narrativ kompetanse. Analyse og praktisk bruk av historiedelen av Aschehougs laereverk i samfunnstag for ungdomstrinnet: "Innblikk"*. Tønsberg: Høgskolen i Vestfold.
- Foster, Stuart. (2011). Dominant traditions in international textbook research and revision. *Education Inquiry*, 2(1), 5–20.
- Haue, Harry. (2013). Transformation of history textbooks from national monument to global agent. *Nordidactica: Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education*, 2013(1), 80–89.
- Karlsson, Klas-Göran. (2009). Historiedidaktik: begrepp, teori och analys. In *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken*, Karlsson, Klas-Göran & Zander, Ulf (eds.), 25–70. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Klerides, Eleftherios. (2010). Imagining the textbook: Textbooks as discourse and genre. *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, 2(1), 31–54.
- Körner, Göran. & Lagheim, Lars. (2002). *Historia: För grundskolans senare del. Grundbok*. Stockholm: Natur och kultur.
- Lee, Peter. (2006). Understanding history. In *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Seixas, Peter (ed.), 129–164. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Lee, Peter. & Howson, Jonathan. (2009). "Two out of five did not know that Henry VIII had six wives:" Historical literacy and historical consciousness. In *National History Standards: The Problem of the Canon and the Future of Teaching History*, Symcox, Linda & Wilschut, Arie (eds.), 211–264. Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.

- Lässig, Simone. (2009). Textbooks and beyond: Educational media in context(s). *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, 1(1), 1–20.
- Mandik, Pete. (2008). An epistemological theory of consciousness? In *Philosophy in the Neuroscience Era, Special Issue of Reti, Saperi, Linguaggi*, Plebe, Alessio & De La Cruz, Vivian (eds.), 136–158. Rome: Squilibri.
- Nordgren, Kenneth. (2006). *Vems är historien?: Historia som medvetande, kultur och handling i det mångkulturella Sverige*. Umeå: Fakultetsnämnden för lärarutbildning, Umeå universitet.
- Porat, Dan A. (2004). It's not written here, but this is what happened: Students' cultural comprehension of textbook narratives on the Israeli-Arab conflict. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(4), 963–996.
- Rüsen, Jörn. (2004). *Berättande och förnuft: Historieteoretiska texter*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Rüsen, Jörn. (2006). Historical consciousness: Narrative, structure, moral function, and ontogenetic development. In *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Seixas, Peter (ed.), 63–85. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Rüsen, Jörn. (2008). *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation*. 2nd ed. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Rüsen, Jörn. (2012). Tradition: a principle of historical sense-generation and its logic and effect in historical culture. *History and Theory*, 51(4), 45–59.
- Seixas, Peter. (2006). Historical consciousness: the progress of knowledge in a postprogressive age. In *Narration, Identity and Historical Consciousness*, Straub, Jürgen (ed.), 141–162. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Shemilt, Denis. (2000). The Caliph's coin: the currency of narrative frameworks in history teaching. In *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, Stearns, Peter N., Seixas, Peter & Wineburg, Sam (eds.), 83–101. New York: New York University Press.
- Skolverket. (2011). *Läroplan, examensmål och gymnasiegemensamma ämnen för gymnasieskola 2011*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- Van der Leeuw-Roord, Joke. (2000). Working with history - developing European historical consciousness. In *Approaches to European Historical Consciousness: Reflections and Provocations*, Macdonald, Sharon & Fausser, Katja (eds.), 114–124. Hamburg: Edition Körber-Stiftung.
- Wineburg, Sam. (1998). Reading Abraham Lincoln: an expert/expert study in the interpretation of historical texts. *Cognitive Science*, 22(3), 319–346.
- Vinterek, Monika. (2010). Different kinds of teaching resources – different kinds of learning?: Teachers' ends and means. In *Opening the Mind or Drawing Boundaries?*, Helgason, Thorsteinn & Lässig, Simone (eds.), 123–140. Braunschweig: Georg-Eckert-Institut für Schulbuchforschung.
- Virta, Arja. (2012). Finska kriget 1808–1809 i svenska och finska gymnasieböcker i historia. *Norddidactica - Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education*, 2012(1), 54–79.
- Åström Elmersjö, Henrik. (2013). *Norden, nationen och historien: Perspektiv på Föreningarna Nordens historieläroboksrevision 1919–1972*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.