

# Historical Consciousness, Historical Media, and History Education

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*For Engla and Ingrid*



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# Appendices

- Paper I: Thorp, R., 'The Concept of Historical Consciousness in Swedish History Didactical Research'. In *Cultural and Religious Diversity and Its Implications for History Education*, edited by Joanna Wojdon, 207-24. Yearbook of the International Society for History Didactics 34. Schwabach: Wochenschau Verlag, 2013. Reprinted with permission.
- Paper II: Thorp, R., 'Towards an Epistemological Theory of Historical Consciousness'. *Historical Encounters* 1, no. 1, (June 2014): 17-28. Reprinted with permission.
- Paper III: Thorp, R., 'Historical Consciousness and Historical Media: A History Didactical Approach to Educational Media'. Manuscript currently under review in *Education Inquiry* (14<sup>th</sup> of May 2014). Printed with permission.

# Abstract

This thesis by publication contains an introductory summary chapter and three papers. The first paper presents a study of how the concept of historical consciousness has been defined, applied, and justified in Swedish history didactical research. It finds that there is consensus regarding the definition of what a historical consciousness is, but that there is variation in how the concept is applied. It is suggested that this variation makes historical consciousness a complex and vague concept.

The second paper uses the results presented in the first paper as a point of departure and from thence argues for a broadened understanding of the concept of historical consciousness that incorporates its definition, application, development, and significance. The study includes research about historical consciousness primarily from Sweden, the UK, the USA and Canada. The paper presents a typology of historical consciousness and argues that level of contextualisation is what distinguishes different types of historical consciousnesses and that an ability to contextualise is also what makes historical consciousness an important concept for identity constitution and morality.

The third paper proposes a methodological framework of historical consciousness based on the theory of historical consciousness presented in the second paper. It presents arguments for why the framework of historical consciousness proposed can be useful for the analysis of historical media and it discusses how aspects of the framework can be applied in analysis. It then presents a textbook analysis that has been performed according to the stipulated framework and discusses its results regarding how textbooks can be used to analyse historical consciousness and its development.

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*Robert Thorp*

*Gävle, May 2014.*



# Introduction

This study deals with historical consciousness. The concept has served as a point of departure throughout my research. Having worked as an upper secondary school teacher of history in Sweden for nearly a decade, I thought I had a decent grasp of what a historical consciousness is and how it can be used in history education, and consequently I proposed a plan for my coming research in which I planned to visit classrooms to study and develop methods for developing a historical consciousness in pupils. This turned out to be a lot more difficult than I had expected, and for more reasons than I had initially thought. Instead I found that I had to investigate the notion of historical consciousness itself.

Why historical consciousness? From a Swedish perspective, the concept has had a central position in history didactics and history education since 1994 when it was made the centre-piece of Swedish history curricula<sup>1</sup>: through the study of history, Swedish pupils are supposed to develop their historical consciousnesses.<sup>2</sup> There has also been an increase in research internationally (especially from the UK, the USA, and Canada) that makes use of the concept.<sup>3</sup> Even though historical consciousness to some extent has

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<sup>1</sup> Bengt Schüllerqvist, 'Kanon och historiemedvetande – två centrala ämnesdidaktiska begrepp', in *Kanon och tradition: Ämnesdidaktiska studier om fysik-, historie- och litteraturundervisning*, ed. Lars Brink and Roy Nilsson, Lärarutbildningens skriftserie/Högskolan i Gävle, 1652-0955; 2 (Gävle: Lärarutbildningen, Högskolan i Gävle, 2006), 136–140.

<sup>2</sup> *Läroplan, examensmål och gymnasiegemensamma ämnen för gymnasieskola 2011* (Stockholm: Skolverket, 2011), 66.

<sup>3</sup> For some examples, see Frances Blow, 'How Pupils' Conception of the Relationship between the Past and Present Impact on the Ways They Make Sense of the History Taught', in *The Processes of History Teaching: An International Symposium Held at Malmö University, Sweden, March 5th-7th 2009*, ed. Per Eliasson, Carina Rönnqvist, and Kenneth Nordgren, studier i de samhällsvetenskapliga ämnena didaktik 15 (Karlstad: Karlstads universitet, 2011), 106–109; Catherine Duquette, *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, 2011); Claudio Fogu, 'Digitalizing Historical Consciousness', *History and Theory* 48, no. 2 (2009): 103–121, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2303.2009.00500.x; Daniel Friedrich, 'Historical Consciousness as a Pedagogical Device in the Production of the Responsible Citizen', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 31, no. 5 (December 2010): 649–663; Peter Lee and Jonathan Howson, "'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*, ed. Linda Symcox and Arie Wilschut (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Pub., 2009), 211–264; Jan Löfström, 'Finländska gymnasieelevers reflektioner över historiska gottgörelser - Vilka implikationer ger det för historieundervisningen i Finland?', *Nordidactica - Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education*, no. 2 (2011): 64–88; Peter Seixas, 'Progress, Presence and Historical Consciousness: Confronting Past, Present and Future in Postmodern Time', *Paedagogica Historica* 48, no. 6 (2012): 859–872, doi:10.1080/00309230.2012.709524; Denis Shemilt, 'Drinking an Ocean and Pissing a Cupful: How Adolescents Make Sense of History', in *National History Standards: The Problem of the Canon and the Future of Teaching History*, ed. Linda Symcox and Arie Wilschut (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Pub., 2009), 141–210; Zhan T. Toshchenko, 'Historical Consciousness and Historical Memory: An Analysis of the Current Situation', *Russian Studies in History* 49, no. 1 (1 May 2010): 37–52, doi:10.2753/RSH1061-1983490103; Brenda M. Trofanenko, 'More than a Single Best Narrative: Collective History and the Transformation of Historical Consciousness', *Curriculum Inquiry* 38, no. 5 (December 2008): 579–603; Arie Wilschut, *Images of Time: the Role of an Historical Consciousness of Time in Learning History* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Pub., 2012); Sam Wineburg et al., 'Common Belief and the

become an increasingly central concept in history didactics, its use is marred with difficulties and the concept is perceived by researchers as vague and complex.<sup>4</sup> This renders theoretical research into the concept of historical consciousness highly relevant.

Furthermore, history didactics as an academic discipline is a rather recent phenomenon<sup>5</sup> and much of the research in the field is inspired by research in other academic fields, which may result in a richness but also confusion regarding methodologies and concepts.<sup>6</sup> This is very much the case concerning the concept of historical consciousness. It has been used not only by historians in research, but also by researchers in psychology<sup>7</sup>, philosophy<sup>8</sup>, literature<sup>9</sup>, sociology<sup>10</sup>, religious studies<sup>11</sup>, architecture<sup>12</sup>, political science<sup>13</sup>,

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Cultural Curriculum: An Intergenerational Study of Historical Consciousness', *American Educational Research Journal* 44, no. 1 (3 January 2007): 40–76, doi:10.3102/0002831206298677; and Esther Yogev, 'Clio Has a Problem: How to Develop Active Historical Consciousness to Counter the Crisis in History Teaching', *Online International Journal of Arts and Humanities* vol. 1, 2012, no. 2 (June 2012): 13–22.

<sup>4</sup> For some examples see, Fredrik Alvé, *Historiemedvetande på prov: En analys av elevers svar på uppgifter som prövar strävansmålen i kursplanen för historia* (Lund: Forskarskolan i historia och historiedidaktik, Lunds universitet, 2011), 25–26; Lars Andersson Hult, *Att finna meningen i ett historieprov: En studie om mer eller mindre utvecklat historiemedvetande* (Lund: Forskarskolan i historia och historiedidaktik, Lunds universitet, 2012), 10; Duquette, *Le rapport*, 259; Kenneth Nordgren, *Vems Är historien?: Historia som medvetande, kultur och handling i det mångkulturella Sverige*, doktorsavhandlingar inom den Nationella forskarskolan i pedagogiskt arbete, 1653-6894; 3 (Umeå: Fakultetsnämnden för lärarutbildning, Umeå universitet, 2006), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. David Ludvigsson, 'Kritiska perspektiv på historiedidaktiken', in *Kritiska perspektiv på historiedidaktiken*, ed. David Ludvigsson, Aktuellt om historia 2013:2 (Eksjö: Historielärarnas förening, 2013), 7; and Bengt Schüllerqvist, *Svensk historiedidaktisk forskning*, Vetenskapsrådets rapportserie, 1651-7350; 2005:9 (Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet, 2005), 14–26.

<sup>6</sup> Maria Repoussi and Nicole Tutiaux-Guillon, 'New Trends in History Textbook Research: Issues and Methodologies toward a School Historiography', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 2, no. 1 (30 May 2010): 156–157, doi:10.3167/jemms.2010.020109.

<sup>7</sup> Jürgen Straub, 'Telling Stories, Making History: Toward a Narrative Psychology of the Historical Construction of Meaning', in *Narration, Identity and Historical Consciousness*, ed. Jürgen Straub (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 44–98.

<sup>8</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'The Problem of Historical Consciousness', ed. Erick Raphael Jimenez et al., *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 5, no. 1 (1975): 8–52, doi:10.5840/gfpj197512.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Ingemansson, 'Det kunde lika gärna ha hänt idag': *Maj Bylocks Drakskeppstrilogi och historiemedvetande hos barn i mellanåldrarna* (Göteborg: Makadam förlag, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> John Torpey, 'A Pursuit of the Past: A Polemical Perspective', in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 240–55.

<sup>11</sup> Wolfgang Hasberg, 'The Religious Dimension of Social Diversity and History Education', in *Cultural and Religious Diversity and Its Implications for History Education*, ed. Joanna Wojdon, Yearbook of the International Society for History Didactics 34 (Schwalbach: Wochenschau Verlag, 2013), 147–69.

<sup>12</sup> Reinhold Martin, 'Historical Consciousness', *Journal of Architectural Education* 64, no. 2 (2011): 82–82, doi:10.1111/j.1531-314X.2010.01130.x.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth H. Prodromou, 'Formation of Historical Consciousness Among Greek Adolescents: Some Insights for Political Science Theory', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 18, no. 2 (2000): 305–19, doi:10.1353/mgs.2000.0040.

and educational research, spawning a rich but sometimes confusing body of research that uses the concept. In order to gain a firmer grasp of how the concept of historical consciousness can be understood, one aim of this study is to analyse the use of the concept of historical consciousness (and related concepts). Since historical consciousness is a concept that is central for history education, particularly in Sweden, another aim of the present study is to discuss how the concept of historical consciousness can be understood and applied in history didactics and history education.

The investigation in this study has been guided by the following questions of research:

- How is the concept of historical consciousness presented in research?
- How, according to research, is a historical consciousness developed?
- If possible, can an understanding of historical consciousness be reached that incorporates the perspectives that exist regarding the concept?
- To what extent can this understanding of the concept be applied to enhance analyses of historical media regarding their ability to promote historical understanding?

## **Outline and Structure of the Introductory Summary Chapter**

This study contains an introductory summary chapter and three papers. In the introductory summary chapter, the ontological and theoretical assumptions that underlie the research presented in the papers are made explicit and defined, the relation of this study to previous research is specified, the methodology of the study is presented and discussed, and, finally, the results of this study are presented and discussed. This outline is especially significant for the second paper since the argument presented there rests on many theoretical assumptions that need to be made explicit in order for the argument to have a chance of succeeding.

The first paper presents a study of how the concept of historical consciousness is used in Swedish history didactical research and should be regarded as the starting point for the arguments and theories I develop in the two following papers. The second paper argues for a theory of historical consciousness that incorporates the various perspectives of the concept that exists in research and proposes a theory for the development of historical consciousness in an individual. The third paper discusses the understanding of the concept outlined in the second paper and applies one aspect of it in textbook analysis. Thus it could be argued that the three papers constitute a whole since the first paper presents a descriptive conceptual analysis and the second paper a normative or prescriptive conceptual analysis resulting in a regulative definition of the concept of historical consciousness which is then operationalised in the third paper.

## **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

Since the scope of the study is wide, its results are quite limited. The present study should first and foremost be regarded as an attempt to reach a broadened and deepened theoretical understanding of the concept of historical consciousness and its presumed theoretical underpinnings and a specification as to how the concept could be related to its manifestations, development, and how it can be applied in practice. These matters, as the study will show, are complex and as a result, the theoretical positions outlined are in want of empirical confirmation. The textbook analysis in the third paper is quite limited and is mostly intended to illustrate one of many possible approaches to research using the framework and understanding of historical consciousness that is developed.

# Theoretical Framework

This section aims to make explicit various assumptions that I have made implicitly in my research and to specify my understanding of the most central concepts or notions that I deploy in the same research. Hence, the focus here is not to give exhaustive accounts of these matters, but rather to illustrate how I perceive them and why I have chosen to apply them in the manner I have done. The first sub-section presents the ontological assumptions of my research and the second sub-section the history didactical ones.

## Ontological Assumptions

The ontological approach in this study could best be labelled phenomenological. In the context of this study, I use phenomenology primarily as a theory that illustrates basic ontological categories, not as a methodological approach to doing science. As a methodological approach I instead use what could probably best be called hermeneutics. I believe that these two theoretical perspectives can be used together since I perceive them as dealing with two different ontological aspects: phenomenology deals with questions about the world and hermeneutics deals with questions of the interpretation of the world. I am thus primarily interested in phenomenology as a theory that illustrates how we perceive the world and hermeneutics as a theory that deals with how we interpret this perception. Consequently, in this study phenomenology should only be understood as a theory that describes how we perceive the world, and hermeneutics only as a theory that describes humans as interpreting beings, i.e. as a method of interpretation.<sup>14</sup>

I have decided to divide this section into two sub-sections. *The Perceived Object* deals with metaphysical assumptions about the constitution of our perceptions of the world, and *The Perceiving Subject* deals with how individuals experience the world and what significance that may have.

### *The Perceived Object*

#### *Phenomenology*

At the most fundamental level, I have applied what could be called a phenomenological approach in my research. Hence, phenomenology is what could be called the ontological point of departure for the present study. According to phenomenology, we can only study the world or reality as it appears to us. Phenomenology thus states that we can only describe and analyse phenomena as they occur to us and that we should give detailed atten-

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<sup>14</sup> For a similar view on hermeneutics, see Gunnar Karlsen, *Språk, tolkning och argumentation: En samhällsvetenskaplig introduktion* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2012), 11–16.

tion to aspects of the world that we more or less take for granted.<sup>15</sup> Thus, with this view the basic ontological category is our perception of the constitution of reality.

Accordingly, phenomenology stresses the importance of using the practical or material world as the starting point when doing research (or trying to understand the world around us) and not theoretical devices or notions of reality. According to the view presented here, the material world is the primary object of knowledge, and not theoretical abstractions as, for instance, the Platonic Ideals. When we want to study the world we should begin with the phenomena, not with theories about them.

