

## **UNDERSTANDING TEMPORALIZATION BY THE ACTIVITY OF HISTORICAL THINKING: DIALOGICAL SELF THEORY AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATION THEORY**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this paper is to articulate the dialogical self theory (DST) and the social representation theory (SRT) so that the conceptual tools required for the analysis of the temporalization process are implemented. This theoretical endeavour are done in terms of a transformative approach to SRT, which examines temporality according to a dialectical approach to social practices. A dialectical approach apprehends the objects of social representation by the processes of anchoring and objectivation, explaining the cognitive activity behind specific group practices (Abric, 1994; Jodelet, 1989). Analysing the objectivation process of time leads to an understanding of the production of different historical narratives in the context of social practices. As such, SRT complies with Moscovici's (1961) perspective, aiming to understand the cognitive activity underlying collective action in the transformation of social reality. This approach stands out of the slipstream of Durkheim (1898), mapping out the cultural, social and political landmarks accounting for the process of reproducing social and institutional structures. According to this view, individual action is pursued under a limited range of possibilities given by structural and historical regularities (Berthelot, 1990). For Moscovici (1961), SRT rather considers the wide array of possibilities allowing the identification of representational structures. In this respect, I refer to the theory of the central core and its peripheral system proposed by Abric (1994) to describe both the foundations and variations of the social representation of historical time. First, I tackle the DST and its conceptual implications regarding teaching and learning history. Second, I address the objectivation of time involved in the process of subjectification with reference to SRT. Finally, these two theories enable me to delineate the nature of the activity involved in historical thinking, behind the process of the production of history

**Keywords:** historical thinking, teaching, learning, social representation theory, dialogical self theory

### **DST and Teaching History**

Dialogical Self Theory (DST) is very much linked to the issue of history education. To my knowledge, only Valsiner (2012) establishes a link with this field, from a perspective of putting history into a narrative form. It is actually surprising that it has not imbued the field of research earlier since the processes that it sheds light on examine the goals and learning process. As posited by this theory, the human condition is marked by dialogue with otherness, which is part of the Self (Hermans, 2012, 2013; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). This presence of otherness is linked to one of

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the fundamental goals of history education that seeks to develop an open mind toward what is different in order to establish a dialogue (Ségal, 1990). According to Wineburg (2001), otherness defines the core of developing historical thinking in pupils, varying between what is strange and what is familiar. Developing this ability to consider viewpoints from different historical actors is generally defined in scientific literature by the concept of historical empathy (Lee, 2005; Lee & Ashby, 2001; Wineburg, 2001). It refers to the ability to take into consideration people's frame of reference (or belief systems) when trying to understand their actions, social practices, and institutions. This concept of historical empathy, from its very conception, is based on the Collingwood principle, which stipulates that "all history is history of mind" (Shemilt, 1984, p. 40). It appeared during the second half of the 1970s in Great Britain to define the ethical foundation of historical thinking.

It satisfies reasonably well the four criteria of the *utushi* concept proposed by Morioka (2008)<sup>1</sup>. First, it supposes that the subject opens up emotionally to the historical experience of others, which is to say, "the transfer of the affect beyond the boundary between self and the other, between the inside and the outside" (p. 156). Second, it involves being open to mimesis, which reminds us of Ricoeur's (1986) "*historical poetic*" in describing the historical thought movement when trying to understand historical actions. While this movement is both interpersonal and intrapsychological, it is set in motion by dialogue between the pupils and the teacher as well as by the reflexive activity of historical thinking. This activity is marked by cognitive reversibility and, in the end, is the cause of cognitive restructuring (VanSledright & Limon, 2006).

As a first approximation, the concept of historical empathy may lead to a curious contradiction: while the DST highlights the presence of otherness at the heart of dialogism and cultural practices, researchers in history education tend to promote it as if it had not existed before we started teaching history. Researchers stress that pupils are generally not disposed to considering the difference, and would tend toward presentism, that is, to apply their own belief system when trying to understand historical figures (Seixas, 1998; Wineburg, 2001). This is in fact not a contradiction, if only on the surface. On the one hand, it is true, as mentioned by teaching specialist and historian Chervel (1998), that school always teaches some of what pupils already know. This is a fundamental characteristic of school culture, at least in France.

On the other hand, some concepts from the DST shed light on this presentism that tends to be immediately associated with a single narrative. This is a narrative that does not make space for otherness and is usually attributed to an absence of historical

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<sup>1</sup> This concept refers to the very co-experience of otherness in a therapeutic situation. Even if the aim of the therapist is not the same of the history teacher or of the historian, this co-experience is a *sine qua non* of the understanding of past's phenomenon.

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thought (Duquette, 2011). The concepts of *I*-position and counter-position show that historical narratives are built on a polyphonic base and activate the “repertoire of the Self” (Hermans, 2013; Raggatt, 2012). Work on historical memory in Quebec<sup>2</sup> confirms this phenomenon. For example, Trépanier (2001) identifies Marxist and nationalist foundations in the historical discourse about Quebec’s sovereignty during the 1995 referendum. These are discordant, generate contradictions, but nevertheless live together inside the same historical narrative. The subject’s position—as a repertoire—can be revealed by analysing the narrative, as Létourneau (2014) did recently regarding history education in Quebec. These studies shed light on the link between identity and historical experience and its objectivation in the form of interpretative narratives. Although these studies do not tackle it, DST can nevertheless clarify the morphology of historical narratives.

