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Research Article

The Memory-Method-Perspective Model: Three Dimensions to Thinking Historically

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Abstract: Historical thinking is an integrative and reflexive process, yet existing pedagogical frameworks often isolate its components, leading to conceptual fragmentation. This study introduces the Memory-Method-Perspective (MMP) model as a synthesis-oriented alternative to Seixas' influential six-part model. Anchored in the philosophies of Collingwood and contemporary cognitive theories, the MMP model reframes historical thinking into three interactive dimensions: Memory, encompassing substantive and procedural knowledge; Method, which ensures analytical precision and contextual interpretation; and Perspective, fostering ethical and critical reflexivity. The model's triadic structure provides a unified lens through which historical inquiry transcends procedural rigidity to engage with the past as a dynamic interplay of thought, action, and moral reflection. By emphasizing integration and ethical responsibility, the MMP model not only addresses the fragmentation in contemporary historical education but also equips educators and students with tools to combat misinformation and cultivate nuanced historical consciousness. This work invites further dialogue on the philosophical and practical implications of holistic frameworks in history education.

Keywords: historical thinking skills; Memory-Method-Perspective Model; Collingwood; Seixas; cognitive models, critical pedagogy, misinformation resilience

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1. Introduction

Is it arrogant to believe we can fully understand the past? Perhaps. But doesn't this arrogance stem from a deeper need – a primal urge to make sense of the interplay of memory, causation, and meaning? Engaging with history entails a deep reflection on our collective identity and trajectory (Ruin, 2019). How can we know where we are headed if we do not understand how we arrived here? Furthermore, being a historian is inescapable. The only option is whether to be a good one or not (Hughes-Warrington, 1996) This universal fascination and entanglement with the past underpins the frameworks we create to teach and think historically. Yet these frameworks themselves are not neutral; they are tools – imperfect, provisional, and deeply consequential.

Seixas' (2015) Canadian model of historical thinking has been one of the most influential tools in contemporary history education. Through six concepts – historical significance, primary source evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspective-taking, and the ethical dimension – it has guided generations of students and teachers. Its accessibility has enabled widespread adoption in the field. But as with all tools, its utility has limits. Seixas' framework presents six discrete tensions, but its lack of integration often results in conceptual fragmentation, challenging students and educators to synthesize these in isolation.

This paper proposes the Memory-Method-Perspective (MMP) model as a necessary alternative. If the Canadian model fragments historical thinking into isolated tensions, the MMP model reimagines it as an integrated whole. It reduces the six components to three dynamic dimensions: **Memory**, which anchors us in the substantive and procedural aspects of historical knowledge; **Method**, which equips us with tools to analyze, contextualize, and synthesize evidence; and **Perspective**, which challenges us to reflect ethically and critically on our positionality in relation to the past. These dimensions do not merely coexist – they interact, shaping and reshaping one another in a process that mirrors the complexity of

historical inquiry itself.

The aim of this paper is not merely to critique the Canadian model but to provide an alternative. By offering a more parsimonious structure, the MMP model addresses the conceptual redundancies and inefficiencies of its predecessor. By emphasizing interaction over isolation, it offers educators and students a framework that is both philosophically robust and practically intuitive. If history is indeed an audacious attempt to make sense of our existence, let us at least equip ourselves with tools worthy of the task.

In the sections that follow, I will first critique the fragmentation and inefficiencies of Seixas' model, then outline the philosophical underpinnings and structure of the MMP framework. Previous research has the germ of the MMP but none has articulated it adequately so far (Pandan et al., 2023; Gentallan & Pandan, 2024). This paper seeks not only to advance a new approach to historical thinking but also to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about how best to navigate the complexities of the past.

2. Materials and Methods

What is historical thinking if not the haunting specter of our engagement with the past, demanding responsibility, yet offering no final absolution? This study dares to define historical thinking as the entirety of human acts through which individuals weave connections across space and time, acts that are neither cataloged in completeness nor neatly confined to a preordained list. To insist on such a list would be to betray the essence of the historical: a process, not a product. Here, the act of definition itself must mimic history—it must be tentative, evolving, open. This is not an escape from rigor but an invitation into discovery, a challenge to recognize in the fluidity of our encounters with the past a family resemblance among acts, all suffused with the inexorable pull of responsibility.

The philosophical-interpretive approach employed in this study draws its lifeblood from Collingwood's re-enactment theory, wherein history is neither the sterile arrangement of facts nor the passive regurgitation of events. No, history is thought. It is the struggle to inhabit the mind of the historical agent, to share in their agony, their triumph, their reasons made possible by a shared human way of being-in-the world (Retz, 2017). But how is this done? Through a dialectical interplay of **memory**, **method**, and **perspective**, three dimensions that, like history itself, are distinct yet indivisible: (1) **Memory** serves as the repository of substantive and procedural knowledge, the anchor from which historical inquiry departs; (2) **Method** provides the tools to interrogate the past, to synthesize, to contextualize, and to demand more from evidence than it is willing to give; and (3) **Perspective** integrates ethical reflexivity, linking the historian's positionality with the broader societal implications of historical inquiry, forcing the historian to gaze not just into the past but also into the mirror, acknowledging the limitations and biases that come with their place in time.

Developing the Memory-Method-Perspective (MMP) model involved iterative refinement through critique and analysis. It unfolded in three phases.

Formulation of the Model. Perhaps it is easiest to deconstruct before one constructs. So, this study began with a critical engagement with the theoretical underpinnings and practical implications of Seixas' model, a framework that slices historical thinking into six concepts as though history could be so neatly compartmentalized. Against this fragmentation, the MMP model emerged – not as a rejection but as a synthesis, a more parsimonious structure, drawing sustenance from cognitive theories, pedagogical insights, and the quiet strength of Collingwood's principles.

Analytical Application. To speak of a model is one thing; to let it breathe is another. The MMP model was applied to selected historical narratives and pedagogical practices, not to prove its worth but to test its soul. Could it integrate the brute facts of history with the delicate art of ethical reflection? Could it survive the brutal light of application and still stand? The answer, tentative as all answers must be in history, was a cautious yes.

Iterative Refinement. Philosophy, for all its audacity, must bow to the wisdom of dialogue. The model was subjected to the critique of peers, to the test of time, to the scrutiny of literature both ancient and modern. Feedback was not merely endured but sought, and with each iteration, the MMP model inched closer to coherence without forsaking complexity.

The work here presented is not a monument to certainty but a testament to process – a demonstration that the act of thinking historically is itself historical, an engagement not just with the past but with the restless, questioning mind that dares to face it.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Seixas' Model of Historical Thinking

Peter Seixas' six-concept model of historical thinking is structured around the idea of tensions – intrinsic dilemmas that characterize the historian's craft and the teaching of history. These tensions are not arbitrary challenges but arise from the very nature of historical inquiry, reflecting the complexities of how we engage with the past. Far from being a weakness, these tensions are the model's most profound insight, revealing the richness of historical thinking and its capacity to grapple with ambiguity and contradiction.