The reason I have chosen to apply phenomenology in my research is that it is a theoretical approach that harmonises well with educational objectives and practices. If we want to be specific about how knowledge construction and development occur, it is valuable to study the practices that surround these phenomena.<sup>16</sup> This has also been the starting point of my research: through a close study of how the concept of historical consciousness is presented and used in research I have categorised the various conceptions of the concept which have then been used as a stepping stone for my further research.

### *The Practical Turn or Practice Theory*

Closely connected to a phenomenological view of the world is what has become known as practice theory or the practical turn. At the most generic level, it can be said to be an approach to research that treats practice as a fundamental category or as a theoretical point of departure for research. Ludwig Wittgenstein's theory of language-games and Martin Heidegger's hermeneutical holism have been essential to the development of a practical approach to theory. Wittgenstein claimed that language has to be interpreted in its context of use in order to analyse its meaning, and Heidegger argued that rules or theories have to be assessed in their context, since a theory or rule in theory can be made to apply to anything and explain more or less all phenomena in the world. Taking its practical application into account, on the other hand, enables us to gain a rich understanding of it.<sup>17</sup> For instance, the abstract concept of *justice* can be defined as "the quality of being just" or "fairness."<sup>18</sup> However, if one applies the concept as a principle for legal isonomy, it comes to mean something quite different than if applied as a princi-

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<sup>15</sup> Konrad Marc-Wogau, 'Edmund Husserls kritik av psykologismen', in *1800-talet*, ed. Konrad Marc-Wogau, *Filosofin genom tiderna* 3 (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers bokförlag, 1965), 293.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Monika Vinterek, *Åldersblandning i skolan: Elevers erfarenheter*, doktorsavhandlingar i Pedagogiskt arbete, 1650-8858; 1 (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 2001), 82-89.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. David G. Stern, 'The Practical Turn', in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, ed. Stephen P. Turner and Paul A. Roth (Padstow: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003), 185, 192-200.

<sup>18</sup> This is what the entry for 'justice' in Randolph Quirk, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 1992) states.

ple for Marxist economical re-distribution, and this is because the application of a concept affects its definition, according to this view.<sup>19</sup>

This is the approach to theory I have applied in the present study since I think it allows us to analyse the importance of practice from a number of perspectives. Two of them are that the way we apply concepts comes to determine what we perceive them to mean (i.e. the use of a concept affects its meaning) and in order to analyse theoretical notions (like historical consciousness) we need something manifest or concrete on which to establish our analyses.<sup>20</sup>

### *Hermeneutics*

The practice theoretical perspective I have adopted is hermeneutics. According to Hans-Georg Gadamer the aim of hermeneutics is to make evident the wonder of understanding not as a secretive communication between souls, but as a co-operation in mutual meaning-making. Every valid interpretation needs to bracket or differentiate itself from the influence of the contemporary world and prejudices of the interpreting subject. The interpreter needs to direct her attention to matters *as they are*.<sup>21</sup> This, I believe, is meant to direct us towards an appreciation of the importance of the *practice of interpretation*, rather than the interpretation itself.

Understanding thus becomes a holistic endeavour: we have to take the full context of the object we study into account. Furthermore, it is in the dialectical engagement with the object that we can reach the fullest interpretation, not by applying a certain method when doing analysis.<sup>22</sup> The ideal here is that we should strive towards a kind of hermeneutical openness using the dialectic method in text analysis.<sup>23</sup> The interpreter should always try to make explicit her presumptions or prejudices when studying texts, and then strive to engage with these presumptions in order to take the full context of the text into account. An interpreter that does not engage in this kind of dialectic method runs the risk of becoming arbitrary since the point of view of the experiencing subject is not taken into account even though it is essential to the meaning that is derived from a certain account.<sup>24</sup>

This is an approach to interpretation that I find suitable for the aim of this study: if we want to be able to say anything with any degree of certainty of

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Karlsen, *Språk, tolkning och argumentation*, 38; and Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1 January 1969): 46, doi:10.2307/2504188.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', 46–52.

<sup>21</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'Om förståelsens cirkel', in *Filosofiska strömningar efter 1950*, ed. Konrad Marc-Wogau, *Filosofin genom tiderna* 5 (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers bokförlag, 1981), 327–328.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Dagfinn Føllesdal, Lars Wallöe, and Jon Elster, *Argumentasjonsteori, språk og vitenskapsfilosofi*, 5th ed. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1992), 97–100.

<sup>23</sup> Per-Johan Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande: Hermeneutik i teori och praktik* (Stockholm: Norstedts akademiska förlag, 2007), 25–30.

<sup>24</sup> Gadamer, 'Om förståelsens cirkel', 330.

what a historical consciousness can mean, why it can be perceived as essential to individuals, or how it can be developed, it is important to engage with both our understanding of the concept and the meaning-making it is intended to cause in individuals from a practical perspective. A theory of historical consciousness that focuses on individual meaning-making thus needs to take the individual context and practice into account.

### *Knowledge and Truth*

Considering the hermeneutical approach in this study, I have applied a view of knowledge and truth that could be called inter-subjective verifiability or criticisability; an important aspect of scientific knowledge is that it can be criticised and reproduced by others.<sup>25</sup> Hence, it is important for researchers (and people in general) to be able to explain how they went about getting the knowledge they possess. If a scientist (or person) fails to do this in an intelligible or acceptable manner, we are prone to question the value of the knowledge the person possesses.

In order to enhance inter-subjective verifiability or criticisability, it is important to strive for clarity regarding the concepts we use and the results we get from using these concepts. If we use concepts that are not specified in detail in our research (or elsewhere), it may be difficult to assess what we mean by what we say, hence the results of our studies (i.e our knowledge) cannot be evaluated.<sup>26</sup> For instance, Ludwig Wittgenstein once stated that “Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly. Everything that can be said can be said clearly,”<sup>27</sup> and according to him, the basic problem with philosophy was that it did not make sense due to its lack of conceptual clarity.<sup>28</sup>

In this sense, knowledge and its production are inherently social in character: what is knowledge is determined by the context in which it is perceived or conceived, and what is acceptable knowledge production (or science) is also contextually contingent. This does not mean that anything goes, but rather that we have to pay close attention to the context in which pieces of knowledge were created to assess the value of them.

Furthermore, knowledge and what is perceived to be valuable knowledge are dynamic: few would have guessed that Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution, when it was published, would have as fundamental an impact on modern science as it has today and many people doubted the veracity of Darwin’s claims. To claim that we are descendants of monkeys was in some circles both ridiculous and blasphemous, and to think so was not perhaps as foolish

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Björn Badersten, *Normativ metod: Att studera det önskvärda* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2006), 74–79.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Sven Ove Hansson, *Verkttygslära för filosofer* (Stockholm: Thales, 2010), 124–125.

<sup>27</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. (Charles Kay) Ogden, 2010, para. 4.116, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5740>.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 4–4.01.

in the 1860's and 1870's as we might like to think today if we consider the scientific and social context of Darwin's work.<sup>29</sup>

One aim of a hermeneutic approach to knowledge can be to dissolve what is sometimes called the Cartesian distinction: the notion that knowledge is binary and can be either objective or relative, absolute or incomplete in character. Hermeneutics urges us to engage with the inherently dynamic and social aspect of knowledge: our guiding notion in search of knowledge should be to approximate verisimilitude (or truthlikeness) instead of binary truth-value.<sup>30</sup> With this view, knowledge and the holding of truth are *always* relative to the context in which they exist, and this is an essential aspect of knowledge. Hence, it could be argued that knowledge is not possible without an appreciation of its relative and dynamic character.

## ***The Perceiving Subject***

### *Consciousness*

At the most fundamental level, human beings experience the world through their consciousnesses. I regard consciousness primarily to be a function in an individual. This means that a consciousness cannot be reduced to mere sensory loci or parts of the brain. It is by virtue of our consciousness that we become aware of phenomena or objects, and consequently, the sensory loci or the phenomena that appear in our consciousnesses are subordinate to this function of our consciousness: without this function, there would be nothing of which to speak, there would be no experiences.<sup>31</sup> Consciousness is thus primarily perceived as a function and not a physiological or mental entity.

In phenomenological research on consciousness, it can be useful to differentiate between what may be called *applied* and *basic* consciousness. Applied consciousness deals with the objects that appear in our consciousness and that can be studied in research. Basic consciousness, however, is that by virtue of which we come to be aware of the objects of our consciousness. Consequently, what appears in the applied consciousness of individuals is what we can investigate and assess objectively (or inter-subjectively), because we have basic consciousness. With this view we cannot study basic consciousness in the same way since that would require some kind of extra-

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, 3. ed., (rev.). (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989), 222–226; Peter Seixas, 'Historical Consciousness: The Progress of Knowledge in a Postprogressive Age', in *Narration, Identity and Historical Consciousness*, ed. Jürgen Straub (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 149; and Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande*, 32–34.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Richard J. Bernstein, *Bortom objektivism och relativism: Vetenskap, hermeneutik och praxis*, Filosofi och samhällsteori, 99-0864008-9 (Göteborg: Röda bokförlaget, 1991), 307–309; and Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, 233.

<sup>31</sup> Ran Lahav, 'What Neuropsychology Tells Us About Consciousness', *Philosophy of Science* 60, no. 1 (1993): 79.

consciousness (whatever that could be).<sup>32</sup> This view harmonises well with the hermeneutic approach: there can be a consciousness outside of consciousness as little as there can be an understanding outside of understanding.

In a similar manner, historical consciousness can primarily be understood as the function by which individuals make sense of history. Hence, a historical consciousness can be found in the applied consciousness of individual human beings, in how they make sense of and use history.

### *Narration*

When we are conscious of something, we use narration to convey it, both to ourselves and others. In order for us to comprehend, or even experience, things, we need to narrate them, to put them in words. By narrating our experiences, they come to make sense to us and we can distinguish between different phenomena because we narrate them. Some think that narration distorts reality since it enforces some kind of order on a reality that is disharmonic and chaotic in character.<sup>33</sup> However, in order to make that postulation, one has to assume certain things about reality. It has to be shown what reality is behind narration, which from a phenomenological perspective seems an impossible and, ultimately, meaningless endeavour since we would have to do it without disseminating what we perceive of reality. To speak of matters beyond what we can perceive or convey to others seems, however, not only meaningless but also counter-productive. Since everything we know or experience has to be put into words to become comprehensible, to invoke that we cannot *really* know what things are like because our words distort them plunges us into a sea of uncertainty without any hope of relief. Indeed, there is very little we know if we cannot put words to it or narrate it.<sup>34</sup>

Consequently, I use narration in a very broad or loose sense. More or less any structures can be applied to narratives, and the structures that are applied can probably be varied and modified indefinitely.<sup>35</sup> The key aspect here is that narration is the foundation of how we can intelligibly experience the world, i.e. it is central to human epistemology. This does not mean that I claim that narratives constitute reality, but rather that they constitute our perception of reality; human reality is essentially a linguistic reality.<sup>36</sup> Since

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Mark Rowlands, 'Consciousness', in *Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*, ed. Shaun Gallagher and Daniel Schmicking (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 92–95.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Louis O. Mink, 'Interpretation and Narrative Understanding', *The Journal of Philosophy* 69, no. 20 (9 November 1972): 736, doi:10.2307/2024670.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy, 0550-0060 (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986), 25–29.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Marya Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007), 95–99.

<sup>36</sup> Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande*, 47.

my approach to research is hermeneutic in character, narration becomes an essential notion.

### *Identity*

If we claim that narration constitutes our perception of the world, it is also the means by which we perceive ourselves, our identities. The view of identity that I have applied in the present study has been characterised as the narrative self-constitution view. According to this view individuals create and develop their identities by creating narratives about themselves. Furthermore, even though most identity-constitutive narration is unconscious, an awareness of how narration relates to our identities is essential for personhood.<sup>37</sup> An individual who is not aware of the fact that her identity is dynamic and subject to how she perceives herself through narratives could thus not be regarded as having gained a profound knowledge of herself.<sup>38</sup>

Another key aspect of identity formation with the narrative self-constitution view is temporality. It is essential that individuals perceive themselves as temporally persisting subjects: what I did yesterday affects who I am today, and who I am and what I do today will affect who I will be tomorrow. This also seems to be essential to our view of morality: I am morally responsible for acts that I have committed and I evaluate the actions that I commit today from the perspective of what causes they are likely to have in the future. Without this temporal awareness it could be argued that an individual is not fully responsible for her actions, as can be argued to be the case with children for instance.<sup>39</sup>

It could further be argued that a notion of identity should be historically contextualised in order to avoid becoming essentialist: an awareness of the fact that the categories I perceive to be relevant for my identity formation are historically contingent, enables individuals to become fully aware of the scope of their identity constitution.<sup>40</sup> I want to argue that it also makes historical consciousness a central component of identity constitution.

## **History Didactical Assumptions**

The ontological and epistemological approach outlined above also bears significance for how I perceive history didactics and history. This section aims at specifying how I regard history didactics, history, historical media,

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 93–94.

<sup>38</sup> This is a notion of identity and personhood is closely connected to existentialist views of identity, which in turn should be regarded as a phenomenological approach to identity formation, cf. David E. Cooper, *Existentialism: A Reconstruction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 187.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 2, 94.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Margaret R. Somers, 'The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach', *Theory and Society* 23 (1994), 612.

historical knowledge, historical thinking, and historical consciousness, i.e. key aspects of how history is perceived, disseminated, and understood.