The concepts of third position (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010), dialogical triad (Raggatt, 2012), and reflexive positioning (Raggatt, 2007) emphasize the process of teaching and learning history. The third position refers to the cognitive mediation of learning knowledge in a school context (Lenoir, 1991). This third term is there to overcome a contradiction relative to the knowledge already mastered by the pupils and—paradoxically to produce new ones—that will act as vectors for new learning. Why does the Treaty of Utrecht, ratified by France in 1713, indicate the decline of the French colony in North America? Because the colony’s economic structure depended largely on the exploitation of the territory’s natural resources (*furs*). The concept of colonial economy enabled pupils to understand the incomprehensible happening at that time in New France. However, it also raised new contradictions: Why did France give up so easily its colonial territories, if it knew that this would have disastrous economic repercussions? The concept of mercantilism comes into play to account for colonial policy: sacrifice a colony that is not very profitable in order to keep the more lucrative French West Indies. Then how does one explain France’s participation in the United States War of Independence, which cost much more than all of New France’s defence? Again, a concept—liberalism—was necessary to overcome this contradiction and generate a new one, and so on. This is the role of the third position in learning history, that is, to start both a movement of centralization (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010) and decentralization (Raggatt, 2010).

This double movement is activated through dialogical triads powered by the teacher’s and pupils’ participation in analysing the relationship between the concepts, their properties, and their historical events. Thanks to this dialogue, pupils broaden their “repertoire of the Self” and can begin a reflexive process to take a position. While during their childhood these pupils integrated, mainly through socialization within the family, two external (social) positions, school required them thereafter to enter an

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<sup>2</sup> Quebec is one of the ten provinces of Canada. This province is different from the rest of Canada due to its 80% French speaking population. This percentage is 22% across Canada.

individuation process. This process is based on the more or less conscious internal construction of a position repertoire that, through the dialogism between the positions, puts into perspective the cultural and institutional norms and contributes to an emerging singular identity (Raggatt, 2007, 2012). This process puts tension on some positions with respect to themes that have an ethical impact and pushes pupils to take a position on current issues. It is in order to develop an identity, regulated more or less consciously by historical thinking, that the program *Histoire et éducation à la citoyenneté*<sup>3</sup> (Gouvernement du Québec, 2007) requires pupils to take a stand on specific issues, “by taking into consideration the suggestions made by groups” and “showing respect for the diversity of viewpoints” (p. 23; loose translation). This dialogism involved in the pupils’ individuation has been recognized in education, particularly since Cooley (1922), who observed the inseparability of the individual and social levels when trying to understand intellectual activity: “‘society’ and ‘individuals’ do not denote separable phenomena” (p. 37). Although Vygotsky (1978) also recognizes the sociogenetic basis of consciousness, he separates it from the individuation process (Vygotsky, 1929). Regarding history education, the dialogue relative to issues is fundamental to historical agency and historical empathy (Lee, 1984, 2005; Lee & Ashby, 2001; Seixas & Morton, 2012).

These concepts connected to DST delimit the subjectivation enacted by teaching and learning history. However, they do not make it possible to describe the accompanying objectivation process. For this, I address SRT in the next pages.

### **SRT and the Objectivation of History**

As mentioned above and it has been acknowledged since Thucydides (Koselleck, 1997), history is objectivized in the form of narratives. The issue remains the *modus operandi* of these narratives in daily practices, which I address from the perspective of SRT. This theory makes it possible to describe the nature of the activity involved in objectivizing time and that distinguishes well the object from its representation. This distinction is fundamental: historians and teaching specialists admit that history and its symbolic representation do not correspond. As noted by Valsiner (2012): “What happens in history is real—but what is written about it is not” (p. 327). It is therefore necessary to delineate the form and modalities of this objectivation of time within the context of the anthropological experience of culture, and which must be separated from their content. As Geertz (1995) explains: “Anthropology gets the tableau, History gets the drama; Anthropology the forms, History the causes” (p. 253).

Historical narratives are both cognitive and social instruments granted by a community’s collective memory, which is crystallized around a common identity (Jovchelovitch, 2012). These narratives make up a shared and institutionalized

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<sup>3</sup> History and Citizenship Education.

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knowledge that contributes to the reproduction of traditions, practices, and mythologies (Bartlett, 1923) Ginzburg (2003) recognizes the primacy of this shared knowledge relative to the history of historiography, beginning in ancient Greece, from the perspective that belonging to a specific community is a priority:

The simplest of communication presupposes knowledge that is shared, obvious, and raw: this observation [that of Aristotle in which he realizes that “Dorieus won the Olympics,” and that there is no need to specify that he won the crown because everybody knows], apparently made in passing, has a hidden meaning in its implicit allusion to a parallel text by Herodotus. The tacit knowledge to which Aristotle is referring concerns a sense of belonging to a city-state: “everybody” means “all of the Greeks” since Persians are excluded from this knowledge [...]. But Aristotle says more: that discourses analyzed by rhetoric (those that are heard in public places and before tribunals) refer to a specific community and not to men as animals gifted with reason (p. 31; loose translation).