3.1.1. Historical Significance

The tension of historical significance lies in the historian's need to distill meaning from the infinite, chaotic expanse of the past. How does one determine what is worth remembering, teaching, or writing about? Seixas (2015) points to the contrast between antiquarianism—a fascination with the old for its own sake – and the historian's duty to tie events to a larger, meaningful narrative. This tension is compounded in an age where nationalistic grand narratives have given way to fragmented identities and competing perspectives. The historian must navigate between the universality of shared meanings and the solipsism of personal or localized interests. Yet, the resolution is never complete. The historian is forever suspended between these poles, constructing significance in a way that is contingent, contested, and subject to revision.

The question of historical significance is particularly resonant in debates surrounding the inclusion of pre-Hispanic history in Philippine education. Should greater emphasis be placed on the grandeur of the barangays – independent villages with established social hierarchies, trade networks, and cultural practices – or on the cataclysmic arrival of Ferdinand Magellan in 1521, marking the beginning of European colonization (Scott, 1994)? On one hand, emphasizing the pre-colonial period challenges the colonial narrative that the archipelago's history began with Spanish conquest. On the other hand, the Magellan narrative is central to the larger story of global maritime exploration and colonialism. This tension reflects the historian's task of linking local histories to broader narratives without subsuming one under the other.

3.1.2. Primary Source Evidence

The tension within primary source evidence arises from the disjunction between the past and the present. A document, artifact, or relic is always a product of its time, yet it reaches us severed from its original context, existing in a new temporal and interpretive frame. Seixas (2015) likens this to a "wild animal in a zoo," fundamentally altered by its containment in the historian's present. The historian must reconstruct the original context to make sense of the source, but this reconstruction is mediated by contemporary concerns. Thus, working with evidence is not merely a technical task but a negotiation between the text's pastness, its historical context, and the present questions that give it meaning.

Consider the documents on José Rizal's eventual execution, the Philippines' national hero. To what extent can we trust these documents as evidence of his revolutionary intentions, given their origin in a colonial power determined to suppress dissent (Schumacher, 1978)? The historian must grapple with the context in which these documents were produced – an empire asserting its dominance—while using them to address contemporary questions about Rizal's role in inspiring Philippine nationalism. This tension mirrors Seixas' observation of evidence as a "wild animal in a zoo," torn from its original habitat and transformed by the lens of the present.

3.1.3. Continuity and Change

Historians are often tasked with explaining both the persistence of structures over time and the moments of rupture that defy continuity. Seixas highlights the epistemological tension between the historian's search for patterns and the reality of discontinuity. Are changes in history merely superficial, masking deeper continuities, or do they represent profound transformations? This tension also extends to the relationship between the past and the present, where historical narratives often oscillate between emphasizing the familiar and the alien. The historian's challenge is to navigate these layers of continuity and change without succumbing to the simplicity of linear progression or abrupt disconnection.

The Philippine Revolution of 1896 against Spanish rule exemplifies the tension between continuity and change. While the revolution marked a radical break with the colonial past, many of the elites who led it – the *principalia* – maintained their socio-economic privileges in

the subsequent American and post-independence periods (Simbulan, 2005). This raises a critical question: did the revolution truly transform Philippine society, or did it merely reconfigure the structures of power? The historian's challenge is to account for both the ruptures and the continuities, resisting simplistic narratives that either overstate the revolution's impact or dismiss its significance altogether.

3.1.5. Cause and Consequence

The tension of cause and consequence centers on the historian's attempt to explain how and why events unfold. Seixas frames this as a duality between human agency and structural determinism. History is shaped by the actions of individuals, yet those actions are constrained by inherited conditions and broader social forces. If causation is framed too rigidly within structures, human agency disappears, reducing history to an inevitable march of impersonal forces. Conversely, overemphasizing agency risks romanticizing individuals as wholly autonomous, divorced from the contexts that shaped their decisions. The historian, caught in this tension, must craft explanations that balance freedom and constraint, intention and consequence.

The assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983 illustrates the tension of cause and consequence. His death galvanized the People Power Revolution of 1986, leading to the fall of the Marcos dictatorship. But was this event a result of deliberate choices by political actors, or was it the culmination of systemic forces – widespread corruption, economic decline, and repression – already at play?

While Aquino's assassination provided a focal point for resistance, the historian must also consider the broader structural conditions that made a revolution inevitable. This duality reflects Seixas' emphasis on balancing human agency with structural constraints in understanding historical causation.

3.1.5. Historical Perspective-Taking: Understanding the Other Across Time

Perhaps the most intricate of the tensions, historical perspective-taking, involves the attempt to understand the thoughts, feelings, and worldviews of people from vastly different historical contexts. The difficulty lies in the interplay between continuity—the aspects of human experience that transcend time – and difference – the particularities of a given era. The historian must grapple with the impossibility of fully escaping their own contemporary lens while striving to reconstruct the mental frameworks of the past. This effort requires both imagination and evidence, a balance that resists both the naivety of projecting modern sensibilities onto the past and the nihilism of absolute incomprehensibility.

Understanding the Moro Wars during Spanish colonization requires grappling with the radically different perspectives of the Christianized lowlanders and the Muslim Sultanates of Mindanao (Angeles, 2024). For the Spanish colonizers and their allies, the Moros were "pirates" disrupting trade and imposing a threat to Christianity. For the Moro communities, the wars were acts of resistance against colonial aggression and cultural erasure. To navigate this tension, historians must reconstruct the Moro worldview – rooted in Islamic traditions and sovereignty – while acknowledging the Christianized lowlanders' lens shaped by Spanish influence. This effort resists the simplifications of presentism, revealing the deep cultural and ideological divides of the time.

3.1.6. The Ethical Dimension

The ethical dimension encapsulates the tension between the historian's dual role as a recorder of the past and a moral agent in the present. Seixas identifies three key challenges: judging historical actors by present-day standards, grappling with the legacies of past injustices, and fulfilling memorial obligations to those who have suffered or sacrificed. These challenges demand that the historian reflect on their own positionality and the moral implications of their work. Yet, as with the other tensions, there is no resolution – only the ongoing negotiation between fidelity to the past and responsibility to the present.