### ***History Didactics***

On the most general level, history didactics deals with how we convey and understand history in all its shapes (i.e. as science, media phenomena, in the classroom, etc.). From a didactical perspective, history does not necessarily deal primarily with pieces of historical knowledge, but rather with how history is portrayed, interpreted, and used in contemporary society.<sup>41</sup> For these reasons, the way we use history becomes essential in history didactics and it also becomes the point of departure for all research that is history didactical in character.<sup>42</sup>

### ***History***

The term history has sometimes been called an unreliable signifier since it has a number of connotations attached to it. We have the academic discipline taught at universities, the subject we teach at schools, the record of past events (i.e. works of historians, historical artefacts, et cetera), and then also the past itself understood as the sum of everything that has ever happened. If we apply a practice theoretical perspective on history, these four different notions seem to collapse into two: the first notion deals with history itself (as having a teleological, some other, or no purpose) which could be called an ontological perspective, and then we have the notion of history as a practice performed by historians and others, which could be called a focus on the uses of history.<sup>43</sup>

By applying a hermeneutic perspective on history, I argue that these two notions of history also seem to merge: because a prerequisite for understanding something is that we interpret it from a contextual perspective and that we cannot (sensibly) talk about what we cannot experience, talk of history as an ontological notion comes to be influenced by uses of history as well. If we apply a hermeneutic approach to history, history must include an assessment of the uses inherent in history, or the representational practices that go into disseminating something historical. Otherwise we run the risk of becoming arbitrary in our representations of history. This does not mean that historical knowledge becomes impossible as has sometimes been implied by postmodernist thinkers, but rather that historical knowledge re-

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<sup>41</sup> Nordgren, *Vems är historien?*, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Per Eliasson et al., 'Inledning', in *Historia på väg mot framtiden: Historiedidaktiska perspektiv på skola och samhälle*, ed. Per Eliasson et al. (Lund: Forskarskolan i historia och historiedidaktik, Lunds universitet, 2010), 9–10.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Robert J. Parkes, *Interrupting History: Rethinking History Curriculum after 'The End of History'*, Counterpoints: Studies in the Postmodern Theory of Education., Volume 404 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2011), 3–5.

quires context to be made specific, both that of the historical agent or source and that of the interpreting subject.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Historical Media***

Following the argument presented above, a historical medium is more or less anything that conveys something historical, be it a history textbook, a teacher, or an old guitar amplifier. This means that the *use* of the medium determines whether it should be perceived to be historical in character or not. If I want to use a certain object to disseminate something historical, that makes it a historical medium. Consequently, media that would not generally be called historical can indeed be so if they are used for that purpose. The same kind of reasoning can be inverted as well: we can use media that have deliberately been made to be historical in ways that are not historical and thus we turn them into regular or other kinds of media. This is the reason why I perceive the usage of media as being so central when it comes to determining its meaning.<sup>45</sup>

Some historical media have been deliberately produced to be historical, as for instance history textbooks or historical films. Consequently, these media could be regarded as artefacts of a historical culture in the sense that they convey what is perceived as historically significant and how history is portrayed by a certain historical culture. It could be argued that these historical media are full of uses of history and as such can be regarded as part of a larger historical culture.

### ***Historical Knowledge***

There are four aspects of historical knowledge that I want to focus on in the present study: (i) basic historical facts, (ii) 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> order concepts of history, (iii) contextualisation, and (iv) inter-subjectivity. The most fundamental aspect is knowledge of basic historical facts (i.e. facts that are tentatively accepted by a scientific (or other) community): that World War I was fought between the years 1914 and 1918, for instance.

The second aspect deals with applying 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> order concepts on historical pieces of knowledge. We can have knowledge of what in research is generally called 1<sup>st</sup> order concepts: concepts that relate to history, such as “feudalism,” “the French Revolution,” or “Witch Processes.” These concepts are used to order and categorise various historical facts in different cohorts (for want of a better word) of knowledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> order concepts, on the other hand, are concepts that we can use to analyse history synchronously and

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 6–15.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, ed. Todd Samuel Presner, *Cultural Memory in the Present*, 99–2896218–9 (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), 324–326; and James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), xii–xiii.

diachronously. Examples of 2<sup>nd</sup> order concepts are *causation, change and continuity, significance, et cetera*.<sup>46</sup>

The third aspect of historical knowledge deals with an ability of contextual analysis. When we apply historical thinking to history, we learn to assess historical representations from a contextual perspective. We learn to appreciate how important the historical agent's temporal and spatial context was for her understanding of the world and, hopefully, we come to realise how important our own temporal and spatial contexts are for our understanding of the world and history.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, the level of contextualisation an individual has of historical pieces of knowledge influences her epistemic attitudes towards knowledge, i.e. her attitudes about the character and nature of historical accounts. Individuals that have no awareness of the representational practices of history (such as interpretation, etc.), have no means of handling contradictory accounts of history except by rejecting or accepting them. With an understanding of the importance of context in history, it becomes possible for an individual to navigate between differing accounts of history and we also have a method for ascertaining the value of the historical piece of information we have at hand. Few historians would use sources that have no provenance regarding their origin, i.e. knowledge about the context of the source.<sup>48</sup>

The fourth and final aspect of historical knowledge that I want to stress is inter-subjectivity. If we regard historical knowledge from an inter-subjective perspective, it is essential that historical knowledge is contextualised according to how we have come to be certain of the historical knowledge we possess. Since all history can be perceived to be an art of interpretation and representation, a failure to grasp the context of this interpretation results in an inability to make inter-subjectively acceptable truth-claims concerning history. As soon as we apply historical methodology to claims of historical

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Stéphane Lévesque, *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: Buffalo, 2008), 17; Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2013), 2–4; and Peter Seixas and Carla Peck, 'Teaching Historical Thinking', in *Challenges & Prospects for Canadian Social Studies*, ed. Alan Sears and Ian Wright (Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press, 2004), 115–116.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Per Eliasson, 'Kan ett historiemedvetande fördjupas?', in *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken*, ed. Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2009), 317, 325; and Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 18–24.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Cecilia Axelsson, 'Att hantera källor - på gymnasienivå.', in *Kritiska perspektiv på historiedidaktiken*, ed. David Ludvigsson, *Aktuellt om historia 2013:2* (Eksjö: Historielärarnas förening, 2013), 72; Ivar Bråten et al., 'The Role of Epistemic Beliefs in the Comprehension of Multiple Expository Texts: Toward an Integrated Model', *Educational Psychologist* 46, no. 1 (January 2011): 54–55, doi:10.1080/00461520.2011.538647; and Peter Lee and Rosalynn Ashby, 'Progression in Historical Understanding among Students Ages 7-14', in *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, ed. Peter N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 204–212.

knowledge that do not incorporate a contextual analysis, they seem to become examples of mythology or fantasy rather than knowledge.<sup>49</sup>

### ***Historical Thinking***

A concept that deals with these four aspects of historical knowledge is historical thinking. It can be defined as an ability to appreciate how historical knowledge is constructed and to know what that means.<sup>50</sup> By applying 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> order concepts to history, individuals come to realise that the value of historical knowledge is dependent on the interpretation and representation of the historian, or writer of history.<sup>51</sup> The aim of historical thinking is to enable the individual to make contextual analyses of history and thereby gain a meta-historical understanding that allows her to assess and use historical accounts, frameworks, and facts.<sup>52</sup>

### ***Historical Consciousness***

Since historical consciousness is the central concept of this study and it is a concept with many different connotations, I think it is important to specify how I understand the development of the concept from a historiographical perspective. Hans-Georg Gadamer claimed that historical consciousness is the epistemological condition of modern man and that it was the most important development in the last 500 years. He regarded historical consciousness as the ability of being fully conscious of the fact that everything around us is historical and, consequently, that everything is relative to this fact, this historicity.<sup>53</sup> When a person realises the historicity of everything around her and of all her opinions, i.e. that everything is contingent on historical factors (even history itself), she comes to understand that she must critically assess everything she experiences, perceives, and believes. The historical consciousness of modern humanity enables us to critically assess the world around us, and in extension becomes the only way we can reach “true” knowledge, according to Gadamer.<sup>54</sup> With this view, historical consciousness becomes a hermeneutic concept that deals with the totality of history and historical understanding: it takes a meta-perspective on history and individual’s conceptions of history.

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Skinner, ‘Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas’, 6–7.

<sup>50</sup> Lévesque, *Thinking Historically*, 27.

<sup>51</sup> Seixas and Peck, ‘Teaching Historical Thinking’, 115–116.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Lee, ‘Understanding History’, in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 134–135; and Denis Shemilt, ‘The Caliph’s Coin: The Currency of Narrative Frameworks in History Teaching’, in *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, ed. Peter N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 97–98.

<sup>53</sup> Gadamer, ‘The Problem of Historical Consciousness’, 8.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 47–48.

This change in epistemological perception dates back to the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and can be understood as a new method of reading the classical histories of Thucydides, Herodotus, and others.<sup>55</sup> Instead of accepting everything the classics wrote at face value, the French Enlightenment philosopher Bodin claimed that it is essential to take into account the historical realities of the classical authors, i.e. the historical context in which their work was conceived.<sup>56</sup>

The concept of historical consciousness became essential as a history didactical concept in West Germany in the 1960's in the debate whether positivist knowledge of history is possible. West German philosophers, historians, and sociologists inspired by the work of Karl Marx criticised the dominant positivist historical tradition.<sup>57</sup> History should, according to thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas, be used emancipatorically, to make people aware of the shackles that history has put on them. By studying history, people will be able to break free from history's grip and become truly free individuals.<sup>58</sup> Behind this position lies the assumption that the traditions and culture that are handed down through history have a limiting effect on human beings, a view akin to Karl Marx's theories of class consciousness and its importance for the individual human being.<sup>59</sup> This view of history came to heavily influence history didactics in West Germany during the 1970's,<sup>60</sup> and Karl-Ernst Jeismann in particular became influential in defining and specifying the concept.<sup>61</sup>

Historical consciousness came to Sweden in the early 1980's, from West Germany via Denmark, and is hence affected by the German view of historical consciousness as an individual concept that deals with how human beings perceive themselves, the world around them, and the history therein.<sup>62</sup>

However, recently (primarily in the last decade) it is in the UK, the USA, and Canada that researchers have become interested in historical consciousness, which probably can be explained by the differing influences

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<sup>55</sup> John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness: The Remembered Past* (Transaction Publishers, 1985), 10–16; and Yves Charles Zarka, 'The Construction of Historical Consciousness', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 12, no. 3 (2004): 416, doi:10.1080/0960878042000253088.

<sup>56</sup> Zarka, 'The Construction of Historical Consciousness', 416.

<sup>57</sup> Georg G. Iggers, *New Directions in European Historiography* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan U.P., 1984), 116–118.

<sup>58</sup> Carolin Kreber and Patricia A. Cranton, 'Exploring the Scholarship of Teaching', *The Journal of Higher Education* 71, no. 4 (July 2000): 484, doi:10.2307/2649149.

<sup>59</sup> Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (MIT Press, 1971), 46–48.

<sup>60</sup> Klas-Göran Karlsson, 'Historiedidaktiken och historievetenskapen - ett spänningsfyllt förhållande', in *Historiedidaktik*, ed. Christer Karlegård and Klas-Göran Karlsson (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1997), 24–25.

<sup>61</sup> Halvdan Eikeland, 'Begrepet historiebevissthet, historiedidaktisk forskning og dannelse Av historiebevissthet', in *Historiedidaktik i Norden 6: Historiemedvetandet - teori og praksis*, ed. Sirkka Ahonen et al. (København: Institut for historie og samfundsfag, Danmarks Lærerhøjskole, 1997), 77–79.

<sup>62</sup> Klas-Göran Karlsson, 'Historiedidaktik: begrepp, teori och analys', in *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken*, ed. Ulf Zander and Klas-Göran Karlsson (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2009), 27–34.

for research in history didactics. Whereas mainly historians argued for the importance of a history didactical perspective on history in West Germany and Sweden, it was psychologists that led the research in history didactics in the UK and the USA.<sup>63</sup> For this reason, research focused more on how individuals learn history, i.e. historical cognition, and what are the best methods of teaching history instead of how the history learnt affects the individual and how the individual's pre-conceptions about history influence the way she studies and learns it. Consequently, historical thinking has been the central concept in this research and is also the concept that has guided researchers towards the concept of historical consciousness.

To summarise then it could be asserted that history didactical research on historical consciousness is a comparatively recent phenomenon, and that research about the concept emanates from (at least) two different traditions: one historical and philosophical in origin, and the other psychological and cognitive in character. This is, consequently, how I understand the origins and traditions of the concept of historical consciousness.

## **Summary**

To summarise, the theoretical framework I have presented can be regarded as fundamentally phenomenological and practically hermeneutic since the interpretation and understanding of historical phenomena is the core of my research problem. Furthermore, this interpretation and understanding always takes place in a specific context, and this context is crucial for how we come to interpret and understand what we study: the practice of our interpretation affects how we come to understand what we interpret, and this in turn affects what we interpret since we ascribe meanings to it. This should not be regarded as a retreat into relativism or postmodernism, but rather as an attempt to engage with the complexity of interpretation and meaning construction. This complexity is dealt with from the perspective of theory in the first two papers and from the perspective of empirical methodology in the third paper of this study.

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<sup>63</sup> Sam Wineburg, 'The Psychological Study of Historical Consciousness', in *Narration, Identity and Historical Consciousness*, ed. Jürgen Straub (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 188–198.

# Previous Research

Since the focus of my research is threefold in character, the presentation below has been divided into three sections that correspond to my research questions. The first section analyses historical consciousness from a theoretical perspective, the second section focuses on how a historical consciousness is developed from a theoretical perspective, and the third section applies it when analysing historical media.

## Defining Historical Consciousness

In research that seeks to analyse historical consciousness from a theoretical and/or didactical perspective, there are primarily two strands of research: the affirmative strand which assumes that historical consciousness is a significant and central concept in history didactics, and the sceptical strand that questions this or how the concept is defined. The affirmative strand is the overwhelmingly dominant one in research that uses the concept.

### *The Affirmative Strand*

The focus of the affirmative strand of research about historical consciousness is primarily descriptive in character: it states what a historical consciousness is and why it is a significant concept. It could be argued that there have been three waves of research in Sweden that make use of the concept. The first wave in the 1980's and early 1990's rarely defined what a historical consciousness is; the focus seems to have been to present a new concept.<sup>64</sup> In 1997 an anthology called *Historiedidaktik*<sup>65</sup> was published and it contained a chapter by the Danish history didactical researcher Bernard Eric Jensen<sup>66</sup> that became seminal in Swedish history didactical research<sup>67</sup>, and it could be regarded as the starting point of what could be called the second wave of research about the concept. In the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a number of historical dissertations were published that used historical consciousness as a theoretical and analytical concept (the history didactical dissertation by

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Tomas Englund, 'Historieämnets selektiva tradition sett ur ett legitimitetsperspektiv', in *Historiedidaktik i Norden 3: Nordisk konferens om historiedidaktik Bergen 1987*, ed. Magne Angvik et al. (Malmö: Lärarhögskolan i Malmö, 1988), 48–59; K.G. Jan Gustafson, 'Barn, föräldrar och historia', in *Historiedidaktik i Norden 2: Nordisk konferens om historiedidaktik*, ed. Matti Angvik et al. (Frederiksberg: A. Köhlert, 1985), 175–186; K.G. Jan Gustafson, 'Jag vet en gammal väg att gå...', in *Historiedidaktik i Norden 3: Nordisk konferens om historiedidaktik Bergen 1987*, ed. Magne Angvik et al. (Malmö: Lärarhögskolan i Malmö, 1988), 132–145; Sture Långström, 'Läroböcker och historiemedvetande', in *Historiedidaktik i Norden 6: Historiemedvetandet - teori og praksis*, ed. Sirkka Ahonen et al. (København: Institut for historie og samfundsfag, Danmarks Lærerhøjskole, 1997), 287–304.

<sup>65</sup> Klas-Göran Karlsson and Christer Karlegård, eds., *Historiedidaktik* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1997).