Primacy of culture is a characteristic of SRT, acknowledging the existence of objects of representation, underpinning all opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and theories shared by individuals evolving in the same social environment (Jodelet, 1989; Moscovici, 1984). From the perspective of narrative theory, Jovchelovitch (2012) adds that narratives “are an ever-present human activity and the first form of complex cultural discourse that young children learn and enjoy” (p. 442). Narratives would be the medium for social representations, expressing the process of social thought involved in the double process of producing reality and knowledge of the latter: “From this perspective, narratives constitute the very architecture of human thinking as a modality of thought, a mode of operation of mind and a constructive collective tool for remembering and defining reality” (Jovchelovitch, 2012, p. 443). Furthermore, historical narratives would objectivize both time and polyphasia. Jovchelovitch (2012) notes that this hypothesis is considered by Moscovici (1961) to account for cognitive polyphasia across social representations. In the seventh chapter of his most important book, Moscovici shows that social representations are anchored according to a “constellation” of norms and values:

These norms include or are based on representations; their final organization shows their weight and their constellation in a specific environment. The specificity of values and norms in relation to the image of a particular theory—those which affect psychoanalysis do not concern physics and Marxism simultaneously—and the conversion of this theory’s elements according to their values are a means of anchoring representation in social reality (Moscovici, 1961, pp. 230-231; loose translation).

SRT would therefore make it possible to grasp polyphasia that is sought after by DST by looking at where daily cultural thought and experience meet. To do this, SRT suggests analysing both poles structuring how social representation works: its central core and its peripheral system (Abric, 1994). Both must be distinct because they go together in everyday life, thus hiding the variables involved in personality (Flament & Rouquette, 2003), among which are the interindividual modulations of polyphasia. These modulations rest on opinions, attitudes, and beliefs shaping individual dispositions. These two poles describe the two movements of anchoring and objectivation involved in how social representation works: while anchoring indicates prior movement, to guarantee the normative and operational function of the object, objectivation designates later movement toward materialization of the object in the context of social practices. The central core features stability, whereas the peripheral system lends itself to adaptation. With respect to this scale, social representation comes into play at the level of individual psychology as a cognitive operator. The latter makes it possible to interpret reality, to act, and to adapt to familiar and strange situations through attitudes and behaviours peculiar to the social group one belongs to (Guimelli, 1994).

Jovchelovitch (2012) turns to the collective memory construct to describe this central core of time, and questions the idea of a stable central core described by Abric (1994): “A historical approach debunks history as a source of immobility” (Jovchelovitch, 2012, p. 446). However, Jovchelovitch retains the *thêmata* concept proposed by Moscovici and Vignaux (2001) to identify stable properties (or fundamental structures) in historical narratives: *narratives, plots and stories, dialogical, cognitive polyphasia, thèmes, and metasystem*. I do not believe that this is sufficient regarding the *thêmata* concept, which translates specific ways of thinking across social practices in the *long run* (Moscovici & Vignaux, 2001). While history indeed designates a specific way of thinking, its structuring properties must assume the attributes of stability and homogeneity that are peculiar to the central core of a social representation. Thus I have chosen to keep Abric’s (1994) theory of a central core and peripheral system.

Furthermore, works on historical thinking and how it is taught require me to distinguish two poles, similar to the central core and peripheral system in how historical understanding works: mythological and analogical structures. These structures, which I tackle in the next two sections, have similarities with the distinction proposed by Wertsch (2004) between schematic narrative templates and specific narratives. In the representation of immediate experience, the first defines the organizational models (underlying pattern) ensuring a theoretic function (implicit theories), and the latter points out a set of events in chronological order. Along the same lines, Hartog and Lenclud (1993) also note a “‘virtual’ structure, in potentia” and a “‘real’ structure, in presentia” (p. 35; loose translation). These poles are similar to the levels—manifest and

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latent—identified by Hermans and van Gilst (1991), which create discord between the dialectical movements of abstraction and reification of temporalization. The latent level is defined by the “basic motives” of mythological nature, which underpin the comprehension of social realities. Being sociogenetic, these motives define polyphasia’s radical form, structured around opposed pairs. These come into play both in individual and collective temporalization activities at the manifest level, consisting of putting time into a narrative, expressing in a single more or less coherent structure the present, past, and future.