The Martial Law period under Ferdinand Marcos (1972–1986) epitomizes the ethical challenges of history. How should we judge Marcos' actions, including the suppression of dissent and widespread corruption, against his regime's claims of development and national security? Moreover, what is our obligation to the victims of human rights abuses during this era? This tension persists in contemporary debates about the historical rehabilitation of Marcos' legacy, particularly in light of his family's return to political power. Was there a need to neutralize the legacy's past with misinformation or does it suffice to acknowledge the non-transferability of guilt from father to son (Guiang, 2022)? Historians must balance moral judgment with an understanding of the conditions that allowed such abuses to occur,

engaging with both the victims' narratives and the broader socio-political context.

Seixas' (2015) model represents a pragmatic attempt to distill historical thinking into discrete, actionable components. Each of the six concepts – historical significance, primary source evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspective-taking, and the ethical dimension – is presented as a unique tension, inviting educators and students alike to wrestle with the complexity of historical inquiry. Its strength lies in its accessibility: educators can isolate a specific concept and teach it as a standalone skill. However, this very accessibility is its limitation. By presenting these concepts in isolation, the model often leaves learners struggling to connect the pieces, resulting in an experience that mirrors the fragmented nature of the historical record itself rather than its cohesive interpretation. Let us now therefore turn to the alternative, the Memory-Method-Perspective Model.

3.2. Major Dimensions of Historical Thinking

Historical thinking defies simple definitions, requiring a nuanced approach. Yet, it beckons us irresistibly, demanding clarity if we are to engage with the past responsibly. It is not merely a set of processes or instincts—it encompasses interconnected dimensions of memory, perspective, and methodology. Ellis and Vincent (2020) may be right to warn us that "any attempt to characterize historical thinking is fraught" (p. 216), yet this challenge is precisely why we must proceed. To retreat from definition would be to concede to incoherence, to abandon the historian's task of meaning-making.

At its core, historical perspective is paradoxical. It is partly static, a lens shaped by time and deeply rooted within the historian's intellectual and emotional being. Yet it is also dynamic, actively mediating between memoryand method, shaping the way the historian interrogates and interprets the past. It is, as Duquette (2015) expresses it, the lens, disposition, or habit of mind through which the past is seen and made meaningful (p. 52). Without perspective, history is either a sterile collection of facts or a chaotic stew of actions without coherence.

Perspective connects with method, another vital element of historical thinking. Method is the engine of history's movement, the inferential processes through which the historian makes sense of the past. It is action and rigor, structure and discipline. And yet, method relies on something even more fundamental: memory. Historical knowledge – or what Collingwood (1946) calls "remembering" – grounds the historian's work, serving as the raw material for inquiry (p. 247). It is static, waiting for activation by perspective and method, and without it, the historian's questions are untethered, drifting in a sea of speculation.

If these three elements – memory, perspective, and method – are the pillars, their unity forms the edifice of historical thinking. To think historically is to engage in a set of acts that are critical, deliberate, and, above all, responsible. Responsibility, here, is not a mere ethical addendum but the distinguishing mark of true historical engagement. Santiago and Dozono (2022) critique the term "critical historical thinking," arguing that criticality is intrinsic to historical thinking itself. Their insight underscores the need for precision: historical thinking is not just about engaging with the past but doing so in a way that honors its complexity and humanity.

This insistence on responsibility also explains why historical thinking must be described as mental acts rather than mere processes. Processes imply pure dynamism, but acts encompass both the stable and the active, the static and the evolving. This conceptualization, borrowed from Aristotelian logic (Piñon, 1995), allows for a richer understanding of how historical thinking unfolds.

Yet no model is complete without interrogating the relationships between its components. Thinking itself, as noted by Pelczer, Singer, and Voica (2014), spans a continuum from static to dynamic. Historical thinking mirrors this duality. Memory, static and propositional, waits for recall and application. Method, dynamic and action-oriented, moves history forward. Perspective, the bridge between these extremes, is both a condition and a commitment, a static lens that dynamically frames action. Paul and Kleinberg (2018) describe perspective aptly as "commitment," capturing its dual nature.

This interplay between the static and the dynamic is what gives historical thinking its power. It is neither frozen in place nor untethered motion; it is the tension between memory, action, and orientation. Rescher (2003) captures this balance, noting that knowledge is a condition one occupies, not an act one performs (p. 16). And yet, memory without method is inert, and method without perspective is blind.

To think historically is to navigate this triad, to inhabit the delicate interplay between what is known, what is questioned, and what is imagined. It is an intellectual and moral act, a

way of honoring the past not as a dead artifact but as a living dialogue. Historical thinking is not just a skill – it is a way of being in the world, a commitment to understanding what has been so that we may better face what is to come.

Historical thinking defies easy containment. It is not a process to be distilled into sterile formulas nor a skill to be mechanized. It is, instead, a set of mental acts—acts that make one's engagement with the past responsible, meaningful, and human. Ellis and Vincent (2020) remark that "any attempt to characterize historical thinking is fraught" (p. 216), and rightly so. To define it risks flattening its essence, yet without definition, we are left adrift. This study dares to face that fraught task, weaving a definition from the strands of literature and the necessity of intellectual rigor.

The first strand is **perspective**, a concept that resides in paradox. Perspective is partly static, enduring within the historian across time, shaping their perception like sedimentary layers beneath a river. Yet it is also dynamic, actively framing how memory and method are applied. Perspective is not a mere viewpoint; it is a nexus – a mediator between what is known and what can be done. It is, as Duquette synthesizes from Seixas (2010), the lens through which the historian sees and interprets (p. 52). Without it, the past remains a blurred tableau, its shapes incoherent.

The second strand is **method**, the engine that animates historical inquiry. It is here that perspective transforms memory into understanding, employing disciplined inferential processes to draw the past into focus. Method is dynamic by nature, a structured movement of thought and action. It is not satisfied with what is given but probes, questions, and reconstructs. And yet, method cannot stand alone. Without perspective to guide it, method is blind, and without knowledge to ground it, method is hollow.

The third strand is **memory**, the raw material of historical thinking. Collingwood (1946) calls this "remembering," the act of bringing the past into the present as a foundation for understanding (p. 247). Memory, formerly called "knowledge" by the author, is static; it waits, patient and inert, until activated by perspective and method. Yet even in its stillness, it is indispensable. For without knowledge, what is there to inquire into? What is there to interpret?

From these three strands – **perspective**, **method**, and **memory** – emerge a definition. Historical thinking, we propose, is the set of mental acts necessary for responsible engagement with the past. Responsibility, here, is no mere adornment but the very criterion that distinguishes historical thinking from its counterfeits. Santiago and Dozono (2022) critique the term "critical historical thinking," arguing that all true historical thinking is inherently critical. Responsibility is what ensures that engagement with the past transcends superficial recollection or ideological manipulation.

