

CANADIAN ISSUES THÈMES CANADIENS

Winter / Hiver 2010

DiveRses HiStoires Canadiennes

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Canada's DiveRSe HiStORieS

Rose Fine-Meyer
Theodore Christou
Alan Sears
Christian Laville
Phil Ryan
Carla L. Peck
Rosemary Sadlier
Stéphane Lévesque
Hector Mackenzie
Margaret Wells
Leora Schaefer
Janet Markus



Includes a special edition of the Canadian Journal for Social Research (Vol. 3 No. 2 2010: Measuring Racism) - joint issue with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation's DIRECTIONS
Comprend une édition spéciale de la Revue canadienne de recherche sociale (Vol.3, numéro 2, 2010 : Quantifier le racisme) et de DIRECTIONS, revues publiées conjointement avec la Fondation canadienne des relations raciales



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INTRODUCTION: TEACHING HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY IN ONTARIO

Jan Haskings-Winner, President OHASSTA, Instructional Leader (History and Contemporary Studies), Toronto District School Board.

OHASSTA is pleased to partner with the Association for Canadian Studies to produce a special edition of the *Canadian Issues* publication on the theme of “Canada’s Diverse Histories”. This publication provides insights into current debates over how best to deal with issues of diversity in constructing the Canadian historic narrative. It seeks to address some key questions around diversity and history teaching.

Does historical content matter when you teach history? Whose history is and should be taught in high schools, given that it may be some students’ last experience with the subject in a curriculum?

The theme “what is history” offered by this edition’s contributing authors speaks to the important ongoing debate about national histories. Exploring the notion that history is not one story, but many, and that our own identities may play a role in the way we construct history, provides interesting insight into the discipline.

How well are our teachers prepared to address issues of diversity in the history curriculum? Most teachers who teach high school history in Ontario have completed at least two history courses in university. Pre-requisites for teaching history range from completing a minimum of two courses at the University of Toronto (three courses is the current requirement), to five courses at several other Ontario universities. There is considerable focus on content and story, with the expectation that the undergrad will know how to analyze and make connections. However, the challenge most teachers face in their 21st century classrooms is the fact that the lecture model does not produce the desired degree of understanding of history, culture, or historical context among the students.

One way to engage high school history students is to use narratives that students can easily identify with and then have the student express what they mean personally. Although Canada’s history of conflict and engagement in war is usually well covered – one might say overly covered – several other important stories simply make it into the classroom. The more that alternative and diverse narratives

are introduced into the classrooms, the more likely the students are to become engaged in their own history. There is no reason for teachers *not* to include the histories of women’s experiences, workers’ experiences or immigrant stories. As Carla Peck has noted in her essay, “Studying the relationship between ethnic identity and the construction of historical narratives can help students, teachers and researchers understand some of the reasons why people have different interpretations of the past.”

Over the past year at the same time that I have been teaching at the University of Toronto, I have had the opportunity to visit several of the province’s history classrooms. I observed that the province’s compulsory grade 10 history course, whose lesson plan begins in 1914 results in class that continue to study World War I well into the semester (Ontario, Canadian and World Studies 2005, p.45). As Phil Ryan noted in this edition of *Canadian Issues*, “Beware Shared memory”, “Canada’s military history is an effort to bring together two solitudes that we cannot bridge any other way. War and memory are as closely linked today as they ever were... the apotheosis of Vimy Ridge, which has morphed from a generally forgotten battle to represent “the birth of a nation” (Ryan).

A second approach to engaging the high school student in history is by creating opportunities that encourage students to demonstrate their learning in a diversity of performance tasks. These can include the traditional essay or test, but can further extend to creative ventures that incorporate drama, art, and technology, effectively allowing them to “do” history. “A classroom filled with student posters may suggest that students have engaged in meaningful learning. But it is the process of student learning and the cognitive engagement rather than the resulting product – that distinguishes projects from busywork.” (Larmer John and Mergendoller, 2010).

The process of “doing” History does not require the History teacher to be an expert, but rather to co-learn with the students as they investigate and explore big issues, not topics. We are now beginning to recognize the

complexity of culture, and the way events have shaped different stakeholders, groups and individuals.

Ideally, how much do history teachers know about the context and current debates around Canada and history? What level of knowledge should we expect from them? These are all questions without clear-cut answers. As Stéphane Lévesque notes, “Developing historical literacy necessitates a particular mode of engaging with history – both in terms of evidence and narrative. When students are challenged to think like historians they must tackle a series of essential questions that cannot be answered with classroom texts and cross-curricular literacy skills” (Lévesque).

Historical literacy and historical thinking are both required in our classrooms today. Developing these skills requires a collaborative effort on the part of both teacher and student. In their reflections on citizenship and history, Christou and Sears explore the question of which specific skills are needed. “Notable was the depiction of history in education in terms of dispositions and outlooks rather than skills or merely content. These dispositions included a detachment from immediate pressures, a willingness to search for comparisons and analogies, a readiness to subject emotions to reason, consideration of multiple perspectives in issues, and weighing the forces of continuity or change. The importance of these outlooks for educators committed to the development of an active and critical approach to pedagogy is in no small part because the concept of mindedness is used in appealing to habits of mind and human life as opposed to retention of data or dexterity with particular skills.” (Christou and Sears)

Another way to engage students is to incorporate the identities, values, and experiences of reflecting their diverse backgrounds. The study of history requires more than a desire to engage students in the process of looking at the past. Students’ curiosity and involvement will increase if they see a reason to know and understand more about historical events, people, and communities. As Fine-Meyer identifies, “The experiences of Canadian women were absent from nation building narratives that embraced the achievements of elite and public men. Political and military leaders, lawmakers and industrial giants helped shape the national polity.” If students do not recognize themselves in the history being taught, they will not care. This is supported by Sadlier’s question, which asks, “how is it that we have managed to further a part of a Canadian narrative that has managed to exclude Canadians who were here from the earliest times?”