<sup>66</sup> Bernard Eric Jensen, 'Historiemedvetande - begreppsanalys, samhällsteori, didaktik', in *Historiedidaktik*, ed. Christer Karlegård and Klas-Göran Karlsson (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1997), 49–81.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Schüllerqvist, *Svensk historiedidaktisk forskning*, 51.

Nanny Hartsmar<sup>68</sup> in 2001 could be regarded as an exception since it is a history didactical study).<sup>69</sup> Another important anthology<sup>70</sup> on history didactics was published in 2004. It contained chapters by central Swedish history didactical researchers such as Klas-Göran Karlsson and Per Eliasson, and it could be regarded as the starting point of what I regard to be the third wave of research about historical consciousness in Sweden. This research has a strong history didactical focus and was initiated in the middle of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>71</sup> In 2009 the Swedish government initiated two research schools in history didactics that have spawned further research using the concept.<sup>72</sup> This research is predominantly empirical in focus, i.e. the concept of historical consciousness is applied to analyse empirical material, and practically all of the researchers have used Bernard Eric Jensen's theory of historical consciousness as their point of departure.

In the UK, the USA, and Canada, research on historical consciousness has been growing in the last decade. Central researchers here are Peter Lee,

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<sup>68</sup> Nanny Hartsmar, *Historiemedvetande: Elevers tidsförståelse i en skolkontext*, Studia Psychologica et Paedagogica. Series Altera, 0346-5926; 155 (Malmö: Institutionen för pedagogik, Lärarhögsk., 2001).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Martin Alm, *Americantitis: Amerika som sjukdom eller läkemedel: Svenska berättelser om USA åren 1900-1939*, Studia Historica Lundensia, 1650-755X; 10 (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2002); Roger Johansson, *Kampen om historien: Ådalen 1931: Sociala konflikter, historiemedvetande och historiebruk 1931-2000* (Stockholm: Hjalmarson & Högberg, 2001); Åsa Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia: Historieskrivning som ideologisk maktresurs 1892-2000*, Atlas Akademi, 99-3423719-9 (Stockholm: Atlas, 2001); and Ulf Zander, *Fornstora dagar, moderna tider: Bruk av och debatter om svensk historia från sekelskifte till sekelskifte* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001).

<sup>70</sup> Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander, eds., *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2004).

<sup>71</sup> Niklas Ammert, *Det osamtidas samtidighet: Historiemedvetande i svenska historieläroböcker under hundra år* (Uppsala: Sisyfos, 2008); Ingemansson, *Det kunde lika gärna ha hänt idag*; Nordgren, *Vems Är historien?*; Carina Renander, *Förförande fiktion eller historieförmedling?: Arm-serien, historiemedvetande och historiedidaktik*, Skrifter med historiska perspektiv, 1652-2761; 4 (Malmö: Malmö högskola, 2007); Igor Potapenko, *Historiemedvetande och identitet: Om historiens närvaro i några estniska ungdomars liv* (Stockholm: Institutionen för didaktik och pedagogiskt arbete, Stockholms universitet, 2010); Ylva Wibaeus, *Att undervisa om det ofattbara: En ämnesdidaktisk studie om kunskapsområdet Förtintelsen i skolans historieundervisning* (Stockholm: Pedagogiska institutionen, Stockholms universitet, 2010).

<sup>72</sup> Alvé, *Historiemedvetande på prov*; Andersson Hult, *Att finna meningen i ett historieprov*; Cathrin Backman Löfgren, *Att digitalisera det förflutna: En studie av gymnasieelevers historiska tänkande* (Lund: Forskarskolan i historia och historiedidaktik, Lunds universitet, 2012); Kerstin Berntsson, *Spelar släkten någon roll?: 'Den lilla historien' och elevers historiemedvetande* (Lund: Forskarskolan i historia och historiedidaktik, Lunds universitet, 2012); Arndt Clavier, *'Mänsklighetens största problem genom alla tider': En receptionsstudie av elevers miljöberättelser och historiska meningsskapande 1969* (Lund: Forskarskolan i historia och historiedidaktik, Lunds universitet, 2011); Steven Dahl, *Folkmord som film: Gymnasieelevers möten med Hotel Rwanda - en receptionsstudie* (Lund: Forskarskolan i historia och historiedidaktik, Lunds universitet, 2013); Ingmarie Danielsson Malmros, *Det var en gång ett land... Berättelser om svenskhet i historieläroböcker och elevers föreställningsvärldar* (Höör: Agering, 2012); Magnus Grahn, *Möbelrike i tiden: Om historiebrukets betydelse för identifikationsprocessen i en näringslivsregion* (Lund: Forskarskolan i historia och historiedidaktik, Lunds universitet, 2011); Maria Johansson, *Historieundervisning och interkulturell kompetens* (Karlstad: Karlstads universitet, 2012); Maria de Laval, *Det känns inte längre som det var länge sedan: En undersökning av gymnasieelevers historiska tänkande* (Lund: Forskarskolan i historia och historiedidaktik, Lunds universitet, 2011); Hans Olofsson, *Fatta historia: En explorativ fallstudie om historieundervisning och historiebruk i en högstadielklass* (Karlstad: Fakulteten för samhälls- och livsvetenskaper, Historia, Karlstads universitet, 2011); Bo Persson, *Mörkrets hjärta i klassrummet: Historieundervisning och elevers uppfattningar om förtintelsen* (Lund: Forskarskolan i historia och historiedidaktik, Lunds universitet, 2011).

Denis Shemilt, Sam Wineburg, and, particularly, Peter Seixas.<sup>73</sup> As noted above, this research has been mainly practice oriented and has had a focus on historical cognition and history education. The central concept has been historical thinking and from thence researchers have become interested in the concept of historical consciousness.

Generally speaking, historical consciousness is defined as a concept that “[incorporates] the connection between the interpretation of the past, the understanding of the present, and perspectives on the future.”<sup>74</sup> This definition is then applied to explain how people understand history, orientate themselves in contemporary society, perceive themselves and their fellow human beings, act morally, make history, analyse and take part in historical culture, and gain insights about themselves, contemporary society and history.

### ***The Sceptical Strand***

The research that applies a sceptical approach to historical consciousness deals with definitional problems or what could be labelled Eurocentrism. It has been claimed that historical consciousness is methodologically difficult to study since it is an abstract immaterial concept that cannot be studied directly but rather through the historical remnants it leaves in culture. For these reasons it is argued that applying historical consciousness in analysis is meaningless since it is not theoretically specified how it relates to historical cultures and is easily confused with either uses of history or historical culture. Hence it is argued that it is more fruitful to focus on uses of history and historical culture (which are observable) and, consequently, historical consciousness does not bring any new dimensions into analysis.<sup>75</sup>

It has also been argued that historical consciousness is a difficult concept to apply when analysing progression in historical understanding since it does not specify how this progression happens. When we use historical consciousness as an analytical device, we cannot say anything about how individuals acquire more complex historical knowledge; instead it presents us with an argument as to why history may be important in people’s lives.<sup>76</sup>

Another kind of criticism against historical consciousness claims that the concept is Eurocentric in character since it seems to assume a certain type of

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<sup>73</sup> Sirkka Ahonen, ‘Historical Consciousness: A Viable Paradigm for History Education?’, *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 37, no. 6 (2005): 697–699.

<sup>74</sup> Karl-Ernst Jeismann, ‘Geschichtsbewusstsein’, in *Handbuch Der Geschichtsdidaktik*, ed. Klaus Bergmann et al., vol. 1 (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1979), 42–44.

<sup>75</sup> Erik Axelsson, ‘Historia i bruk och medvetande: En kritisk diskussion av två historiografiska begrepp’, in *En helt annan historia: Tolv historiografiska uppsatser*, ed. Samuel Edquist et al., *Opuscula Historica Upsalensia* 31 (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2004), 23–24.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Peter Lee, “‘Walking Backwards into Tomorrow’: Historical Consciousness and Understanding History”, *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research* 4, no. 1 (2004): 37–38; and Straub, ‘Telling Stories, Making History: Toward a Narrative Psychology of the Historical Construction of Meaning’, 79.

rationality and regard of history that stems from the ideals of the European Enlightenment. Some African and Asian cultures have fundamentally different approaches to history and rationality, and it is thus Eurocentric to claim that historical consciousness is a universal notion that all human beings possess; it is an inherently essentialist concept that assumes Western rationality as the highest form of existence.<sup>77</sup>

## Developing Historical Consciousness

In research it is claimed that a historical consciousness can be developed by a variety of means. My main focus is on three of these: that a historical consciousness is developed when individuals are exposed to history multi-chronologically or multi-perspectively, that it is developed by applying genetic-genealogical perspectives on history, or that it is developed by applying historical thinking.

The idea that a historical consciousness is developed when pupils are exposed to history multi-chronologically or multi-perspectively claims that historical accounts that incorporate the past, present, and future tenses and/or various perspectives on any given historical topic has a good chance of developing a historical consciousness in an individual.<sup>78</sup> It is furthermore claimed that a personal, private encounter with history is essential for developing a historical consciousness,<sup>79</sup> and, closely connected to that idea is the notion that being confronted with moral values in history also develops an individual's historical consciousness.<sup>80</sup>

Another way of arguing for how a historical consciousness is developed is afforded by research that claims that genetic and genealogical approaches to history are essential for its development. To view history genetically is to regard it as beginning at a certain moment in time and stopping at another. The work of the historian is to explain what has happened in between these two temporal positions. A genealogical approach to history starts with the context of the interpreting subject: why are these aspects or eras of history interesting and significant to us, and why do we choose to interpret history the way we do. It has been argued in research that a genetic understanding of history is developed if pupils work with chronology, and a genealogical un-

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<sup>77</sup> Ulrika Holgersson and Cecilia Persson, 'Rätten att skriva människan. Historiemedvetande och berättelse som problematiska begrepp: svar till Bernard Eric Jensen', in *Historisk tidskrift*, vol. 122:4 (Historisk tidskrift Svenska historiska föreningen, 2002), 635–40; and Peter Seixas, 'Introduction', in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Ammert, *Det osamtidas samtidighet*, 73, 218; and Halvdan Eikeland, *Et laereverks bidrag til historiebevisssthet og narrativ kompetanse. Analyse og praktisk bruk av historiedelen av Aschehougs laereverk i samfunnsstagn for ungdomstrinnet: 'Innblikk'* (Tönsberg: Högskolen i Vestfold, 2002), 7–8.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Eliasson, 'Kan ett historiemedvetande fördjupas?', 322–323; Karlsson, 'Historiedidaktik: begrepp, teori och analys', 50; Potapenko, *Historiemedvetande och identitet*, 137; and Wibaeus, *Att undervisa om det ofattbara*, 53.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Alvé, *Historiemedvetande på prov*, 93–94; and Clavier, *Mänsklighetens största problem genom alla tider*, 176–177.

derstanding of history is promoted by work with sources and source criticism.<sup>81</sup> History teaching that alternates these two perspectives is claimed to have a good chance of developing the historical consciousness of the pupils since it more or less forces them to view history multi-chronologically and thus develops their historical consciousness.<sup>82</sup>

The final approach to development in research that I want to highlight is that of applying historical thinking to historical consciousness.<sup>83</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> order concepts of history are regarded as tools with which we can analyse history and historical accounts and which enable the individual to analyse history from a meta-historical perspective. It is then claimed that the critical approach to history and historical accounts that is afforded by historical thinking can enable pupils to engage critically and reflexively with history and develop meta-historical competencies, and thus develop a more complex or advanced historical consciousness.<sup>84</sup>

### **Applying Historical Consciousness in Media Analysis**

The third aim of my research project is to apply historical consciousness to the analysis of historical media. This has already been done in research on films<sup>85</sup>, textbooks<sup>86</sup>, historical sources<sup>87</sup>, and literary fiction<sup>88</sup>. The methodology of research has varied: some researchers have only studied the historical medium and from thence drawn conclusions on its ability to develop historical consciousness, and others have interviewed respondents after they had been exposed to a historical medium.

Some studies have found that certain historical media activate and develop the historical consciousness of individuals. The key issues then are to show why the historical medium in question has developed a historical consciousness and how the historical consciousness of a certain individual has been developed by that medium. Since historical consciousness is an abstract

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<sup>81</sup> Persson, *Mörkrets hjärta i klassrummet*, 123–127.

<sup>82</sup> Eliasson, 'Kan ett historiemedvetande fördjupas?', 317, 325.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. de Laval, *Det känns inte längre som det var länge sedan*, 27; Duquette, *Le rapport*, 59–60; and Olofsson, *Fatta historia*, 218.

<sup>84</sup> Duquette, *Le rapport*, 231, 261; and Hans Olofsson, "Hiroshimagrejen, liksom" - Om narrativa förkortningar och historiskt meningsskapande hos högstadiel elever', in *Kritiska perspektiv på historiedidaktiken*, ed. David Ludvigsson, *Aktuellt om historia 2013:2* (Eksjö: Historielärarnas förening, 2013), 39.

<sup>85</sup> Dahl, *Folkmord som film*.

<sup>86</sup> Ammert, *Det osamtidas samtidighet*; Aleksey Bushuev, '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*, ed. Joanna Wojdon, Yearbook of the International Society for History Didactics 34 (Schwalbach: Wochenschau Verlag, 2013), 239–52; Eikeland, *Et laereverks bidrag til historiebevisssthet og narrativ kompetanse*; and Nordgren, *Vems är historien?*

<sup>87</sup> Duquette, *Le rapport*.

<sup>88</sup> Ingemansson, *Det kunde lika gärna ha hänt idag*; and Renander, *Förförande fiktion eller historieförmedling?*

phenomenon, it could then be argued that the concept needs a rather detailed theoretical framework in order to specify why and how a certain medium has developed a certain historical consciousness. In my opinion most research that has applied historical consciousness in analysis of historical media have either focused most on the media or the respondents, and less on how certain characteristics of a certain medium relate to a historical consciousness or how a respondent's reply to a certain question can be used as an example to assess her historical consciousness.

I believe, as is specified by what I call the sceptical strand of research, that two central problems with using historical consciousness as a theoretical device are to specify how the concept relates to its manifestations and to specify how a historical consciousness can be developed in an individual. For this reason it could be argued that there is a need for more theoretical research on how a historical consciousness and its manifestations are related and how a historical consciousness is developed in an individual. It has been shown that applying various methods can develop skills, but the question is how it can be theoretically asserted that these skills are a symptom of a historical consciousness; i.e. why are meta-historical competencies a symptom of a developed historical consciousness and why is an ability to make multi-chronological analyses of history similar to having a developed historical consciousness? These are questions that I believe are essential if we want to assert that a historical consciousness can be developed, and they are ultimately related to how we define what a historical consciousness is.