Responsibility also requires precision in language. This is why we describe historical thinking as a set of acts, not processes. Processes are purely dynamic; they suggest constant motion, leaving no room for the static foundations upon which historical thinking depends. Acts, on the other hand, encompass both the static and the dynamic, capturing the dual nature of historical thinking as both contemplation and action. This conceptualization draws from Aristotelian logic (Piñon, 1995), which emphasizes the unity of thought and being.

But what are historical thinking skills (HTS)? Callaway (2020) provides a helpful entry point, describing them as "discipline-specific skills" through which historical thinking manifests (p. 1). HTS are the tangible expressions of memory, perspective, and method. They are the ways in which historians engage with the past, reconstructing it not as a dead artifact but as a living dialogue.

This study builds upon these foundations to construct an integrated cognition model of HTS. Drawing on Domínguez-Castillo, Arias-Ferrer, Sánchez-Ibáñez, Egea-Vivancos, García-Crespo, and Miralles-Martínez (2021), Seixas (2015), and others, the model identifies three categories: knowledge (or remembering), perspective, and method. These categories mirror the core elements of historical thinking, providing a coherent framework for analysis. Figure 1 visualizes this synthesis, offering clarity amidst complexity.

Yet even the most elegant framework requires an understanding of the relationships it maps. Thinking itself, as Pelczer, Singer, and Voica (2014) note, spans a continuum from static to dynamic. Historical thinking reflects this duality. **Knowledge** resides at the static extreme; it is already-existent data, waiting for recall. Rescher (2003) observes that "[k]nowing a fact is not something that one does; it is a condition one has come to occupy in relation to information" (p. 16). **Method**, on the other hand, is entirely dynamic – a movement, an action. **Perspective** occupies the middle ground, bridging the static and the dynamic. It is both a condition and a commitment, shaping how knowledge is translated into action. Paul

and Kleinberg (2018) describe it aptly as "commitment," capturing its active and orienting nature.

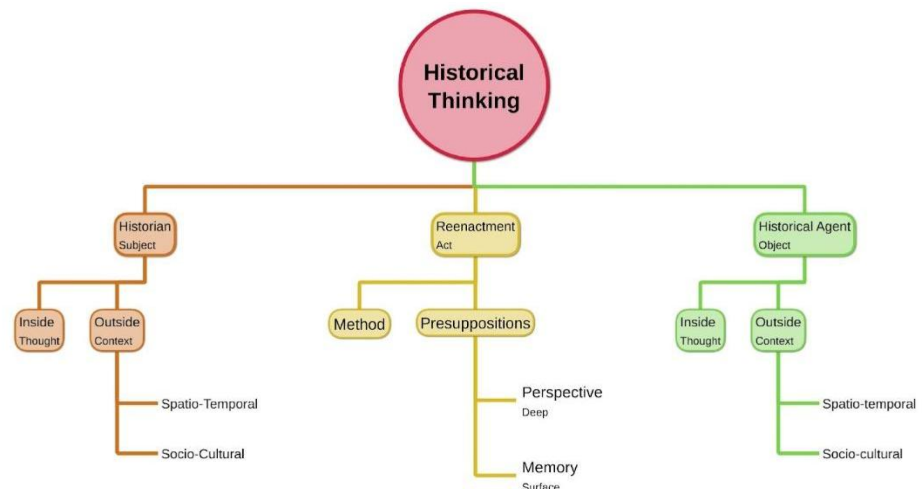

Figure 1. Historical thinking as re-enactment.

This interplay between the static and the dynamic is not a mere technicality; it is the essence of historical thinking. To think historically is to balance memory with action, stability with motion, the given with the imagined. It is a triadic harmony that transforms inert facts into living history.

Historical thinking, then, is not simply an academic exercise. It is an act of responsibility, a way of engaging with the past that honors its complexity and its humanity. It is a moral act, for to engage with the past irresponsibly is to risk perpetuating harm – to ourselves, to others, to truth itself. It is, perhaps, the only way we have of navigating the infinite expanse of time, not as passive observers but as participants in the ongoing dialogue of what it means to be human.

3.3. Memory in Historical Thinking

Memory, in its essence, is the sine qua non of responsible historical thinking – a repository of remembered facts that underpins every attempt to engage with history meaningfully. Knowledge acquired through rigorous investigation may bear a veneer of complexity, but its distinction from memory is, at best, ambiguous. This study employs the broader, more encompassing definition of memory, for it subsumes even those fruits of prolonged inquiry. Memory, as Domínguez-Castillo, Arias-Ferrer, Sánchez-Ibáñez, Egea-Vivancos, García-Crespo, and Miralles-Martínez (2021, p. 33) argue, is the cornerstone of Historical Thinking Skills (HTS), the foundation upon which all other categories of historical engagement rest. Without memory, the edifice of historical thinking collapses; there is nothing to contextualize, analyze, or interpret.

Bain (2015) elucidates this by invoking Collingwood's (1946, p. 247) insight: all historical thinking presupposes a bedrock of knowledge already attained. The empirical findings of Waldis, Hodel, Thünemann, Zülsdorf-Kersting, and Ziegler (2015) reinforce this claim, demonstrating that familiarity with content markedly enhances HTS test performance. Collingwood (1999) crystallizes this point in a striking observation:

> A man who [was] taught history badly [...] when he was at school, and has never worked at it since, may think there is nothing in it except events and dates and places: so that wherever he can find events and dates and places, he will fancy himself in the presence of history. But anyone who has ever worked intelligently at history knows that it is never about mere events, but about actions that express the thoughts of their agents; and that the framework of dates and places is of value to the historian only because, helping to place each action in its context, it helps him to realize what the thoughts of an agent operating in that context must have been like.

History, for Collingwood, is a dialectical process: the historian re-enacts the thoughts of historical agents within "the context of his own knowledge" (p. 215). Here, historical knowledge bifurcates. On one side, it appears static – a catalog of conclusions drawn from prior inquiry. On the other, it embodies dynamism: the would-be conclusions of an ongoing dialectic, the fruits of re-enactment. This tension between stasis and fluidity mirrors

Wineberg's (2018) provocative inversion of Bloom's Taxonomy, where knowledge, paradoxically, crowns the hierarchy as the apex skill built upon all others. In both dimensions, knowledge retains its static quality relative to the methods it informs, achieving immutability only when it attains truth – a pursuit arduous, yet not beyond reach.

This vision of memory and knowledge does not merely describe a cognitive mechanism but delineates a moral imperative: to remember well is to think historically, and to think historically is to fulfill the ethical responsibility of engaging truthfully with our past.