### **Analogical Pole or *Exempla***

SRT takes into consideration the individual relationship with an object by placing it at the level of the peripheral system, where “*individualized social representations*” (Abric, 1994, p. 28; loose translation) are generated (Elejabarrieta, 1996). Representations constitute for everybody “the symbolic link between the outside environment and our mental world” (Larose, Grenon, Bédard, & Bourque, 2009, p. 71; loose translation). In the field of history education research, I owe Peel (1967*a*, 1967*b*)—and more recently Cariou (2004), Lautier (1997), and Pontecorvo and Girardet (1993)—for placing on the analogical level the foundations of symbolic representation of historical phenomena found in the activity of individual consciousness. Analogy is defined as a “model which is familiar to the learner, whose properties are related causally” (Peel, 1967*b*, p. 178). It enables me to render immediately intelligible a historical event, while it simultaneously describes and explains the event: “[t]he analogy would seem to be a link between the two” (Peel, 1967*b*, p. 180). However, Koselleck (1990) resorts to the *exempla* construct to explain the analogical or comparative trait of a ““succession” of events according to “one before and one after in their various contexts” (p. 121; loose translation). In accordance with the Ciceronian expression *historia magistra vitae est*, which ““teaches life” with “a treasure of acquired experiences” that “instruct,” *exempla* are “specific histories [...] focussed on what is practical” that achieve “exemplary and empirical thought in a new unit” (Koselleck, 1990, p. 40; loose translation). From this perspective, *exempla* can translate how social representation works into its functional dimension of flexible adaptation. *Exempla* renders immediately intelligible an unexpected event by adding it to a succession of “singular histories” expressing an “intrinsic” causality.

Thanks to its structure of flexible adaptation, analogy or *exempla* mediatizes the “present” state of historical understanding since “we only experience the past in the present” (Hartog, 2003, p. 44; loose translation) and etymologically “*praesens*” is ““what is in front of me,” which is to say, ‘eminent, urgent,’ ‘without delay’” (Hartog, 2003, p. 121; loose translation), as it is in fact with any object, which “always remains an *objectum*, that is, which stays ‘in front’” (Lenoir, 1996, p. 239; loose translation). It ensures this symbolic mediation by attributing the present event to a structure of

“history that repeats itself,” and by protecting the underlying causal structure of this attribution, which is of mythological nature (this will be discussed later). In the heat of the moment, analogy makes it possible to quickly understand a present event and enables you to act more or less consciously. The problem is that some analogies often emit a more or less irresistible attraction, which makes conscious regulation vary widely.

To illustrate the role of analogies in social practices, I draw on Neustadt and May (1988). These researchers identify four types of historical analogies: irresistible, captivating, seductive, and familiar. To demonstrate the attraction of an irresistible analogy, they use the example of the Korean War, 1950-1953. In this war, South Korea, supported by the main western allies (United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, Australia, Belgium, Turkey, etc.), opposed North Korea, supported by the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union. Officially, however, this war has not ended yet: only a ceasefire agreement was signed, establishing a demilitarized zone along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

The Korean War is an interesting example because of Washington’s dramatic change of mind based on an “irresistible” analogical structure, from the 1930s, which was very effective for the American president and his advisors as well as for the population of the United States. It is important to remember that before the announcement of this major offensive, President Harry Truman and the National Security Council had already concluded in a 1949 top-secret document that Korea “is of little strategic value to the United States and that commitment to United States use of military force in Korea would be ill-advised” (Neustadt & May, 1988, p. 35). Moreover, agreements had been signed with the Soviets during the 1945 Potsdam Conference, and it was already decided that Japanese soldiers north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel would surrender to the Soviets. The problem, somewhat similarly as the case of Germany, was reunification. A problem Kim Il Sung (North Korea) and Syngman Rhee (South Korea) were aware of; they did not want the partition and wished to reunify Korea, but each according to their own ideology! Nevertheless, when the President of the United States was informed that North Korea had advanced to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, the event suddenly took on great importance. The day after, when he arrived in Washington, the objective of his action was irrevocably set: “By God, I am going to hit them hard” (Neustadt & May, 1988, p. 34). Asked to justify his radical decision, Truman called on his historical experience, that is, “lessons of the 1930s” when democratic societies were said to have been weak and lenient with budding totalitarian regimes. This experience holds three analogies—Manchuria, Ethiopia, and Austria—that, for an entire generation, lead to a world war that ended in the use of an atomic bomb.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Thus Truman, “who persists and signs,” describes in his *Memoires* this analogy that he presented to the Congress to justify the offensive in Korea: “I recalled some earlier instances: Manchuria, Ethiopia,



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When explaining to Congress why he had decided to send in American troops, Truman spoke of the “fateful events of the nineteen-thirties, when aggression unopposed bred more aggression and eventually war.” And this was—then—not such ritual phraseology as by the time of Kennedy’s speech on the missile crisis. Truman was stating an analogy with irresistible force for almost all Americans of that time (Neustadt & May, 1988, p. 36).

Because of its irresistible appeal, this analogy worked very well in the political arena, to the extent that Republicans and Democrats alike approved a series of decisions to mobilize troupes and allocate the necessary resources to create the H-bomb, since the Soviets already had the A-bomb (Neustadt & May, 1988). This example illustrates how the analogical pole of the social representation of history mediatizes the symbolic representation of present events and how it comes into play in regulating actions.