# Methodology

The present study includes three papers that each have a different focus and relate to different research questions and for this reason I have used different methodological approaches for each paper. The first paper deals primarily with how a historical consciousness is defined and justified in research, the second paper delves primarily into matters of how a historical consciousness can be developed in an individual (although that has a lot to do with how the concept is defined), and the third paper suggests and discusses a methodological framework of historical consciousness and then applies one aspect of this framework in textbook analysis. The focus of the first paper is descriptive and that of the second paper normative since a regulative definition of historical consciousness is stipulated, and the third paper focuses on how to operationalise the definition presented in Paper II.<sup>89</sup>

## Paper I

The first paper corresponds primarily to the first research question in this thesis: “How is the concept of historical consciousness presented in research?” and to be able to answer this question, I posed the following questions to the empirical material in the study:

- According to researchers, what is an explicitly expressed historical consciousness?
- How is the concept applied by researchers?
- Why is it an important concept according to the research studied?

Since historical consciousness is perhaps *the central* concept in Swedish history didactics and there has been quite a lot of research that focuses on historical consciousness, it seemed plausible to start with a study of Swedish history didactical research to get a grasp of how the concept is presented and used. Swedish research about historical consciousness is, as has been noted above, heavily influenced by German history didactics, which could be regarded as a problem: my focus on Swedish research could present a biased or slanted view of the concept. It does however seem as if most research in other parts of the world (and I am primarily referring to the the UK, the USA, and Canada now) that makes use of historical consciousness, does also tend to regard the concept as emanating from German history didactics: Jörn Rüsen (primarily) and Hans-Georg Gadamer are practically always cited as the main theorists.<sup>90</sup> This is also the case in Sweden and for this

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. Karlsen, *Språk, tolkning och argumentation*, 81.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Duquette, *Le rapport*; Lee, ‘Walking Backwards Into Tomorrow’; Peter Seixas, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); and Yogev, ‘Clio Has a Problem: How to Develop Active Historical Consciousness to Counter the Crisis in History Teaching’.

reason a focus on Swedish research still seemed like a good starting option despite the risk of bias.

To find Swedish research on historical consciousness, I used what could be called snowball sampling.<sup>91</sup> This means that I started with works that I could track down in the Swedish library database and gathered more relevant research from studying its lists of references. By using this method, there is an obvious risk that some essential or important research will be missed, but on the other hand I will cover the research and researchers that are actually cited and hence could be regarded as central.

Accordingly, I started with a search on the Swedish library database (*libris.kb.se*) for historical consciousness (*historiemedvetande* in Swedish). The search gave about 130 results and to sort out which of these were relevant to me I decided to use two criteria: it had to be some kind of academic work (dissertation, scientific article, et cetera) and it had to explicitly specify what it meant by the concept of historical consciousness (if the concept was used without explicit specification, it was hard to tell what the author actually meant with the concept and how the use portrayed related to it). Then, the research that was cited in the works that matched these criteria (and which in itself matched the same criteria) was also included in my study.<sup>92</sup>

Then I studied this material using the research questions specified above. After having studied this quite extensive material I decided to try to categorise it inductively in order to get a grasp of what this body of research had in common and what was different in it. I came up with seven categories that related to how the concept was presented.<sup>93</sup> To demonstrate how these categories were formed and what was characteristic of the representations of historical consciousness in these categories, I used quotations to show which view of historical consciousness belonged to each respective category. Hence, I have used the quotations to illustrate variations and similarities in the uses of the concept of historical consciousness. Some texts I studied belong only to one category, some to more, and some to all of them. Consequently, these categories should not be considered as categories of different researchers since that was not the focus of this study; the focus was to show different ways of using the concept of historical consciousness in research.

If one assumes that the use of a concept affects our perception of it (i.e. how we apply a concept affects how we understand its definition), then it could be argued that it is analytically difficult to separate a concept's defini-

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects*, 4th ed. (Maidenhead, England: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press, 2010), 37.

<sup>92</sup> This is also how I came to find most of the research on historical consciousness from the UK, the USA, and Canada. I also used the method of snowball sampling on this research to get a good picture of what could be considered to be the central research among these researchers.

<sup>93</sup> Although the research presented in the first paper only deals with Swedish research, I did not find any interpretations of the concept from other research that did not match these categories. See pages 30-31 below.

tion from its applications.<sup>94</sup> Consequently, it could be argued that the applications of a concept are important to how we perceive it, i.e. they have bearing on the definition of the concept. I argue that these assumptions have relevance to how historical consciousness is presented and used in research.

To illustrate, one researcher defines historical consciousness as “the experience of connection between interpretation of the past, understanding of the present, and perspectives on the future,”<sup>95</sup> and then applies the concept as one that creates meaning to individuals (because it enables them to make multi-chronological connections)<sup>96</sup> and thus affects their identities.<sup>97</sup> What this example shows us is that the researcher presents a basic (he calls it “lexical”<sup>98</sup>) definition of the concept that he applies to show how individuals create meaning and develop their identities. Hence, what we get is a concept that develops identities and meaning-making through multi-chronology, not merely a concept that deals with multi-chronology. Furthermore, it is not evident how meaning-making and identity constitution relate to multi-chronology.

## **Paper II**

The second paper corresponds to the second and third research questions of this study:

- How can a historical consciousness be developed in an individual?
- How can an understanding of historical consciousness be developed that incorporates various perspectives about historical consciousness?

To answer these questions I used a combination of methods: I analysed the results of the first paper regarding the perspectives of the concept, I studied research on the concept regarding how it is seen to be developed in an individual, and to construct a theory of the concept, I used what could be called philosophical argumentative analysis.<sup>99</sup>

Regarding the perspectives on the concept in research, I supplemented my study of Swedish research on historical consciousness with a study of British and North American research using the same research questions and method as in my study presented in Paper I. All of the presentations and uses of the concept I studied could be placed in the categories that had been developed in the study in Paper I. Concerning the results of Paper I, the categories I had developed seemed to be a bit misleading: some categories seemed to be more fundamental than others and could therefore possibly be regarded as hierar-

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<sup>94</sup> See pages 6-7 above.

<sup>95</sup> Nordgren, *Vems är historien?*, 15.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>99</sup> Hansson, *Verktyslära för filosofer*, 79–86.

chical. Working along this assumption I analysed which category that seemed to be the most fundamental one and then tried to analyse how the other categories could be seen as emanating from that most fundamental category. This seemed to be a fruitful approach when trying to construct a coherent theory of the concept.

The second research problem dealt with how a historical consciousness is developed. Since much research has been done regarding this it seemed appropriate to study this research to get a good picture of what is regarded as essential in developing a historical consciousness. The method for finding the appropriate data was similar to the one used for Paper I (i.e. snowball sampling), and the research question was “According to research, how is a historical consciousness developed in an individual?”

Regarding the perspectives of historical consciousness, I analysed the categories of the concept in research in order to identify the most dominant hypotheses and arguments regarding the characteristics of a historical consciousness. Then I tried to specify and, if necessary, supplement these hypotheses and arguments according to what their aims were and what premises they made use of. This research method could be called descriptive and normative argumentative analysis.<sup>100</sup>

When trying to identify and specify how research regards the development of historical consciousness, I identified three issues that I thought had to be dealt with: (i) after extensive and repeated readings of the material, I tried to identify what could be called the most common denominator in research concerning how a historical consciousness is developed, i.e. what did all the research about how a historical consciousness is developed in an individual have in common?, (ii) I tried to specify how this view of development could be harmonised with a definition and application of historical consciousness, and (iii) I tried to specify an approach or method for developing historical consciousness in the studied research. Using this approach, I then tried to construct a theory of the concept that treated these perspectives comprehensively (and comprehensibly).

### **Paper III**

The fourth research question dealt with how historical consciousness can be applied in the analysis of historical media, in this case a textbook. To be able to do this, I first constructed a theoretical framework of historical consciousness to be applied in the analysis of historical media that used the theory of the concept specified in Paper II as its point of departure, i.e. it should be regarded as an attempt at operationalising the theory developed and presented in Paper II. I then tried to discuss and specify how this framework could be used as a heuristic device in identifying research problems and

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<sup>100</sup> Cf. Karlsen, *Språk, tolkning och argumentation*, 139, 167.

choosing research methods. To illustrate this, I then applied an aspect of the framework in an analysis of an excerpt from a history textbook.

According to the stipulated framework, a historical consciousness can only be studied through uses of history and consequently the textbook analysis focused on finding examples of uses of history in the textbook narrative. For this reason, I began by analysing the narrative structures and strategies employed by the textbook authors. To illustrate the narrative structure, I selected a number of quotations that I perceived to be typical of and central to the narrative. These quotations were then analysed according to how they related to the studied narrative as a whole and what uses of history they portrayed. Regarding the uses of history, I applied two typologies of uses of history to analyse what could be said of historical consciousness from the studied textbook account.

### **Methodological Implications**

There are some implications of the chosen methodology that I would like to discuss below. One methodological implication deals with the vastness of research that focuses on historical consciousness. One example of research that is missing is German history didactical research where historical consciousness has been a central concept for the last 30 – 40 years. My contention is, however, that the most central aspects of the concept of historical consciousness have been covered in this study since the German history didactical research on historical consciousness seems firmly established in the studied research. Furthermore, the approach stipulated in my research is merely one of many possible ways of defining and working with historical consciousness. Hence, it does not necessarily have to be a problem that all research on the concept has not been covered. One asset of the methodological approach of this research is that it seeks to theoretically unite research about historical consciousness from Sweden, the UK, the USA, and Canada.

Another methodological implication of this study relates to how I have dealt with progression in historical consciousness: it could be argued that the focus on historical thinking is essentialist since it presumes that cognition is a problem for historical consciousness and that historical thinking is the best way of solving this problem of cognition. I do, however, think that my research method should primarily be regarded as a response to the problems I encountered in my research. From my perspective, it indeed seems as if cognition poses a theoretical problem to historical consciousness, and that the definition of the concept that I stipulate seems to harmonise well with the notion of historical thinking. Furthermore, this aspect also seems to be something that all studied research about historical consciousness has in common.

## Results – A Summary of the Papers

### **Paper I: ‘The Concept of Historical Consciousness in Swedish History Didactical Research’**

This paper presents a study of how the concept of historical consciousness is presented and used in Swedish history didactical research regarding the definition, application, and justification of the concept. The study finds that Swedish research on historical consciousness is deeply rooted in what is sometimes called the continental history didactical tradition: practically all researchers refer to the German history didactical researchers Karl-Ernst Jeismann and Jörn Rüsen or the Danish researcher Bernard Eric Jensen, who in turn bases his understanding of the concept on the German tradition.<sup>101</sup> This is already the common view in Swedish history didactical research and has also been shown by earlier research, but this study is the first one to include research in what was called the third wave of research about the concept in Sweden, i.e. research conceived during the five to ten years preceding 2014.

Historical consciousness is commonly defined as a concept that deals with interpretations of the past, understanding of the present, and perspectives or anticipations about the future, an ability that the Swedish history didactical researcher Niklas Ammert has called “multi-chronology,” i.e. to handle the past, present, and future coherently. It could thus be claimed that regarding the definition of historical consciousness, the study shows that researchers agree on what could be called a minimal or basic definition of historical consciousness as an ability to make multi-chronological connections in history.<sup>102</sup> This definition is then applied to a number of abilities.

Firstly, historical consciousness is argued to be an identity-creating concept. It is supposed that individuals come to develop their identities through their historical consciousnesses. Secondly, historical consciousness is perceived to be a meaning-making concept. From having a historical consciousness it is claimed that individuals are able to make sense of both history and contemporary life and society. This furthermore can enable them to gain perspective on the future. Thirdly, historical consciousness is perceived as a history-creating concept that may enable individuals to realise and appreciate that they both are and make history at the same time. Fourthly, historical consciousness is argued to be a concept that enables individuals to gain insight. By allowing individuals to scrutinise history, historical consciousness can be an insight-creating concept. Fifthly, the concept is also regarded as a value-creating concept since it allows us to empathise with historical agents, thus allowing us to develop a more tolerant view of “the Other.” The last, and

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<sup>101</sup> Paper I, 209-212.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

sixth, application in the studied research is that of historical consciousness as a heuristic concept that could not and should not be defined in itself, but rather is valuable since it may enable us to pose new questions to history and generate new perspectives in research.<sup>103</sup>

Regarding how the concept of historical consciousness is justified in research, the study finds that the concept is justified through its applications. It is presented as a valuable concept because it allows individuals to develop their identities, make sense of history and society, realise that they are products and producers of history, et cetera. No researcher in the studied research claimed that the concept is valuable merely because it can be a multi-chronological ability individuals have.<sup>104</sup>

From this finding, it is then argued that how the concept is applied affects how it is understood since it is difficult to analytically separate the definition of the concept from its applications.<sup>105</sup> How a concept is used tends to affect how it is perceived.<sup>106</sup> This may not be a problem in itself, but it could be a reason why historical consciousness is regarded to be a vague and complex concept. It could also render the concept too imprecise to specify its scope since more or less anything could be argued to qualify as a historical consciousness. Thus the concept becomes difficult to apply practically since its definition cannot be used decisively.<sup>107</sup> The paper ends with a discussion of how the concept of historical consciousness relates to its applications. The general argument presented is that these relations need to be further specified theoretically; otherwise there is a risk that the concept of historical consciousness collapses into its applications, thus becoming superfluous, or that it becomes too generic a concept and, hence, difficult to apply in practice.

To summarise, the study generates four interesting results: (i) it confirms the general view that Swedish history didactics is continental in origin, (ii) it finds that there is a consensus in research on a minimal definition of historical consciousness, (iii) it suggests why historical consciousness could be regarded as complex and vague; this is because its applications vary and they affect how the concept is understood, and (iv) it suggests how to remedy these problems: by further specifying how historical consciousness relates to its applications, i.e. identity constitution, sense making, et cetera.

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<sup>103</sup> Paper I, 212-217.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 218-219

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', 37.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Karlsen, *Språk, tolkning och argumentation*, 96-104.

## **Paper II: ‘Towards an Epistemological Theory of Historical Consciousness’**

The second paper attempts to construct a theory of historical consciousness that presents (i) a regulative definition of the concept, (ii) specifies how it relates to its application, (iii) suggests how it is manifested, (iv) suggests how it is developed in an individual, and (v) presents an argument to why historical consciousness is a significant concept in history didactics. The strategy used for accomplishing this rather far-reaching approach is to focus on the epistemological aspects of historical consciousness.