The conceptualization of Figure 2 – an synthesis of insights from VanSledright (2011), Domínguez-Castillo, Arias-Ferrer, Sánchez-Ibáñez, Egea-Vivancos, García-Crespo, and Miralles-Martínez (2021), Fordham (2017), the *K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum: Araling Panlipunan* (Department of Education, 2016), Seixas (2015), Nokes (2022), Elder, Paul, and Gorzycki (2011), Waldis, Hodel, Thünemann, Zülsdorf-Kersting, and Ziegler (2015) – represents more than a mere intellectual collage. It emerges from an enduring dialectic between these scholarly voices, each refracting the light of historical understanding through its unique lens.

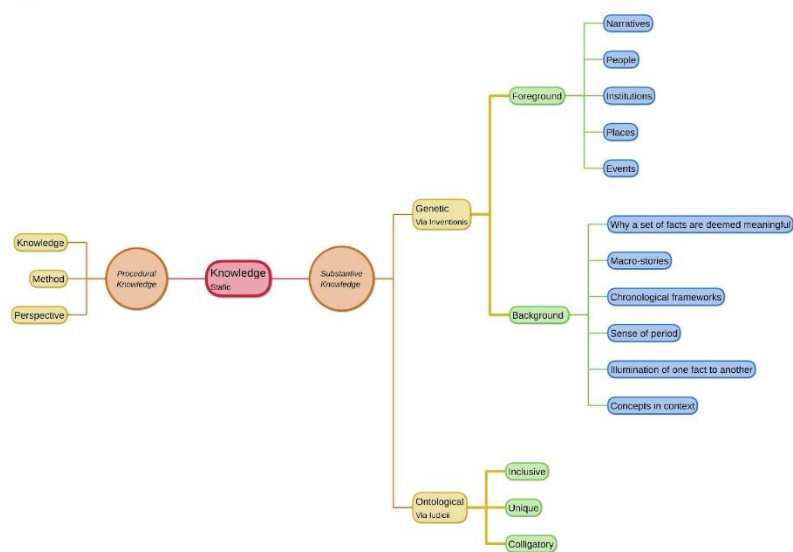

Figure 2. Taxonomy of historical memory.

At its core lies the bifurcation of knowledge into two interdependent realms: *substantive* and *procedural*. This taxonomy, articulated by VanSledright (2011, p. 50) and echoed in kindred terminologies by others, including Domínguez-Castillo, Arias-Ferrer, Sánchez-Ibáñez, Egea-Vivancos, García-Crespo, and Miralles-Martínez (2021), becomes the scaffolding for this exploration. Procedural knowledge, though synonymous in some circles with "methodological knowledge," bears a greater economy of expression – a simplicity that gathers within itself the breadth of historical thinking.

Substantive knowledge stands as the scaffolding of history itself: the raw, unprocessed grain from which the historian draws sustenance. It encompasses "specific facts about history" (Fordham, 2017) and is indispensable for constructing any coherent argument. To know the past, after all, is to be burdened – and blessed – with the material of thought. Fordham's insight here is poignant: without substantive knowledge, argumentation collapses into vacuity.

But what does substantive knowledge *do*? We propose a dual division: *genetic* (via *inventionis*) and *ontological* (via *iudicii*). These divisions signal a deeper metaphysical tension. Genetic categorization reflects the chronology of human discovery – a subjective, temporal order, while ontological categorization mirrors the objective relations intrinsic to the historical reality itself. VanSledright's (2011) distinction between *foreground* and *background* substantive knowledge exemplifies genetic categorization. Foreground knowledge – names, dates, and events – offers a surface-level orientation, the visible skyline of history's cityscape. Background knowledge, by contrast, dwells in the unseen architecture of periods and contemporaneous contexts, subtly shaping the contours of historical thought. Fordham's (2017) taxonomy aligns seamlessly here, its narrative coherence extending from micro-stories to macro-stories, weaving a fabric where each thread finds its place within a larger pattern.

In contrast, Nokes's (2022) categorization of substantive knowledge exemplifies the ontological. Inclusive concepts, like "democracy," span disciplines, shimmering with abstract universality. Unique concepts, such as the "Battle of Lexington," ground history in the particularities of time and place. Colligatory concepts, like the "Roman Empire," impose order, uniting disparate events into coherent wholes. Together, these ontological distinctions offer a kaleidoscopic vision of historical reality.

Procedural knowledge, however, is the how of historical thinking – the compass that guides the historian through the wilderness of facts. Unlike substantive knowledge, which concerns the *what*, procedural knowledge encompasses the meta-concepts of method, as Nokes (2022) aptly terms them. Seixas (2015, p. 5) emphasizes this distinction, reminding us that procedural knowledge does not dwell in the realm of "what history is about" but instead in "how history is done." It is, in this sense, the grammar of the historian's language – a set of rules and structures that renders thought intelligible.

This procedural grasp extends across three dimensions, each corresponding to a key element of historical thinking. The first dimension, procedural knowledge of memory, demands an explicit awareness of the facts necessary for responsible historical engagement. It is a meta-awareness, a knowing of what must be known. The second, procedural knowledge of method, pertains to the skills of historical inquiry, such as discerning primary from secondary sources – a competency enshrined in the *K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum: Araling Panlipunan* (Department of Education, 2016, p. 7). The third, procedural knowledge of perspective, encompasses the orientations and habits required to engage with the past ethically and critically.

This trinity of procedural knowledge is indispensable because, as Nokes (2022, p. 12) observes, understanding the nature of historical inquiry is often a prerequisite for engaging in it effectively. Without such understanding, historical thinking devolves into mere imitation. Elder, Paul, and Gorzycki (2011) reinforce this, urging historians and instructors alike to be "explicitly aware of, and deliberately target," the cognitive processes underlying historical thought.

Having thus mapped the contours of historical memory, the discourse now turns to historical method, where these theoretical distinctions find their application.

3.4. Method in Historical Thinking

This discourse now pivots to the second pillar of HTS: **Method** – that vital architecture of actions and processes through which the historian ensures his engagement with history achieves intellectual integrity and moral responsibility (figure 3). To dissect the anatomy of **Method** in this inquiry, we adopt the framework articulated in *AP Historical Thinking Skills* (2015, p. 11), comprising four cardinal elements: *Analyzing Historical Sources and Evidence, Making Historical Connections, Chronological Reasoning, and Creating and Supporting a Historical Argument*. But let us not misstep into a reductionist trap; one essential cornerstone, glaring in its absence, must be appended – basic information literacy, the unsung scaffolding of all responsible historical method.

A closer exploration of each component invites a renewed appreciation of their distinctive roles and intricate interplay. These are not mere procedural checkboxes, but dynamic processes, each pulsating with intellectual rigor and ethical accountability, challenging the historian not merely to recount the past, but to grapple with its complexities, tensions, and silences. Thus, we begin to discern **Method** not as sterile protocol but as an act of existential confrontation – a deliberate, meticulous dance with the shadows of time and truth.