Analogies define the “context” of an event the moment it is perceived, by making it part of a comprehension structure that is immediately mastered by all. Strictly speaking a context is a “model” that makes it possible to establish “links”: “Context, from the Latin *contexere*, means to weave together, to engage in an active process of connecting things in a pattern” (Wineburg, 2001, p. 21). Regarding polyphasia, this process consists of organizing a situation, by giving the possibility of transposing it into a coherent historical narrative, thus inciting social adhesion: “[narratives] are divided, contested processes, whose representational counterpart is *per force* polyphasic and oppositional” (Jovchelovitch, 2012, p. 447). The possibility of structuring one’s understanding of current events therefore opens the door to “a form of manipulation that establishes analogies that have been led astray and places on the shoulders of the present the depth and complexity of the past” (Gellerano, 1994, p. 90; loose translation). Moreover, this manipulation seeks to establish the legitimacy of political and social institutions, and to consolidate a sense of belonging relative to beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes: “The human *psyche* needs narration about history—and the social institutions that need the collaboration and loyalties of the human beings have developed a sophisticated production system for such cultural products” (Valsiner, 2012, p. 328). In this case, the “lessons of the 1930s” set an analogical structure that is not only intelligible to the average person, but chiefly operational: by opposing allied democratic regimes and totalitarian regimes, it marks a “path to follow” for the future. In this sense analogies are the touchstone of historical thinking, expressing the basic

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Austria. I remembered how each time that the democracies failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead. Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted ten, fifteen, and twenty years earlier. I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall, Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores. If the Communists were permitted to force their way into the Republic of Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threats and aggression by stronger Communist neighbours. If this was allowed to go unchallenged, it would mean a third world war, just as similar incidents had brought on the Second World War” (Truman cited in Neustadt & May, 1988, p. 36).

condition of history as knowledge and action: “But how, *a priori*, is a history possible?—Answer: When an augur *creates* and organizes himself the events he announces in advance” (Kant, 2015, pp. 79-80; loose translation).

We know what comes next. Initially assured, the analogy will gradually crumble under the contradictions that it generates in action: it was first a question of protecting an allied state, then of liberating the Communists, and finally of driving back communism (Neustadt & May, 1988). The first military successes quickly led to the “liberation” of Korea for 66% of Americans, similarly as Europe’s liberation, and gradually even a reunification of Korea: “Appetites grew with eating!” (Neustadt & May, 1988, p. 46).<sup>5</sup> It became increasingly difficult to distinguish the analogy from the future that was unfolding, seemingly going vaguely more in the direction of driving back communism than of protecting an allied state. When the situation revealed itself as not conforming to expectations, the analogy, carrying no contradictions up to now, was no longer adapted to understand what was going on and what should be done: neither the increased importance of the number of troupes to counterbalance the Soviet power and China joining the war were realistic, nor resorting to massive and systematic nuclear strikes, similar to the offensive against Japan five years earlier, were morally justified. This is how the government of the United States, literally “overwhelmed by events,” had to accept an unpopular negotiation in favour of a ceasefire along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, that is, *status quo ante bellum* (Neustadt & May, 1988). This example also demonstrates the limits of the analogical operation of a social representation of history, generating contradictions. These contradictions give way to a “fundamental hiatus” constituent of the reflexive tension of history that “rewrites” by using concepts (Koselleck, 1997), that I discuss later. According to Sahlins (1985), the contradictions produced by the objectivation of time through human activities (mytho-praxis) are inherent in the latter:

*Praxis* is, then, a risk to the sense of signs in the culture-as-constituted, precisely as the sense is arbitrary in its capacity as reference. Having its own properties, the world may then prove intractable. It can well defy the concepts that are indexed to it. Man’s symbolic hubris becomes a great gamble played with the empirical realities. The gamble is that referential action, by placing *a priori*

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<sup>5</sup> Thus, confusion settled, at first when military successes allowed people to dream of a complete liberation of Korea, and then when expectations were not lived up to and contradicted what should have happened: “Truman and Acheson did not, however, fix that goal in the minds of the public or even in their own. When Warren Austin, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, made a speech implying that the war aim was reunification of Korea, neither Truman nor Acheson corrected him. Nor did they object publicly when Congressmen, Democrats as well as Republicans, proclaimed that communism would be rolled back. Then, in September, after MacArthur had started to pursue the North Koreans into their homeland, Truman and Acheson, like almost everyone else, let themselves slip into a supposition that, since reunification seemed feasible, it was as good a goal as restoring the *status quo ante*, maybe better” (Neustadt & May, 1988, p. 45).

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concepts in correspondence with external objects, will imply some *unforeseen* effects that cannot be ignored. Besides, as action involves a thinking subject (or subjects), related to the sign in the capacity of agent, the cultural scheme is put in double jeopardy, subjectively as well as objectively: subjectively, by the people's interested uses of signs in their own projects; objectively, as meaning is risked in a cosmos fully capable of contradicting the symbolic systems that are presumed to describe it (p. 149).

However, to be operational analogies must be anchored in the central core of a social representation, which is the myth.