### ***Definition***

Regarding the definition of the concept, the paper states that historical consciousness should be defined as the understanding of the relation between past, present, and future, i.e. as an understanding of multi-chronology. This definition differs from the one generally presented in research in that it focuses not on the multi-chronological relation itself, but rather on our *understanding* of it. Given the hermeneutical approach to this research project, this could be argued to be a plausible shift in focus. I then argue that this understanding of multi-chronology should be applied to individuals’ sense or meaning making in history. When individuals have an understanding of multi-chronology, they make a different sense of history than without this understanding.<sup>108</sup> This is, furthermore, the application that the other applications (specified in Paper I) hinge on, i.e. I perceive meaning-making to be more fundamental than identity constitution, for instance. This is the edifice on which I build the rest of my argumentation in the second paper.

### ***Manifestation***

The next step is to specify how a historical consciousness can be manifested in an individual. I argue that at the most basic level it is manifested through narration: when we narrate what we perceive of history, we manifest our historical consciousness.<sup>109</sup> I further argue that narration that deals with history could be labelled as uses of history and that there are (at least) two dimensions to uses of history.

The first dimension is what I call the *what*-dimension. The Swedish historian Klas-Göran Karlsson’s widely accepted typology of uses of history can be a good way to illustrate the *what*-dimension of uses of history. These uses of history can be existential, political, scientific, commercial, et cetera. This typology illustrates for what specific purpose history is used.<sup>110</sup> The second dimension to uses of history is what I call the *how*-dimension. This dimen-

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<sup>108</sup> Paper II, 18-19.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 19-20.

sion allows us to say something about how an individual uses history for a specific purpose. The German philosopher of history Jörn Rüsen has developed a typology to illustrate how historical narratives can be used to achieve certain things, and I think this typology can be a good way to illustrate what I call the *how*-uses of history. A traditional use of history is one which uses the historical example to uphold status quo: to show that nothing changes in history. An exemplary use of history uses the historical example to illustrate how history generates rules of conduct, that history teaches us how to lead our lives. The critical use of history uses the historical example to criticise historical, contemporary, and future societies. Finally, the genetic use of history uses the historical example to explain continuity and change in historical and present-day societies. With this model, history is always used according to the two typologies, i.e. you can have political uses of history that are traditional, exemplary, critical, or genetic in kind. I then argue that how an individual uses history depends on the epistemic quality of her historical consciousness.<sup>111</sup>

The third level of manifestation of historical consciousness is historical culture and it is argued that this should be perceived as an agglomeration of uses of history. A historical culture thus presents the individual with the uses of history that are inherent in a specific historical culture, but can also be changed by the uses of history of its individual members.<sup>112</sup>

### ***Epistemic Qualities***

A key feature in showing the connection between historical consciousness and its manifestations is theoretically specifying this relation. It is argued that a historical consciousness at the most basic level should be regarded as a stance or attitude towards narratives, and that this stance or attitude can be qualitatively different depending on the epistemic beliefs of the individual. Peter Seixas has made an extension to Jörn Rüsen's widely accepted typology of historical consciousness. This extension is meant to illustrate different epistemic qualities of historical consciousness. These epistemic qualities can be regarded as being more basic than and correspond to an individual's uses of history. The different types of historical consciousness according to Seixas' extended typology are:

- (i) the *traditional* type which regards history and historical accounts as either true or false and there is no articulated method for determining which is which;
- (ii) the *exemplary* type which also regards history and its accounts as either true or false, but specifies that some kind of method is required to determine which is which. Moral values and human rights

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 19-20.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 20.

- are also perceived as historically derivative: by studying history we can show what is good and bad, et cetera;
- (iii) the *critical* type which questions the possibility of truth in history since all accounts are relative to their context and thus equally true (or false). What ensues is a kind of relativism concerning history;
  - (iv) the *genetic* type which engages with the problem of context and argues that the only way of gaining knowledge from history is to accept that history is contextually contingent and that one has to take that into account in order to get historical knowledge. Hence, it takes the context of both the historical account and the interpreting subject into account.<sup>113</sup>

What distinguishes the different types of historical consciousness in this typology is the individual's ability to regard historical knowledge as contextually contingent. The traditional historical consciousness has no appreciation of the importance of context in history, whereas the genetic type takes the full context, both that of the historical account and herself as an interpreting individual, into account. She thus displays an ability to appreciate the representational practices that go into disseminating history; that all historical accounts are uses of history and contingent on the individual or group that uses them.

With this view of historical consciousness, it can be theoretically possible to assert that a historical consciousness is separated from the notions of narration, uses of history, and historical culture, and that historical consciousness is essential for the uses an individual makes of history. Furthermore, it also seeks to specify why the focus of research into historical consciousness should be on the uses of history that an individual makes.<sup>114</sup>

### ***Development***

If there are different epistemic qualities of historical consciousness, it is also interesting to theorise on how there can be a progression of these qualities. As has been noted above, one criticism against the concept of historical consciousness is that it does not allow us to say anything about progression in historical understanding. I argue that if we define historical consciousness as an understanding of multi-chronology that can be of different epistemic qualities, and that the more advanced an individual's ability to contextualise history and uses of history is, the more advanced or complex is her historical consciousness, it can be possible to theoretically connect historical consciousness with historical thinking.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 20-21.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 22-24.

The aim of historical thinking is, through an increased ability to contextualise historical accounts, to provide the individual with a meta-historical appreciation of history as an art of interpretation and representation, an ability the Australian historian Robert Parkes has dubbed the “historiographic gaze.” In research on historical thinking, it is often argued that it is only through an advanced ability to contextualise that an individual can reach an advanced historical thinking.<sup>116</sup> Thus, by stressing contextualisation, a theoretical connection between historical consciousness and historical thinking can be made which allows us to theorise on how individuals develop their historical consciousness.

### ***Significance***

With this approach to historical consciousness, it can also be possible to show why historical consciousness can be a significant concept in history didactics. As noted above, without specifying how a historical consciousness relates to its manifestations and without differentiating between the different types of applications there are of the concept, there is a risk that the concept collapses into its applications, thus becoming superfluous: why talk of identity constitution through historical consciousness, when we can talk of identity constitution instead?<sup>117</sup>

The model presented here argues that to regard historical consciousness as an understanding of multi-chronology applied to meaning-making that can be more or less advanced regarding to what extent an individual can contextualise historical accounts connected with a narrative view of human epistemology and identity, can be used to show that we create different kinds of identities and world views depending on our epistemic beliefs. A conclusion of such an argumentation can be that an individual that has no ability to contextualise history (and consequently has an undeveloped historical consciousness and historical thinking), will regard herself, her surrounding world, and fellow human beings differently than a person with a developed ability of contextualisation (and historical consciousness and historical thinking).<sup>118</sup> Thus, it can be argued that historical consciousness may be a significant concept in history didactics.

### ***Results***

The theory of historical consciousness outlined in this paper is original in the sense that it argues for a focus on the epistemological aspects of the concept. The pointing out of the two dimensions of uses of history is also new in research and the second *how*-dimension of uses of history as something that

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 23-24.

<sup>117</sup> Paper I, 219-220.

<sup>118</sup> Paper II, 24-25.

offers a way of connecting an individual's use of history to her historical consciousness: she uses history in a certain way *because* her historical consciousness has a certain epistemic quality. Another original aspect of this paper is that it suggests a possible link between historical consciousness and historical thinking in an individual's ability to contextualise historical accounts and gain a meta-historical understanding, a historiographic gaze. There has been other research that has tried to connect historical consciousness to historical thinking<sup>119</sup> but I want to argue that this attempt differs from previous attempts since it specifies that a historical consciousness is manifested in how a person uses history and that historical thinking develops a historical consciousness since it enables the individual to make meta-historical analyses of uses of history, both those of herself and others, thus affecting her epistemic beliefs and historical consciousness.

Finally, it is also suggested how the concept of historical consciousness and identity constitution are related. Presuming a narrative view of identity constitution, it is argued that an ability to regard history as contextually contingent may enable the individual to realise the full scope of her identity constitution and, vice versa, an inability to regard history as contextually contingent could render the individual's view of herself, and others, static. This also has significance for how we act morally: with an appreciation of the importance of context, the individual may become more prone to take the perspective of the other into consideration. Without this appreciation of contextual contingency, that could be regarded as less likely to happen.

### **Paper III: 'Historical Consciousness and Historical Media: A History Didactical Approach to Educational Media'**

The theory of historical consciousness outlined in the second paper is then operationalised in a framework for analysing historical media presented in the third paper. It is argued that the understanding of historical consciousness presented in this study pushes us towards studying historical media from a practical perspective; the uses of historical media determine how they are interpreted and, consequently, their propensities for developing historical understanding.<sup>120</sup> This view argues for an analysis of historical media that goes beyond the medium itself, and engages with and analyses its practical applications and their significance.

The key concept in analysing historical media from the perspective of historical consciousness is use of history since it is through this that an individual's historical consciousness is manifested. That means historical consciousness can only be studied indirectly or implicitly through the explicit use of history an individual makes. If we want to analyse what historical

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<sup>119</sup> See page 22 above.

<sup>120</sup> Paper III, 7-9.

consciousness historical media portray and how it affects its consumers, focus should be put on what uses of history historical media and its users convey. Furthermore, since a certain use of history is contingent on the historical consciousness of its proprietor, how the individual perceives history and historical accounts, i.e. her epistemic beliefs or meta-historical competencies, could be argued to bear significance for how the individual uses the historical media in question. A traditional historical consciousness will be expressed in a traditional use of history, and could result in a use of historical media that fails to appreciate it as a result of interpretation and representation. A genetic historical consciousness, on the other hand, could result in a use of historical media that engages with it as a result of interpretation and representation, i.e. a meta-historical approach is taken. Thus, what kind of historical consciousness an individual has will affect how she uses a historical media and, in turn, affect how that historical media is interpreted.<sup>121</sup>

Through a limited textbook analysis, it is then illustrated how one aspect of the framework of historical consciousness can be used to analyse historical media, both as an analytical frame and as an analytical device. The key concept in analysis is, as stated above, uses of history, and it is argued that the only uses of history we encounter in a textbook are those of the authors. Furthermore, since we can only access historical consciousness through uses of history, it is difficult to say anything about the textbook's propensity to develop the historical consciousness of the readers with any higher degree of certainty. To do that we would need to analyse their uses of history and from thence draw conclusions about the qualities of their historical consciousnesses. It is furthermore suggested that it is difficult to make any conclusions about the historical consciousness of the authors from the sole example of the textbook account, due to the fact that a certain use of history not necessarily corresponds to a certain type of historical consciousness. Furthermore, textbooks are edited and for this reason aspects of the author's uses of history may have been excluded.<sup>122</sup>

The textbook analysis, however, shows how a textbook narrative can be analysed according to the two dimensions of uses of history and that it is thus possible to draw conclusions about the historical consciousness of the proprietor of the narrative through her uses of history, albeit with limited results. Furthermore, the textbook analysis finds that the textbook narrative can be regarded as typical regarding how agency is portrayed and what narrative framework is deployed and that the studied account is stereotypical and manifests what could be regarded as the officially accepted master narrative about Swedish history after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

The analysis also finds that it is difficult to say anything about how the studied account affects an individual's historical consciousness, even though the study finds that the uses of history in the textbook narrative are what could be labelled as traditional. This is because the textbook can be used in a number of ways: a traditional textbook account can most certainly be used to confirm a certain historical culture, but it can also be used critically as an example of a traditional use of history. How the text is interpreted will depend on how the text is used. Furthermore, the individual's historical consciousness as portrayed by her epistemic beliefs also plays a central role when interpreting a textbook: an individual with a traditional historical consciousness will probably not appreciate a textbook account that presents a view that differs too much from her own or that includes multiple perspectives. To be able to judge with a higher degree of certainty how individuals' historical consciousnesses have been affected, it is suggested that a triangulation of different methods, such as textbook analysis, interviews, and observation could be fruitful.<sup>123</sup>

In conclusion, the results of the third paper could be argued to be seven-fold. Firstly, the definition and theory of historical consciousness stipulated in the second paper is operationalised. Secondly, it is specified how a historical consciousness can be studied practically, i.e. through uses of history. Thirdly, it suggests a method for analysing how uses of history relate to historical consciousness; through the *how*-dimension of uses of history, it can be possible to assess the historical consciousness of an individual. Fourthly, it discusses how the concept of historical consciousness can be used as a framework for the analysis of historical media, and, fifthly, it suggests some methodological approaches to analysing individuals' historical consciousnesses and the development thereof. Sixthly, it argues for the importance of taking individuals' historical consciousnesses into account: their epistemic beliefs will affect how they interpret historical media. Seventhly, and finally, it shows how the typologies of the two dimensions of uses of history can be applied to textbook analysis.

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 19-20.

# Discussion

As has been shown above, this study has generated a number of results. The most important of these results is that a theory of historical consciousness is stipulated that relates to earlier research and extends this research in a focus on the epistemological problems connected to historical consciousness. Historical consciousness is further related to historical thinking to afford a theoretical approach to how a historical consciousness can be developed. Finally, a methodological framework of the concept for analysing historical media and its relation to individuals' sense making is proposed.

The research questions posed in this study have all been answered: it is shown how the concept of historical consciousness is presented in research, it is shown how a historical consciousness is perceived to be developed in research, it proposes an understanding of historical consciousness that incorporates the various perspectives on the concept regarding its definition, application, development, and significance. Finally, it also proposes an understanding of historical consciousness that enhances the analysis of historical media concerning its ability to demonstrate and develop a historical consciousness.

Furthermore, this study could be regarded as a whole since there is a clear theme of progression from Paper I to Paper III. The first paper studies research on the concept, the second paper uses the results of this study to construct a theory of historical consciousness, and the third paper applies this theory in developing a methodological framework for analysing historical media using historical consciousness, thus operationalising it. Furthermore, these papers all emanate from the same theoretical approach to research (that was presented in the section called "Theoretical Framework" in this chapter). However, since the article format allows limited space for a more profound discussion of the implications of its results, I want to discuss some questions and implications of the results of the studies below.

## **Paper I: Circularity and Categorisation**

Concerning the first paper, there are two questions that I want to address: whether the study could be regarded as circular and whether the categories developed really are categories.

About circularity, it could be argued that the study is circular for (at least) two reasons: (i) it assumes that the concept is problematic and (ii) it assumes that applications affect a concept's definition. Regarding the first claim, it could be countered by the fact that my research is based on the accounts of other research that states that the concept is vague and complex. Furthermore, even if there had not been such references, the study would still not have been circular since its result should not primarily be considered as

showing that the concept is problematic, but rather that the concept is problematic for a specific reason: that its applications affect how we understand its definition. This leads us to the second argument as to why the study could be regarded as circular: the fact that I assume that an application affects a definition. A response to this criticism could be that my conclusion that the applications affect the definition is not only a result of my inclination to regard matters in that way, but that the results in the study support such a conclusion: no researchers justified the concept by its definition but did so according to its applications, suggesting that the way they applied the concept affected how they regarded it (i.e how they regarded its definition). As has been shown above, this is a rather common theoretical position.