This study's categorization draws from a diverse and esteemed body of literature encompassing scholars, historical frameworks, and curricula. Such a breadth of sources underscores the interdisciplinarity and richness of historical thinking as both a theoretical construct and a pedagogical practice.

In its most constrained operational sense, basic information literacy refers to the capacity to locate and access relevant information efficiently. For instance, the K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum articulates this skill as the ability to use technological tools to source references, encapsulating a crucial modern competency (Department of Education, 2016, p. 7). Meanwhile, the skill of source criticism, or "sourcing," involves evaluating the reliability of historical evidence. This ability is reflected in competencies from the same curriculum, such as identifying sources and critically engaging with texts to understand their historical context, the author's motivations, and perspectives (Department of Education, 2016, p. 7). Sourcing involves examining the incompleteness and biases of sources to assess their

trustworthiness concerning a research question. Primary sources – documents or artifacts created by direct participants or eyewitnesses of events, are distinct from secondary sources, which lack this firsthand provenance.

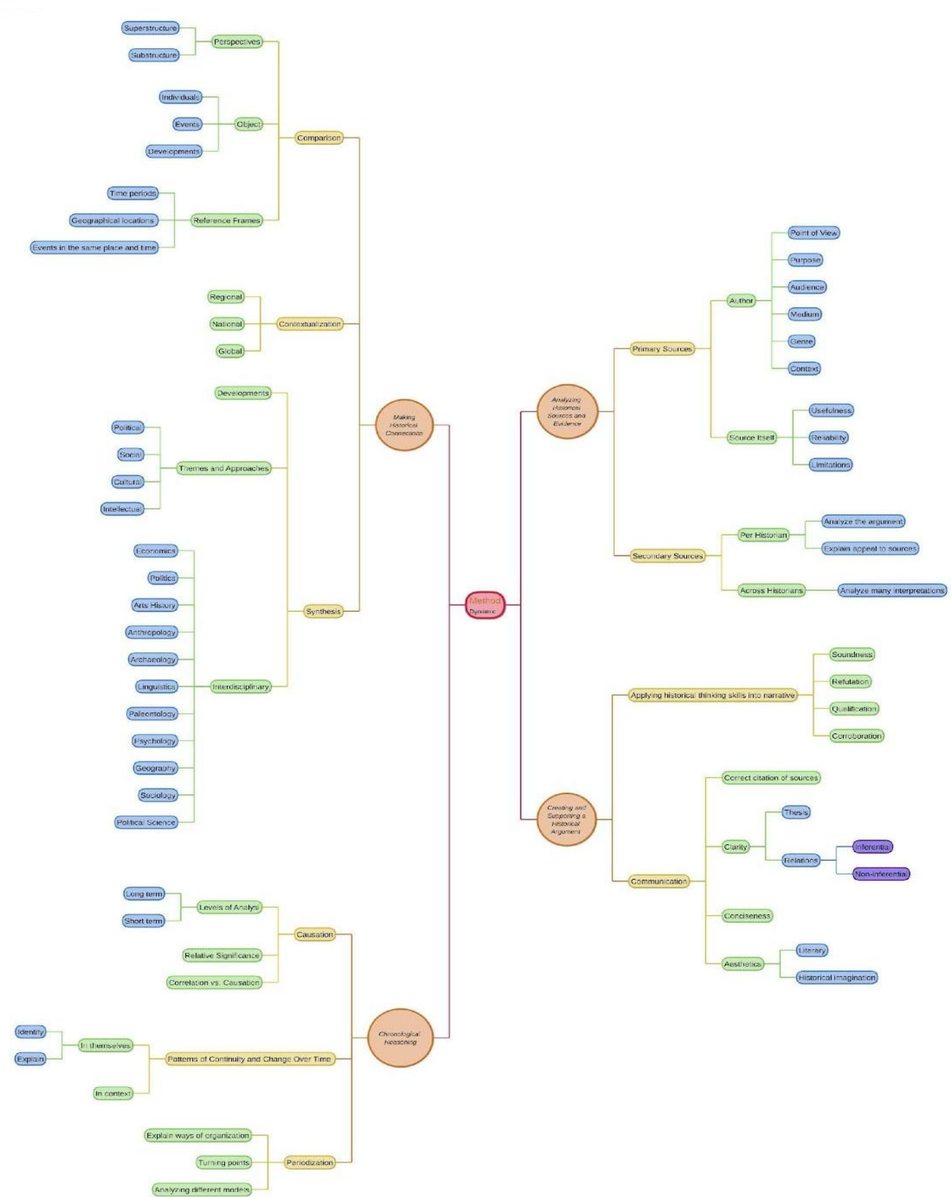

Figure 3. An integrated taxonomy of historical method.

The researchers chose to use "source" rather than "document". This shift acknowledges Nokes' (2022) observation that historical evidence encompasses a spectrum far broader than documents, including artifacts, ecofacts, and other material evidence. This comprehensive view aligns with the dynamic and multifaceted nature of historical inquiry.

The analysis of primary sources, as described in the *K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum* (Department of Education, 2016), entails extracting data from firsthand accounts, emphasizing both internal and external criticism. Internal criticism examines the credibility of the author, considering elements such as perspective, purpose, audience, and historical context (Nokes, 2022). External criticism, by contrast, scrutinizes the authenticity and physical reliability of the source itself. These dual facets enable historians to engage deeply with primary materials, a process foundational to constructing sound historical arguments.

Secondary source analysis requires a similarly rigorous evaluation of claims and the evidence supporting them. Historians must critique interpretations within their broader historiographical context, as well as the effectiveness of arguments. This analytical practice fosters a nuanced understanding of diverse perspectives and encourages scholars to engage

critically with competing narratives.

Making historical connections emerges as a pivotal skill in this framework, encompassing comparison, contextualization, and synthesis. Comparison involves identifying and evaluating similarities and differences between historical phenomena. Additionally, insights into the interplay between superstructures and substructures provide tools for uncovering deeper ideological and sociocultural underpinnings.

Contextualization situates historical events within broader regional, national, or global milieus, enabling historians to draw conclusions about their significance. Christian (2018) extends this practice to universal contexts, emphasizing the interconnectedness of historical phenomena. Synthesis, akin to summarization but broader in scope, involves integrating insights from various disciplines. The K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum captures this capacity in competencies such as summarizing key facts and ideas (Department of Education, 2016, p. 7). Historians thus draw from economics, geography, sociology, and other fields, exemplifying the inherent interdisciplinarity of historical thinking. The synthesis of disciplinary perspectives enriches historical inquiry, aligning with Barton's (2017) observation that history shares substantial conceptual overlap with social sciences. Christian (2018) further underscores the dangers of hyper-specialization, advocating for a return to integrated, multifaceted approaches to knowledge.