### **Mythological Pole**

The central core accounts for the invariants of the social representation and group practices which are associated to them (Elejabarrieta, 1996; Moscovici & Vignaux, 2001). They establish specific identities (Deschamps, 1996) and “make it possible for people to communicate in the groups they belong to, giving them a common language with which to understand events, people, and other groups” (Elejabarrieta, 1996, p. 144; loose translation). This central core shapes the operational and normative dimensions of social representations, which enable people to immediately grasp reality and regulate their behaviour (Abric, 1994). Thus, this central core's operational dimension ensures a guidance function in situations that have an operational purpose (Moliner, 1995). With the normative dimension, it corresponds to the four functions of social representations identified by Abric (1994): justification, knowledge, identity, and guidance.

According to Moscovici (1961), but also to Jovchelovitch (2012), the sociogenetic basis of social representations is of mythological nature. Myth is also acknowledged as the foundation of historiographical understanding in the field of research in history education (Duquette, 2011) and historiography (Dhoquois, 1991; Egan, 2007). For Kojève (1947, in Freitag, 1973) “myth is a theory, that is, a discursive revelation of reality” (p. 95; loose translation), designating “a matrix of beliefs and illusions without which we cannot think” (Beillerot, 2000, p. 47; loose translation). In the case of history, myth represents “a way that is conventional, but not free: a) to make, to imagine, and structure history; b) to work out, in thought and action, the relationship to time and determine the status of the event; c) to identify and build what, here or there, is either causal or predetermined; d) to represent and produce a social order” (Lenclud, 1991, p. 59; loose translation). This description reflects the point of view of anthropologists, which have commonly referred to myth since Malinowski (1926) to account for social practices. Lévi-Strauss (1958) understands myth as an “absolute object” that introduces into language a temporal system by registering events into a permanent structure. The latter is designed as a “scheme endowed with a permanent efficiency that makes it possible to interpret the current social structure in

France, the antagonisms that are expressed, and to foresee the outlines of future evolution” (Lévi-Strauss, 1958, p. 231; loose translation). According to this anthropologist, myth tells a story that makes sense, a very resilient sense—a kind of “hard core” efficiently resistant to the different ways of telling or interpreting. This sense rests on a bundle of antinomical relationships that enables everybody to explain something according to their viewpoint (Lévi-Strauss, 1958).

To my knowledge, there is no historiographical analysis of these bundles of relationships. Koselleck (1997), who seems to recognize the principle, identifies five bundles based on Heidegger, defining the “temporal structure of any possible history” (p. 185; loose translation). First, relative to the notion of “hastening death,” the pair “can kill” and “should die” raise the issue of “survival” and “implies that organized men can kill one another and that they even believe it is sometimes necessary in order to survive” (Koselleck, 1997, p. 185; loose translation). Second, the pair “friend” and “enemy,” from the previous category, presents “a formal opposition that remains open to all possible contents” (Koselleck, 1997, p. 186; loose translation). Third, the categories of “inside” and “outside” that refer to historical space (e.g., secret and public opinion, democratic and non-democratic regimes). Fourth, generativity is the relationship between youth and elderly, each having its own mythological references, generally defined in terms of breaks. This criterion “implies ever new exclusions, diachronic determinations of inside and outside, and types of generation-specific experiences” (Koselleck, 1997, p. 190; loose translation). Fifth, the pair “master” and “servant” characterizes power relations “between the top and the bottom” inside human societies (Koselleck, 1997, p. 190; loose translation).

Regarding the social representation of history, these bundles of antinomical relationships would define the outlines of the historical understanding of social phenomena. They are compatible with the *thêmata* construct, defining fundamental opposed pairs (Markova, 2003; Moscovici & Vignaux, 2001). In everyday life, these mythical relationships would ensure a function homologous to Bourdieu’s *habitus* (Sahlins, 1985), to erase chance and preserve *a posteriori* the global coherence of a temporal structure: “the final form of cosmic myth is current event” (Sahlins, 1985, p. 58). This temporal structure is cyclical, as opposed to the linear structure of historiography, and its polyphasia is radical in that it defines the foundations of all “repertoire of the Self.” This structuring property of the myth is noted by Egan (2007) who cites Namier (1942):

One would expect people to remember the past and to imagine the future. In fact when discoursing about history they imagine in terms of their own experience, and when trying to gauge the future they cite supposed analogies from the past: still by a double process of repetition, they imagine the past and remember the future (Egan, 2007, p. 65).

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Sahlins (1985) demonstrates the role of the myth with the arrival of the British in Hawaii in 1778. The events that followed their arrival reflect the operational and normative character of the hard core of a social representation of time among indigenous populations. It is known that Hawaiian women gave an especially warm welcome to British sailors, who were taken aback by the women's insistence. These women were, in fact, looking for a Lord and, this being the case, they were reproducing a social order that stripped this event of its exceptional character that "trivialized" it, and *a posteriori* that rendered its temporalization pointless. This event therefore found its analogy in the collective memory: it appears that the memory of foreign travellers was present (Marco Polo?), and it heralded their next arrival. Captain James Cook, integrated (despite himself) into this cosmic order, was attributed divine properties (*Lono*) that would work against him. After the departure of the British and their forced return due to technical problems, Cook is killed and eaten according to local rites: the season of the divinity *Lono* was over, giving place to season of the god of war, *Ku*...