The next question deals with the categories presented in the first paper. It could be argued that what I perceive to be categories of the concept of historical consciousness are not categories but rather dimensions of the concept. One criterion regarding categories is that they should be finite and easily discernable, and since the categories that I have presented in the first paper are not of that nature, they should not be regarded to be categories of historical consciousness, but rather dimensions of it. I have two replies to this kind of criticism. The first is to accept that the categories could indeed be considered as dimensions of historical consciousness. The second is to claim that the categories are still categories since they categorise different aspects of how researchers present the concept of historical consciousness. Hence they are not categories of historical consciousness *per se* but rather categories of how researchers present historical consciousness. Thus it could be argued that there is no conflict between the categories or dimensions of the concept: they are categories of how the dimensions of the concept of historical consciousness are presented in research.

## **Paper II: Transformation, Contextualisation, Rigidity, Eclecticism, and Eurocentrism**

Some implications and questions concerning the results of the second paper that I feel are important to discuss are (i) what kind of historical consciousness do we get with the view presented?, (ii) why is contextualisation regarded to be so essential to historical consciousness?, (iii) does the theory present what could be argued to be a rigid view of human cognition?, (iv) to what extent can an eclectic approach (such as this one) to theorising succeed?, and (v) could the view of historical consciousness presented be argued to be normative and Eurocentric?

The view of historical consciousness that I present in this study is in some crucial aspects different or transformed from how the concept is generally presented: fundamentally, I hold historical consciousness to be a kind of stance or attitude towards narratives, which is quite different from an experience of temporal unity. However, if we do regard narrativity to be a cen-

tral aspect of human epistemology, it could be argued that a stance or attitude towards narratives is the most basic feature of a historical consciousness, and I think that this stance or attitude harmonises well with the view of historical consciousness as multi-chronological. Furthermore, it allows us to analyse historical consciousness in accounts that are not multi-chronological in character but still deal with history. Multi-chronology is however still an essential feature of a historical consciousness with this view which in turn affects meaning-making, identity constitution, et cetera. It should also be kept in mind that what is stipulated here is merely one aspect of the concept, and research focusing on other aspects will probably generate different results.

This takes us to the next question: why is contextualisation such an important aspect of historical consciousness? My principal argument here focuses on how it is suggested that multi-chronology influences our historical cognition. If an individual regards history multi-chronologically, it can be argued that she will view history as dynamic: it is something that affects how we perceive our contemporary lives and world and our anticipations of what will come. She will appreciate how the present perspective influences how we interpret history: history and historical facts are contingent on how they are approached. It can be argued that this in turn can result in an appreciation of the importance of context in analysing and interpreting history. Ideally, the individual realises that her context is as important as the context of others, resulting in an understanding of the importance of perspective in history. Furthermore, it can be argued that this enables the individual to apply a kind of temporal intersubjectivity: to interpret historical agents from their own context and to connect this with the interpreting individual's context, i.e. her own context.<sup>124</sup> Another aspect of why I hold contextualisation to be essential is that it allows us to focus on historical cognition (how people understand history) and thus presents us with a possibility of connecting historical consciousness with historical thinking.

Concerning rigidity, it could be argued that the theory of historical consciousness presented is rigid since it seeks to establish that there can be different types of historical consciousness and that these are connected to basic epistemic beliefs and therefore static. If you have a critical historical consciousness, you are stuck with it, so to speak. Some researchers have argued that individuals can move between different types of historical consciousness and that there is no such thing as a fixed historical consciousness in an individual.<sup>125</sup> According to my view, there are possibilities of movement of historical consciousness, but not back and forth between different types of it.

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<sup>124</sup> Cf. Jörn Rüsen, *Berättande och förnuft: Historieteoretiska texter* (Göteborg: Daidalos, 2004), 207–211.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Eli Gottlieb och Sam Wineburg, "Between Veritas and Communitas: Epistemic Switching in the Reading of Academic and Sacred History", *Journal of the Learning Sciences* 21, num 1 (2012): 114–115, doi:10.1080/10508406.2011.582376; and Paul Zanzanian, "Historical Consciousness and the Structuring of

I would like to argue that there is something peculiar about the view that we can move back and forth between different historical consciousnesses: as an analogy, no one would claim that people can read to varying degrees depending on when you ask them to read: either you read well or you do not. Once a person has mastered the art of reading, there is no turning back (unless, of course, she has some kind of accident). The same applies to historical consciousness: once you have mastered the ability to make meta-historical analyses of the contextual contingency of historical accounts, it is not feasible to think that you would suddenly lapse into total amnesia regarding these aspects. The same could be argued about the opposite condition: it seems unlikely that an individual with a traditional historical consciousness that has no awareness of the contextual contingency of historical accounts would suddenly start to make meta-historical analyses.

I think that uses of history could be a way of dealing with inconsistency in how individuals treat history. I have argued above that a use of history is a symptom of a historical consciousness, but from that it does not follow that a use of history is *always* a symptom of a historical consciousness. Or, rather, I would argue that a person with a traditional historical consciousness would only be able to make traditional uses of history; with more advanced historical consciousnesses, matters are more complex. It can probably be the case that a person with a genetic historical consciousness could make traditional, exemplary, critical, and genetic uses of history depending on the circumstances. This does not mean that her historical consciousness transforms, but rather that she uses history in different ways.

Eclecticism is another implication that I want to address: I present theories that could be considered to be quite diverse and I only present aspects of theories that others have developed. My aim has been to analyse what these different theories have in common and as I argue in Paper II, I regard meaning-making in history and contextualisation to be two aspects that these theories have in common and I have accordingly tried to construct a theory focusing on these aspects. This is also why I have focused only on the theoretical aspects that I hold to be relevant for my purposes. For reasons of brevity and scope, it would have been implausible to take the full aspects of all the theories that all the researchers have presented into account.

The final implication that I want to discuss with regard to the second paper is whether it is an example of Eurocentrism.<sup>126</sup> The view of the concept presented here argues that a historical consciousness can be developed and that the extent to which an individual can contextualise history and historical accounts determines what kind of historical consciousness she has. Furthermore, regarding identity and morality, I argue that a person with a genetic historical consciousness has a more profound sense of identity and that she could be presumed to be more tolerant towards other people. This could be regarded as highly normative. If one views this study from the perspective of history education, it could be argued that to develop a historical consciousness is an aim (as in Sweden for instance), but that does not mean that it should be regarded as an aim in other contexts. To say that one can develop a historical consciousness and to create a typology of different types of it does not necessarily mean that it is something that needs to be done. In some contexts the answer is affirmative, but that may not be the case elsewhere.

It could however still be argued that surely the genetic type of historical consciousness is a normatively better type than a traditional one and in certain contexts (such as the Swedish history classroom) that is probably true. In other contexts it could be different. One could, for instance, imagine some kind of tribal community where it is essential to keep traditions alive in order to maintain the common identity of the community; in such a circumstance, a genetic historical consciousness may even be harmful. As for the argument that this view of the concept is Eurocentric since it emanates from an ideal of rationality that sprang from the European Enlightenment, it could be replied that historical consciousness is contingent on the individual and not on her geographical location. In theory anyone can have a traditional, exemplary, critical, or genetic historical consciousness; it does not matter if you live in Europe or in Sub-Saharan Africa. Finally it should once more be stressed that this is one aspect of historical consciousness: other aspects may show other perspectives of the concept that may be more palatable concerning this.

### **Paper III: Uses of History and the Problem of Consciousness**

There are two aspects of the third paper that I would like to discuss below: how do you analyse uses of history and how can we ever come to know what happens inside someone's consciousness? Regarding the problem of how to analyse uses of history, it seems to me as it is a matter more complex than what is perhaps credited in the third paper. The core of the complexity is that uses of history can be analysed on different levels: you can analyse it through

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<sup>126</sup> See pages 20-21 above.

close reading of a text (as I did in Paper III) and investigate what could be called the explicit uses of history. If you analyse uses of history on the level of the textbook or author, you may get very different results in your analysis and there can also be implicit uses of history that may not be visible when studying a text closely and focusing on what is explicitly stated. In the study I performed, I chose to focus on the explicit uses of history in a close reading of the text mostly because this is what pupils encounter in schools when they study history, and because of this (as is implicitly stated in the paper) the results of the analysis were quite ambiguous. I suggested that I would have to get more data from the textbook authors in order to say anything more concrete about their historical consciousnesses and I think that is related to what I have written above.

This leads us on to the next aspect of the third paper that I want to discuss: how can we ever possibly know what is happening inside someone's consciousness? To study what happens in a person's consciousness can be quite a complex matter, not least because there are many different layers of consciousness and many processes may be taking place at the same time, both consciously and sub-consciously. The framework presented states that we can access and thereby assess someone's historical consciousness through the *how*-aspects of their uses of history, but if you are analysing a historical medium, there are probably a number of factors that makes such analysis much less straightforward than it might seem. Textbooks are edited, for instance, and the editor may have modified the author's text. For instance, the editor may have influenced the content of the textbook to such an extent that we cannot analyse the author's historical consciousness. Furthermore, parts of the text that may have been indicators of a certain historical consciousness may have been edited out rendering an analysis of the author's historical consciousness impossible. Another important issue is the commercial considerations made by the publisher that could further have altered the author's original text.

The only way I can think of to dampen the effect of this uncertainty is to use as much data and as many different kinds of data as possible when analysing uses of history: the more aspects you have on someone's use of history, the more credible your results will be.

### **Further research**

I would like to argue that the most obvious result from the present study is the need for further research to specify and verify (or falsify) the theory and framework of historical consciousness proposed here. Furthermore, as the study in Paper III shows, historical consciousness is a complex concept that can be studied from a number of perspectives and for this reason, other and more refined research methods are required to further the results presented here.

# Conclusion

My hope is that the studies included in this dissertation can bring new perspectives on history didactical research and a broadened understanding of the concept of historical consciousness. Perhaps it can be regarded as a useful guide to history didactical research and an example of a new and comprehensive approach on research in history didactics.

Concerning the focus on the cognitive or epistemological aspects of historical consciousness, this focus may be useful when teaching history, but there are other aspects to the concept that are essential as well, particularly ontological ones which are only dealt with implicitly in the present study. It should be noted that while this is an attempt at constructing a coherent theory of historical consciousness, it is not the only one. I am deeply indebted to the extensive amount of relevant and interesting research about this concept that has already been done. Furthermore, even though the papers in this dissertation are primarily theoretical in focus, my aim and wish has been to make the concept of historical consciousness even more practically versatile.

As has been noted above, this study seeks to incorporate many and diverse perspectives on history didactics into the concept of historical consciousness. The main benefit of doing this is that much interesting research in the field of history didactics can be brought together, resulting in new and interesting perspectives on history didactics and history education. The difficulties are that any theory that tries to do so runs the risk of becoming too extensive or too loosely defined. My hope is that a focus on the epistemological problems of historical consciousness can direct us towards the core of historical meaning: construction, interpretation, and dissemination. These are three areas that I hold to be central to history didactics.

# Short Summary in Swedish

## Inledning

Den här licentiatavhandlingen innehåller ett inledande kapitel och tre fristående artiklar. I det inledande kapitlet presenteras de övergripande utgångspunkterna (såväl teoretiska som metodologiska) för studierna som presenteras i artiklarna. Vidare relateras här studierna till tidigare forskning. Det inledande kapitlet redogör också för studiernas syften och frågeställningar samt argumenterar för hur de tre artiklarna kan förstås som utgörande en helhet. Dessutom presenteras studiens resultat som även diskuteras.

Det övergripande syftet för studien har varit att nå en breddad och fördjupad förståelse av historiemedvetandebegreppet genom att knyta samman forskning om begreppet i Sverige, Storbritannien och Nordamerika samt att diskutera hur begreppet kan förstås och tillämpas i historiedidaktik och historieundervisning. Forskningsfrågorna har således varit:

- Hur presenteras historiemedvetandebegreppet i forskningen?
- Hur utvecklas ett historiemedvetande enligt forskningen?
- Om möjligt, kan en förståelse av historiemedvetandebegreppet nås som inbegriper de olika perspektiv som finns angående begreppet?
- I vilken utsträckning kan en sådan förståelse av historiemedvetandebegreppet tillämpas i analyser av historiska medier med avseende på dess potential att utveckla ett historiemedvetande och historisk förståelse?

Den första artikeln svarar mot den första frågeställningen. Den andra artikeln svarar mot de andra och tredje frågeställningarna och den tredje artikeln svarar mot den fjärde frågeställningen.

## Resultat

### *Artikel I*

Den första artikeln presenterar en studie av hur historiemedvetandebegreppet definierats, tillämpats och legitimerats i svensk historiedidaktisk forskning. En vanlig uppfattning bland historiedidaktiska forskare är att historiemedvetande är ett vagt och komplext begrepp och studiens resultat pekar på en möjlig förklaring till denna uppfattning. Utifrån studien av historiemedvetandebegreppet så som det framträder i svensk forskning har kategorier induktivt skapats för att illustrera vad som förenar och skiljer begreppsförståelsen så som det används i forskningen. Studien finner att det finns en konsensus om begreppets definition (som skall förstås som en förmåga att tolka det förflutna, förstå det samtida och ha perspektiv på det framtida) men att denna definition tillämpas på åtminstone sex olika sätt.

Enligt en tillämpning ses historiemedvetande som ett identitetsskapande begrepp: genom vårt historiemedvetande skapar vi våra identiteter. Enligt en annan tillämpning ses historiemedvetande som ett meningsskapande begrepp: det bidrar till människans förståelse av sig själv och sin omvärld. Enligt en tredje tillämpning ses historiemedvetande som ett historieskapande begrepp: genom vårt historiemedvetande skapar vi historia. Enligt en fjärde tillämpning ses historiemedvetande som ett insiktsskapande begrepp: genom vårt historiemedvetande bibringar vi oss insikter om såväl historien som vår omvärld. Enligt en femte tillämpning ses historiemedvetande som ett värdeskapande begrepp: genom vårt historiemedvetande påverkas våra moraliska värderingar. Samt enligt en sjätte tillämpning ses historiemedvetandebegreppet som ett heuristiskt begrepp: begreppet och dess betydelse i sig är underordnat det faktum att det leder till nya och intressanta perspektiv i forskningen.