Chronological reasoning, the third methodological category, includes causation, patterns of continuity and change, and periodization. Causation entails discerning the significance of events and distinguishing correlation from causation. Patterns of continuity and change require careful attention to nuance, recognizing the historical contingencies shaping human behavior. Periodization, meanwhile, involves organizing timelines, identifying turning points, and crafting coherent historical narratives.

Each of these skills contributes to a holistic understanding of history, reflecting the intellectual rigor and imaginative depth necessary for the discipline. By interweaving theoretical insights with practical competencies, this study advances a framework for historical thinking that is both comprehensive and adaptable, grounded in a rich tradition of scholarship and pedagogy.

3.5. Perspective in Historical Thinking

The third pillar of historical thinking skills, "perspective," is perhaps the most elusive, yet it is indispensable (Salinas et al., 2012). It gestures toward the sum of orientations, habits, and stances that render one's engagement with the past responsible (figure 4). To include this category is to concede a profound truth: that historians cannot help but "begin with a particular historical point of view, based on their assumptions and the ways in which they conceptualize the issues" (Elder et al., 2011). This interplay of predispositions and deliberate habits is what makes history, despite its scientific rigor, irrevocably an art.

A historian worth their salt must carry within them an epistemological compass, an axiological sensitivity, and an ontological humility. These orientations, distilled from luminaries like Elder, Paul, and Gorzycki (2011), Nokes (2022), and the K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum (Department of Education, 2016), are not mere academic abstractions but the very essence of historical inquiry. Indeed, they are echoed in the works of Seixas (2015), Duquette (2015), and Lewis (1966).

Axiology within the historian's craft concerns the ethics and values that permeate historical engagement. To write history is not merely to document—it is to wrestle with the moral weight of narratives, to discern justice in the shadows of bygone eras, and to risk the vulnerability of judgment. The values of a historian invariably shape their choice of questions, the weight they give to evidence, and the silences they permit to echo in their prose.

Epistemology, by contrast, wrestles with knowledge itself: its origins, its limits, and its certainties. A good historian, like Paul and Kleinberg (2018), understands that to seek the past is to engage in a kind of paradox. For while the past is unchangeable, our access to it is always partial and mediated. As Murphey (1994) and Carroll (1996) remind us, historical knowledge is a mosaic crafted from fragmentary evidence, patterns discerned where none seem obvious, and truths cautiously inferred from the fog of time.

Finally, there is the ontological—concerned not with what we know, but what is. It asks: what is the nature of the realities history seeks to describe? VanSledright (2011) and Innset (2022) have remarked on the historian's perpetual confrontation with the ephemeral: nations that crumble, ideas that evolve, and lives that vanish into memory. To embrace historical ontology is to embrace transience, to see both the futility and the necessity of reconstructing worlds that no longer are.

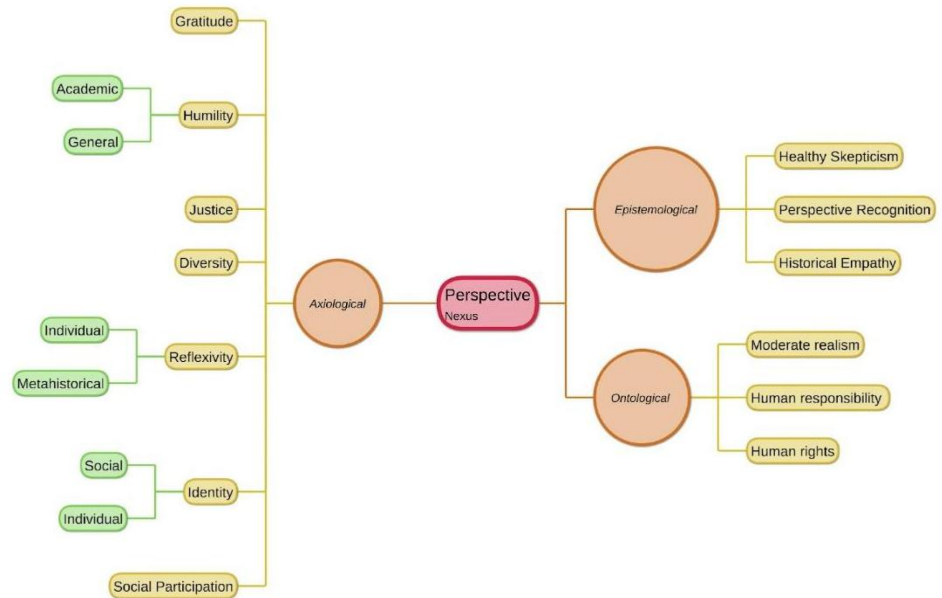

Figure 4. An integrated taxonomy of historical perspective.

Together, these perspectives do not merely shape history—they are history. They are the currents beneath the surface, pulling each generation of historians to confront their own humanity in the act of understanding those who came before. To ponder the past without perspective is to read a shadow of a text, devoid of color or dimension. With it, however, the past comes alive – not as a static tableau but as a living, breathing complexity, charged with the fullness of its tragedies, triumphs, and irreducible ambiguities. This breathing forth of life is precisely what good history teachers are able to do (Agoncillo, 1997)

If history is an art, it is one painted in perspective, where every stroke reveals not only what is known but the quiet humility of knowing it could always be otherwise.

The historian's epistemology must breathe skepticism, embrace the nuance of perspective, and ache with empathy for the past. *Healthy skepticism*, as VanSledright (2011) explains, is not mere doubt but a disciplined stance. It shuns the dogmatic embrace of *naïve realism*, recoils from the paralyzing excess of *naïve relativism*, and steadies itself in the dynamic tension of *critical pragmatism*. This stance acknowledges the variability of historical accounts yet insists they be measured by rigorous criteria – those tools of the trade that enable one to sift through the sediment of evidence, situating fragments within their historical context (VanSledright, 2011, p. 66). Such skepticism defends history against the disorienting whirlwinds of extreme relativism, which Christian (2018) aptly notes it resists, for history dares to balance on the knife's edge of the credible and the contestable (p. 12).

Yet skepticism alone does not suffice. The historian must engage in *perspective recognition* – an intellectual ascent that seeks to inhabit another's mindscape. Nokes (2022) encourages this leap, urging us to trace the contours of the informant's viewpoint, even when unfamiliar or repugnant. The *K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum: Araling Panlipunan* (Department of Education, 2016) captures this in its plea for awareness of bygone values and mores, fostering a consciousness of how they differ from or converge with the present (p. 7). Collingwood (1998) envisioned this as a metaphysical labor, one tasked with unearthing the "absolute presuppositions" embedded in historical thought – a process of reconstructive empathy that peels back the layers of human striving and folly (p. 47). It is here, in the collision of recognition and reconstruction, that historical empathy is born – a way of being with the past so intimately that it compels action in the present.