### **Dialogical Triad and Reflexive Positioning: Foundations of Historical Thinking**

This description of the foundations of SR that are historical in nature makes it possible to define the functions of the third position, of the dialogical triad, and of the reflexive positioning in relation to the DST in how the functions operate. Still from the perspective of teaching and learning history, the third position is associated to concept and the dialogical triad of conceptualization. I saw it with the case of the Korean War, comprehension of social realities can always be improved, whereas the analogies mobilized to this effect are not necessarily the most appropriate to describe and explain them. The events that came after the Allies joined the war in Korea have in fact revealed contradictions with respect to the "lessons of the 1930s." How do we overcome or prevent such contradictions? By using concepts, ensuring a cognitive mediation between the subject and his or her immediate experience of reality, it is possible to objectivize time differently: "in Kant's words, as cited by Grimm: There must be judgement because, before perception becomes experience, intuition must be subsumed under a concept" (Koselleck, 1997, p. 203; loose translation). Peel (1965, 1967*b*, 1966, 1971, 1972) underlines the essential role played by learning scientific concepts during adolescence. Regarding historical thinking, this researcher highlights the link between the structure of a concept and the events to explain—that is, the actions (acts) and discourses (utterances) produced by men throughout history—in terms of causes and consequences. This is the "substance of history" expressing its temporal dimension (Peel, 1967*a*).

The concept comes into play in the cognitive process by submitting the social representation of an object to its significative and indicative-denominative functions. According to Vygotsky (1997), these functions establish the comprehension of reality according to a causal structure (significative function) articulated to a group of

descriptive properties. It is where these functions meet that the concept makes it possible to express latent contradictions in the more or less controlled application of historical analogies. Transcending the mythological structure is possible with the significative function of concept because it introduces another causal structure into an activity that makes it possible to explain a group of historical events. This function comes into play during the ontogenetic development of consciousness since “the word is the philosophy of fact; it can be either its mythology or scientific theory” (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 198; loose translation). The scientific concept is ontogenetically of the same nature as the mythical structure—since it is always a causal structure, but it is different because of the control—or mediation—to which it lends itself because of its indicative-denominative function. With respect to everyday life, this function helps overcome stressful events (Egan, 2007) when they go beyond the normative framework of expectations (Lee, 2005). The significative function authorizes the creation of new structures for generalizing (Vygotsky, 1997), which according to Koselleck (1997) is a means to obtaining new historical interpretations:

Whether it is gods or a *fatum* acting above them (Herodotus, Polybius), men’s innate ambition for power (Thucydides, Machiavelli, Lord Acton), fortune (Polybius, Tacitus, Otto of Freising, Machiavelli, Voltaire), or the Christian God to whom are attributed all of these justifications in order to return man’s unchanging finiteness to the divine eternity (Saint Augustine, Saint Bede, Otto of Freising); whether it is forces, ideas, or principles operating over a long time (Herder, Humbolt, Ranke), sustainable powers (J. Burckhardt); whether it is production conditions, permanent features in law, economic or institutional determinations, or even economic movements that escape men’s mastery (Ferguson, Smith, Marx); whether it is modern combinations of the theoretical treatment of data from experiences accumulated over time: from a methodological perspective, the point each time is to interpret primary experiences (provoked by surprising facts and unique innovations) based on long-term causes that made them possible (Koselleck, 1997, p. 219; loose translation).

To illustrate, Saint Augustine’s historical thinking is presented by Hartog (2003) and Koselleck (1990) “as another example of the immense strength of transformation in theological experiences for historical knowledge [...] which enabled the Saint to relativize all earthly events” (Koselleck, 1990, p. 126; loose translation). It is in theological terms (significative function) that Saint Augustine chose to translate his situation of “dispersion” at a time when the Western Roman Empire was going through a change in experience because of the passage of Alaric. His historical narrative was marked by an order of time “embedded in the eternity of God, creator of all time [...] that of a personal God who called people to walk toward him” (Hartog, 2003, pp. 71-72; loose translation).

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However, Koselleck (1990) specifies that, in order to be from a perspective of a “modern historical process,” this causal structure can be neither “implausible” nor uniquely the fruit of “chance” or “luck” because it must be empirically “falsifiable.” This falsification process corresponds to reflexive positioning in which the concept comes into play as the third position to control the relationship between a social reality that is problematic and the facts that determine it empirically. Peel (1967*a*, 1967*b*) outlines the historical thinking accomplished by pupils while they are interacting, mobilizing concepts to understand a specific social reality. This thought process is defined according to the “dynamic balance” operating in the construction of historical explanations: “[t]his sensitivity to systems of dynamic balance, involving the potentiality of action, its cancellation and possible compensation by other action is fundamental in scientific thinking and may be more widespread” (Peel, 1967*a*, p. 162). Acknowledging the thought process as a compensatory dynamic, explanation would act on the theoretical “systems” to resolve a “discrepancy” linked to a subject’s daily social practices: “The most obvious and general action of this kind in adolescence is the need for and the process of explanation. When a person explains a phenomena [sic] he effects an equilibrium” (Peel, 1965, p. 178). Cognitive balance is established through the control of the relationship between description and explanation: “[w]hen a person is capable not only of describing a phenomenon or event but also of explaining it in terms of independent and preexisting concepts, we may say that he understands it” (Peel, 1967*b*, p. 183). Description refers to the empirical determination of events, whereas explanation points out how these events and the causal structure of the concept fit together, transferable in the analysis of reality, that is, “[t]heir invocation as possibilities to account for new experiences” (Peel, 1967*b*, p. 182).