Artikeln avslutas med ett diskuterande avsnitt vars syfte är att belysa varför historiemedvetandebegreppets olika tillämpningar kan bidra till att skapa begreppslig vaghet och komplexitet gällande historiemedvetandebegreppet. Jag argumenterar för att det är svårt att analytiskt skilja ett begrepps definition från dess tillämpningar eftersom tillämpningarna tenderar att påverka hur ett begrepp förstås. Detta blir tydligt då historiemedvetandebegreppet legitimeras i forskningen: det är genomgående dess tillämpningar som rättfärdigar dess existens och framskjutna position i svensk historiedidaktik. Av den här anledningen argumenterar jag sedan att det är viktigt att precisera hur begreppets definition och tillämpningar hör samman, då man annars riskerar två saker: antingen får man ett monolitiskt begrepp som innefattar allt men förklarar desto mindre, eller så får man svårt att motivera begreppets existens jämte dess tillämpningar. Det kan då hävdas att man i så fall borde fokusera på begreppets tillämpningar istället för begreppet i sig. Alltså ser man historiemedvetande som ett identitetsskapande begrepp borde man då istället prata om "identitet" istället för "historiemedvetande" för att undvika vaghet eftersom det kan förstås som otydligt hur de två begreppen hänger samman.

Sammanfattningsvis kan man säga att studien genererar tre viktiga resultat: för det första kartläggs hur historiemedvetandebegreppet används i svensk historiedidaktisk forskning, för det andra preciseras användningen av begreppet genom kategoriseringarna, och för det tredje anges en förklaring till vari begreppets vaghet och komplexitet består. Med hjälp av resultaten från studien skulle man alltså kunna gå från att säga att historiemedvetande är ett vagt och komplext begrepp till att diskutera på vilket sätt det kan vara så och varför det kan vara fallet.

## Artikel II

Den andra artikeln svarar huvudsakligen mot studiens andra och tredje frågeställningar: avsikten är här att presentera en teori för historiemedvetandebegreppet som påvisar hur begreppets definition och tillämpningar hänger samman samt hur ett historiemedvetande kan utvecklas hos en individ samt varför och hur ett historiemedvetande kan påverka en individs identitet och moraluppfattning.

Argumentet som presenteras utgår från de kunskapsteoretiska aspekterna av historiemedvetandebegreppet och fokuserar således på begreppet som centralt för hur människor förstår historia. Historiemedvetande definieras som "förståelsen av relationen mellan det förflutna, samtida och framtida" och tillämpas på hur individer skapar historisk förståelse, eller som ett meningsskapande begrepp för att använda den första artikelns kategorier av tillämpningar.

Därefter presenteras ett argument för hur man kan betrakta historiemedvetnadets manifestationer. Den mest basala manifestationen av historiemedvetandet ser vi genom berättandet: när en individ uttrycker något om historien gör hen det genom berättande eller narrativ.

När en individ skapar narrativ om historia ger hen uttryck för ett historiebruk. Det finns två aspekter av historiebruk som är centrala för artikelns argumentation. den första aspekten kan kallas *vad*-aspekten och beskriver vad historiebruket syftar till och det illustreras väl av Klas-Göran Karlssons typologi över historiebruk: är det politiskt, existentiellt, kommersiellt, och så vidare.<sup>127</sup> Den andra aspekten kallar jag för *hur*-aspekten och här åsyftas hur historien brukas, vilket kan illustreras genom Jörn Rüsens typologi över historiska narrativ: ett historiebruk (till exempel politiskt) kan brukas på en rad sätt: det kan vara traditionellt (för att söka upprätthålla traditioner i historien), det kan vara exemplariskt (för att söka motivera regler för mänskligt agerande), det kan vara kritiskt (för att söka kritisera samtida eller historiska samhällen eller sedvänjor), eller så kan det vara genetiskt (för att påvisa förändring och kontinuitet i historien).<sup>128</sup> Till sist berör jag begreppet historiekultur på så sätt att jag uppfattar det som ett konglomerat av individers historiebruk. Genom att vi brukar historien upprätthåller vi olika historiekulturer. Vidare uppfattar jag historiekultur som grundläggande för individers historiebruk och historiemedvetanden på så sätt att en historiekultur alltid föregår individen i ett visst samhälle eller sammanhang. Samtidigt hävdar jag att individen kan förändra historiekulturen i sin omgivning genom sitt historiebruk.

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<sup>127</sup> Karlsson, 'Historiedidaktik: begrepp, teori och analys', 59.

<sup>128</sup> Jörn Rüsen, 'Tradition: A Principle of Historical Sense-Generation and Its Logic and Effect in Historical Culture', *History and Theory* 51, no. 4 (2012): 52, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2303.2012.00646.x.

Mitt nästa argument går ut på att en individs historiebruk skall uppfattas som ett uttryck för hens historiemedvetande: det är genom att studera hens historiebruk som vi kan komma i kontakt med hens historiemedvetande. Därför är det viktigt att teoretiskt precisera hur begreppet och dess manifestationer hör samman. Eftersom jag argumenterar för att ett historiemedvetande på den mest grundläggande nivån kan förstås som en attityd eller hållning gentemot historien och att denna attityd eller hållning kan vara kvalitativt olika beroende på individens epistemiska uppfattningar kan det vara möjligt att visa hur ett historiemedvetande hänger samman med sina uttryck (såsom historiebruk). Då jag fokuserar på historiemedvetande som ett kunskapsteoretiskt begrepp, är det *hur*-aspekten av historiebruket som skall analyseras för att komma åt en individs historiemedvetande. Av den anledningen är det viktigt med en typologi över olika typer av historiemedvetande. Här används Peter Seixas utökning av Jörn Rüsen<sup>129</sup> typologi över historiemedvetanden. I Seixas utökade typologi diskuteras fyra epistemiska typer av historiemedvetanden som jag anser passar mycket väl för att illustrera historiemedvetandets kunskapsteoretiska aspekter:

- Med ett traditionellt historiemedvetande betraktas historia och historiska utsagor som något objektivt givet: vi kan historia därför att vi lärt oss det av föräldrar, lärare och vänner. Historiska påståenden kan antingen vara sanna eller falska, men en person med ett traditionellt historiemedvetande har ingen metod för att avgöra vilket av motsägande historiska påståenden som är sant.
- Med ett exemplariskt historiemedvetande betraktas även historia och historiska utsagor som något objektivt givet, men det preciseras att det behövs någon form av metod för att avgöra vad som är historiskt sant. Tillämpar man bara rätt metod kan man upptäcka det historiskt sanna. Vidare betraktas värden såsom mänskliga rättigheter som historiskt betingade: genom att studera historien kan vi bevisa (eller upptäcka) vilka rättigheter individen har.
- Med ett kritiskt historiemedvetande ifrågasätts sanningsvärdet i historien eller historiska utsagor. Eftersom den historiska sanningen betraktas som relativ till den historiska kontexten eller personen kan alla historiska utsagor betraktas som lika sanna eller falska. Vad som följer är en kunskapsteoretisk relativism angående historia, och i förlängningen ifrågasätts därför huruvida vi kan veta något om historien.
- Med ett genetiskt historiemedvetande tas varken ett positivistiskt eller relativistiskt ställningstagande angående historien eller historiska utsagors riktighet. Här förflyttas fokuset från det enskilda historiska påstå-

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<sup>129</sup> Jörn Rüsen, 'Historical Consciousness: Narrative, Structure, Moral Function, and Ontogenetic Development', in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 72.

endet till den kontext inom vilken det skapats. En person med ett genetiskt historiemedvetande betraktar alla historiska påståenden, kategorier och fakta som historiskt kontingenta och att det är helt normalt att det förhåller sig på det sättet samt att det är en förutsättning för att vi ska kunna nå kunskap i historia. Vad som hos den med ett kritiskt historiemedvetande betraktades som ett bevis för att historisk kunskap knappast är möjlig, uppfattas hos den med ett genetiskt historiemedvetande som en förutsättning för att vi överhuvudtaget ska nå kunskap om det som skett. Genom att ta kontexten i beaktande (både den historiska och den meningsskapande individens kontext) kan vi komma att veta något om historien.<sup>130</sup>

Genom att relatera den här typologin av historiemedvetande till typologin över historiebrukets *hur*-aspekter kan man visa hur ett visst historiebruk beror på ett visst historiemedvetande. En person som inte besitter någon som helst förståelse för historiens kontingenta karaktär, kan inte bruka historien på ett genetiskt sätt. Hen kan dessutom inte heller förhandla mellan eller analysera de historiekulturer hen tillhör. Med ett genetiskt historiemedvetande kan istället individen analysera olika historiebruk från ett kontextuellt perspektiv och hen kan på så sätt förhålla sig till historiekulturen på ett förhandlande och analytiskt sätt.

Nästa steg i analysen var att redogöra för hur och varför ett historiemedvetande kan utvecklas hos en individ. Eftersom jag ansåg att förmågan till kontextualisering är vad som skiljer de olika typerna av historiemedvetande åt, är det centralt att redogöra för hur progression sker angående individers förmåga till kontextualisering. Ett begrepp som fokuserar på progression i kontextualisering är historiskt tänkande såsom det skrivs fram i de brittiska och nordamerikanska forskningstraditionerna. Genom att tillämpa vad som kallas första och andra ordningens begrepp på historia hävdas det att individer når en förmåga att tolka historien och dess utsagor på ett alltmer kontextualiserat sätt: individen når en förståelse för historievetenskapens tolkande och framställningsmässiga karaktär. Tanken är att denna insikt ska leda till en förståelse för hur metod, urval, tolkning och framställning påverkar historikers arbete, dvs. historikerns kontext. Detta leder sedan vidare till en förståelse av perspektivens betydelse för historiskt meningsskapande: den historiska agentens perspektiv måste tas på lika stort allvar som den tolkande historikerns perspektiv.

Ett fullt utvecklat historiskt tänkande leder till vad den australiensiske historikern Robert Parkes kallar en *historiografisk blick*, det vill säga en förmåga att ta hänsyn till hela den historiska framställningsprocessen, inklusive det tolkande subjektet. Jag hävdar sedan att en person med ett genetiskt

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<sup>130</sup> Seixas, 'Historical Consciousness: The Progress of Knowledge in a Postprogressive Age', 145–149.

historiemedvetande är en person som har en sådan historiografisk blick, och att det således är genom kontextualiseringsgraden som begreppen historiemedvetande och historiskt tänkande kan sammankopplas. Genom historiskt tänkande kan en person utveckla sin förmåga till kontextualisering och därmed även utveckla sitt historiemedvetande.<sup>131</sup>

Denna kontextualiseringsförmåga är även central för individers identitets- och moralbildning. Genom att tillämpa narrativ identitetsteori såsom den beskrivs av den amerikanska filosofen Marya Schechtman kan ett samband mellan historiemedvetande och identitetsbildning påvisas genom att en individs attityd till narrativer är avgörande för hens identitetsbildning.<sup>132</sup> En person som inte har någon medvetenhet om hur narrativer påverkar sin identitet har inte en likadan identitetsuppfattning som en person som har denna medvetenhet. Vidare hävdar jag att en person med ett traditionellt historiemedvetande troligen har en identitetsuppfattning som är statisk, medan en person med ett genetiskt historiemedvetande förmodligen har en mer dynamisk identitetsuppfattning eftersom den är beroende av både rumsliga och temporala kontexter och kan således förändras i tid och rum. Tätt sammankopplad med en individs identitet är hennes moraluppfattning. Om man betraktar identitet som en källa till moral på så sätt att vi sympatiserar moraliskt med dem som vi känner tillhörighet med och vice versa, kan man med samma typ av argument som ovan hävda att vilken typ av historiemedvetande som en person har är avgörande för vilken moralsyn hen har. Ett traditionellt historiemedvetande kan leda till en moralsyn som är statisk och därmed finns det en risk att det inte tas någon hänsyn till den moraliska kontexten. En person med ett genetiskt historiemedvetande kan enligt resonemanget ovan ha lättare att se den andres perspektiv i moraliska frågor och får därmed möjligen en mer tolerant moralsyn.

Resultatet av den andra studien är således att en regelgivande definition av historiemedvetandebegreppet stipulerats samt att en heltäckande teori över historiemedvetandets manifesteringar, utveckling och rättfärdigande skisserats.

### **Artikel III**

Den sista artikeln utgår från den teoretiska modell av historiemedvetandebegreppet som utarbetades i artikel II och diskuterar en modell för operationalisering av begreppet i analys av historiska medier. En modell skisseras för hur historiemedvetandebegreppet kan förstås som tolkningsram och metodologiskt angreppssätt vid analys av historiska medier. Den mest grundläggande tanken är att man genom att analysera individers historiebruk kan analysera deras historiemedvetande. Därför är det centralt att man utgår

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<sup>131</sup> Parkes, *Interrupting History*, 119–120.

<sup>132</sup> Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves*, 93–94, 143–144.

från historiebruk när man analyserar historiemedvetanden. Hur en person brukar historien visar vilken kontextualiseringsförmåga hen har, och på så vis även vilken typ av historiemedvetande hen har.

Delar av tolkningsramen tillämpas sedan i analys av ett avsnitt ur en lärobok i historia utifrån frågorna vilket historiemedvetande vi kan möta i avsnittet samt hur avsnittet kan sägas påverka individers historiemedvetanden. Om historiebruket är det sätt på vilket man kan komma i kontakt med en persons historiemedvetande dras slutsatsen att man genom att göra läroboksanalys endast möjligen kan dra slutsatser om läroboksförfattarens historiemedvetande eftersom det är det enda historiebruk vi kan antas möta i en lärobok. Om man vill kunna uttala sig om hur läromedel påverkar individers historiemedvetanden måste man rimligen gå bortom historieboken för att undersöka läroboksanvändarens historiebruk (och därigenom hans historiemedvetande). Vidare hävdas det att vilken typ av historiemedvetande en person har är avgörande för hur hen tolkar ett visst läromedel: om en person har ett traditionellt historiemedvetande antas det att hen har en liten förmåga att ta till sig läromedel som skulle kunna betraktas som multi-perspektivistiska och multikronologiska. En person som har ett genetiskt historiemedvetande antas även kunna använda i princip vilket läromedel som helst för att kunna utveckla ett historiemedvetande då hen besitter den historiografiska blicken som nämndes ovan.

## **Diskussion**

Eftersom angreppssättet i denna licentiatavhandling är teoretiskt till sin karaktär och utgår från breda frågeställningar, är dess resultat närmast att betrakta som tentativa. Det krävs ytterligare empiriska och teoretiska undersökningar för att, om möjligt, bekräfta de teoretiska positioner som skrivits fram och för att precisera tankegångar som förs. Det som jag hoppas att undersökningen kan tillföra är en breddad syn på historiemedvetandebegreppet på så sätt att det inkorporerar forskning kring historiskt tänkande för att påvisa progression i historiemedvetande, samt att det försök till att skissera en koherent men även mer precis teoretisk modell av historiemedvetandebegreppet som införlivar begreppets centrala element och söker göra det ytterligare praktiskt tillämplbart i forskning kan ge näring åt fortsatta teoretiska undersökningar eller empirisk forskning utifrån historiemedvetandebegreppet.

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