This triad – *skepticism, recognition, empathy* – coalesces into a foundational skill of *historical perspective-taking*: the cognitive disentanglement of the present from the past. Seixas (2015) names this the antidote to *presentism*, that insidious fallacy of imposing modern sensibilities on ancient realities. Beware, however, the equivocation with the metaphysical presentism of time's ontology – a divergence that Koons (2022) clarifies with precision.

Epistemology alone, however, cannot carry the weight of historical thinking. It must be

undergirded by an axiological framework that prizes virtues such as gratitude, humility, and justice. Kidd (2014) extols gratitude as the antithesis of Lewis's (1966) "chronological snobbery" – the haughty dismissal of the past as primitive or irrelevant (p. 207). Collingwood (1994), in an indictment of Enlightenment hubris, calls for a reckoning with the concrete actuality of human effort, commingled as it is with both light and shadow (p. 102). Gratitude, then, is not mere sentiment but an intellectual discipline that tempers the historian's hubris.

Humility – both academic and existential – is another indispensable virtue. It is the recognition, as Nokes (2022) observes, that even our most esteemed efforts are corrigible in the face of better evidence (p. 11). It is the acknowledgment, as Church and Samuelson (2017) argue, of biases both in the archive and in ourselves. It is the clarity of mind that, as Wineburg (2018) notes, admits that no historian can reconstruct every era or every region in exhaustive detail. Without humility, the pursuit of history devolves into hubris; with it, it becomes a collaborative art.

And what of justice? This virtue demands more than impartiality; it calls for moral engagement. The *K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum: Araling Panlipunan* (Department of Education, 2016) identifies competencies like defending rights and fulfilling responsibilities. Seixas (2015) gestures toward its ethical dimension – the rendering of moral judgment on historical actions, alongside appropriate recompense or remembrance. Justice, in this sense, is not merely retrospective but anticipatory, shaping how we engage with the ongoing narratives of our shared humanity.

Amidst this axiological landscape lies the value for diversity, a commitment to tolerance and the enrichment of culture through difference. This value repudiates the atrocities of intolerance – epitomized by the Holocaust's brutal erasure of those deemed "other." Proper historical perspective insists that divergence need not incite division; rather, it can be a wellspring of cultural vitality.

Yet, historical thinking demands more than virtue. It calls for *reflexivity* – both individual and metahistorical. Peterson (2002) warns that without self-knowledge, the solemn vow of "never again" remains hollow, for the moral catastrophes of history were authored by people alarmingly like ourselves. To remember, we must first understand, and to understand, we must confront our own capacity for evil. This individual reflexivity, akin to metacognition, extends to metahistorical reflexivity: the interrogation of the very methodologies and assumptions that scaffold our historical inquiries (Innset, 2022).

Finally, history invites us into an identity dialogue – social and individual. The *K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum: Araling Panlipunan* (Department of Education, 2016) emphasizes national identity, yet Christian (2018) and Harari (2014) beckon us toward a global consciousness, for our species now wrestles with challenges that transcend borders. Harari (2016) cautions, however, against hubristic anthropocentrism, asking whether we, as "dissatisfied and irresponsible gods," truly know what we want. History, then, becomes not merely an academic exercise but an existential imperative, a means of grounding identity amidst the chaos of modernity.

Ontologically, the historian must commit to a moderate realism, the ontological concomitant of what Nokes (2022) calls the criterialist epistemic stance. This commitment includes the affirmation of a knowable reality, the existence of other minds, and the causal intelligibility of human action (Murphy, 1994). Yet it also requires openness to possibilities that defy reductionism, lest history devolve into a dogmatic science devoid of wonder (Carroll, 1996).

In the end, historical thinking is not just an epistemic or axiological exercise; it is an ontological stance, a way of being in the world that seeks truth—not as an abstract ideal but as a lived commitment. For Pascal, the love of truth is the antidote to an age obscured by lies, and perhaps, it is this love that marks the historian's soul (Kreeft, 2015).

5. Conclusions

The research offers a sharp contrast between the established model of Peter Seixas and the proposed Memory-Method-Perspective (MMP) framework. On one side lies Seixas' six-concept model, deeply rooted in procedural clarity, but not without its conceptual fragmentation. On the other, the MMP model aspires to overcome this fragmentation through synthesis, offering an approach both broader and more demanding.

Seixas' model represents a pragmatic attempt to distill historical thinking into discrete, actionable components. Each of the six concepts – historical significance, primary source evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspective-taking, and

the ethical dimension – is presented as a unique tension, inviting educators and students alike to wrestle with the complexity of historical inquiry. Its strength lies in its accessibility: educators can isolate a specific concept and teach it as a standalone skill. However, this very accessibility is its limitation. By presenting these concepts in isolation, the model often leaves learners struggling to connect the pieces, resulting in an experience that mirrors the fragmented nature of the historical record itself rather than its cohesive interpretation.

In contrast, the MMP model reimagines historical thinking as a dialectical process. Memory, Method, and Perspective interact dynamically, creating a framework where historical inquiry is neither a static recollection of facts nor a mechanical application of techniques. Instead, it becomes a living, reflexive engagement with the past. The power of the MMP model lies in its integration: Memory anchors us in substantive and procedural knowledge; Method equips us with analytical tools to contextualize and synthesize; and Perspective compels us to engage ethically and critically with both the past and our positionality within it. However, this model's philosophical depth requires educators and students to possess a certain intellectual maturity, one not easily cultivated within the constraints of standardized curricula.

The divergence between these models is perhaps most evident in their focus. Seixas' approach emphasizes procedural clarity, encouraging students to approach history as a series of manageable problems. By contrast, the MMP model promotes holistic engagement, aligning with the complexities of historical inquiry. This is not merely a philosophical stance but an ethical one: by integrating perspective as a core dimension, the MMP model demands that learners reflect on their positionality and biases, challenging the neutral stance often implied in procedural methodologies.

Yet, neither model is without critique. The Seixas model, for all its practical utility, risks reducing historical thinking to a checklist of isolated skills, potentially leaving students ill-equipped to navigate the nuanced interplay between past and present. Meanwhile, the MMP model, though theoretically robust, requires significant investment in training and resources, making it less accessible in many educational contexts.

Ultimately, the choice between these models reflects a deeper tension in the philosophy of history education: is historical thinking best taught as a set of discrete skills or as a cohesive, integrative process? The table underscores this tension, inviting us to consider whether we ought to prioritize accessibility or depth, procedural clarity or philosophical coherence. What remains clear is that both models, in their own ways, challenge us to wrestle with the past not as a distant archive but as an ever-present dialogue, demanding responsibility and meaning.

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