This cognitive balance achieved by historical thinking can be illustrated with the case of the US involvement in Korea. This balance would have consisted of showing historical empathy to foresee other viewpoints in relation to the causes of the conflict and to the possible consequences for the United States. Neustadt and May (1988) emphasize that if Truman and his entourage had carried out an analysis of events with other concepts, they would probably have not used the same analogies and they might even have avoided taking military manoeuvres on such a scale. First, North and South Korea are not distinct nations, contrary to what happened in Manchuria, Ethiopia, and Austria, respectively invaded by Japan, Italy, and Germany. Second, interesting parallels could have been drawn with the concept of civil war, in relation to the Spanish civil war of 1936-1939, and the Rhine crises in 1936 and Czechoslovakia in 1938. The concepts of “civil war” and “coup” would have been more appropriate than “world war” to represent what was taking place in Korea. The points of view of the Korean leaders—who were not contemplating partitioning Korea, despite their diverging ideologies (Syngman Rhee was not in fact a proponent of western democracy)—would have had to be taken into consideration. Finally, security was a sufficiently major issue in 1950 so

that the international community did not consider this an isolated event comparable to Greece in 1946-1947.

Regarding polyphasia, this example demonstrates that the concept enables not only the restructuring of representations through conscious control of the explicative and descriptive functions of analogies, but mainly that it transforms the dispositions to act. The concept makes it possible to detach one's Self from immediate experience and to take into consideration the viewpoint of Others through dialogue with other forms of historical experiences. This experience of otherness is what is needed to "transcend" (*aufheben*) contradictions: "Immediate experience of consciousness (*I am me*) is that of "Self" that becomes "Other" (*I am another*) because "I" does not exist in relation to the "other," thus in the social and historical becoming of man" (Pudelko, 2006, p. 193; loose translation). It is by thinking with concepts that the essence of Self appears—according to Hegel, identity differentiates itself by revealing itself to itself—by acknowledging another point of view and criticism of its "internal premises" so that "this point of view raises itself to a higher level" (Hegel, 1971, in Pudelko, 2006, p. 194; loose translation). In other words, objectivation of history is inseparable from the experience of otherness, considering that "difference, not identity, gives birth to meaning" (Freitag, 1973, p. 35; loose translation).

### Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to shed light on the temporalization process with concepts related to DST and SRT. These theories enabled the description of links between dialogism of the human conscience and objectivation of time in the form of social representations. DST made it possible to locate understanding of social and historical realities relative to the *I*-position, defined by a specific configuration of the "repertoire of the Self." This configuration accounts for social identity, for its characteristics, and for what distinguishes it from other identity possibilities (counter-position). This configuration also gives meaning to historical empathy (making it possible to restructure) and to the objectivation of historical time in the form of narratives, whose foundations were grasped from the perspective of SRT and the theory of a central core and a peripheral system. The latter allowed me to find these foundations in the myth, structured around five opposing pairs, which could be objectivized differently according to the context in the form of analogies. The relationship between the mythological and the analogical poles describes the nature of historical thinking across social practices. In accordance to a transformative approach of SRT, we specified that this relationship can be restructured by using concepts. Coming into play as the third position, concepts can modify how historical thinking works by setting in motion reflexive positioning surrounding the contradictions generated by the application of historical analogies. Moreover these theoretical issues have been illustrated with the Korean War as documented by Neustadt and May (1988).



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While this analysis has brought me a few answers on the objectivation of time in the framework of social practices, it nevertheless raises a number of questions. The first concerns the central core of any possible history, consisting of opposing mythological pairs. Not only have these failed to lead to studies, but I must also seriously consider the hypothesis that historical narratives rest on a fundamental *a*-temporal structure. Is there not here a fundamental aporia? The second question stems from the first: how does the activity between the two poles happen? More specifically, considering that “what exists simultaneously in thought develops successively in language” (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 492; loose translation), how does language mediation work in the double process of historical objectivation and anchoring? Mediation ensured by the concept, as third position, in this double process, should also be analysed. Is mythical structure subsumable? According to Egan (2007), there would be a limit to historical thinking, in that it would not be possible to “exit” the framework of the myth structure: “it seems in some sense inescapable” (p. 66). Finally, from the perspective of learning history, in what way does this double process contribute to developing pupils’ historical thinking and position repertoire? A development that is dependent on language mediation and, as Koselleck (1997) notes, in relation to historiographical innovations, is only possible through “the development of the semantic aspect of language, here as elsewhere, is a fundamental and conclusive process in the development of children’s thought and language” (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 413; loose translation).

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