For her part, Markus provides insight into the ways in which artists are responding to the question of “whose story,” by retelling historical narratives in new forms. “Archival footage, stories about lived history and artefacts carefully preserved, provide artists with the information

and messages to create symbolic testimony. The result is art work that provides visual evidence of evolving identities and relationships with a Canadian experience and culture.” History is not static, but a lived experience of the present and the past.

In determining what the next steps history teachers might take to strengthening their approach to teaching history, Mackenzie draws on the example of confronting issues of historic redress. He suggests, “Perhaps the best way to examine and evaluate the issues surrounding apologies and redress in the classroom would be to borrow a technique employed in the study of international relations, among other disciplines – the “case study” method. That would prompt questions about the justification or evidence employed for each claim, as well as consideration of the context and the content of the original decision-making, including purposes and anticipated results, as well as the validity and likely impact of remedial action. It could also demonstrate that these questions are complicated and that consequently the answers are not simple.”

So, how do we help our students become engaged with History and encourage them to make connections between the past and present? Leora Schaefer and Margaret Wells recommend that, “students think about the question of legacy and how history is preserved, interpreted and taught to future generations. In the latter parts of their study, Facing History classes often examine the role of monuments and memorials in a society. “They are the signposts of past wrongs we don’t want to repeat in the next generation,” wrote one student about the role of monuments in promoting historical memory. “We need to know what happened in the past to clearly understand what we face in the future.” Through this interaction between past and present, students can derive meaning and become active, informed, and engaged thinkers.

Teaching History in the 21st century means that students are taught the critical and historical thinking skills that will allow them to make historic knowledge and learning relevant to their future endeavours. Students need to be encouraged to explore the content that engages them and enables them to develop a critical perspective when it comes to the past and future. Historians from schools, faculties of education, and universities can work together to make History in the 21st century meaningful by incorporating the multitude of perspectives and voices that shape our stories.

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INTRODUCTION : L'ENSEIGNEMENT DE L'HISTOIRE AU SECONDAIRE EN ONTARIO

Jan Haskings-Winner, Présidente de l'OHASSTA, Leader en enseignement (Histoire et Études contemporaines), Conseil scolaire du district de Toronto.

OHASSTA est heureuse de se joindre à l'AEC pour son congrès annuel cette année. Nous sommes heureux de pouvoir vous présenter un grand nombre de conférenciers, de présentateurs et de récipiendaires de prix dans notre programme, ainsi que la présence d'enseignants provenant de partout au pays. L'opportunité de rencontrer, d'apprendre, de discuter et de créer une connaissance de notre histoire dans toute sa diversité est bien importante de nos jours.

Est-ce que le contenu compte lorsqu'on enseigne l'histoire? Quelle(s) histoire(s) doit(ven)t être enseigné(es) au secondaire si c'est la dernière fois qu'un élève touchera à l'histoire? Est-ce que les compétences comptent et si c'est le cas, lesquelles — la pensée historique ou les compétences littéraires, ou sont-elles toutes deux interreliées? Nous savons que pour plusieurs élèves, le cours d'histoire au secondaire représente la dernière occasion pour eux de porter attention à l'histoire en tant que champ d'étude. *Comment* les enseignants d'histoire apprennent-ils à enseigner l'histoire? Quel est l'objectif de l'enseignement de l'histoire en tant que discipline distincte, séparée des sciences sociales ou des sciences humaines?

Les contributions des auteurs se prêtent bien au thème de «Qu'est-ce que l'histoire» de ce numéro spécial. L'idée que l'histoire n'est pas qu'une histoire, mais plusieurs histoires, et l'idée que la manière dont on «fait» l'histoire ainsi que le rôle que notre identité joue dans ce processus, permettent de découvrir des choses intéressantes.

La plupart des enseignants qui donnent des cours d'histoire ont suivi au moins deux cours d'histoire à l'université. L'habilitation à enseigner l'histoire a varié entre un minimum de deux cours à l'Université de Toronto (maintenant trois cours) à cinq cours dans quelques universités en Ontario. La plupart de ces cours de premier cycle sont offerts selon une formule d'exposé, de transmission d'information. On met l'accent sur le contenu et sur l'histoire, en s'attendant à ce que les

étudiants de premier cycle sachent comment analyser, faire des liens et écrire de façon critique. Le défi auquel les enseignants font face dans leur salle de cours du 21^e siècle est de savoir que le modèle de l'exposé ne produit pas le niveau espéré de compréhension de l'histoire, de la culture ou du contexte historique.

Une façon d'impliquer les élèves du secondaire dans l'histoire est de trouver des histoires qui les concernent et de laisser les élèves exprimer ce qu'elles veulent dire en leurs propres mots. Bien que l'histoire des conflits et des guerres auxquels le Canada a participé soient bien couvertes, on pourrait même parfois dire trop couvertes, d'autres histoires n'ont pas la possibilité de se rendre jusqu'à la salle de cours. Plus ces histoires sont introduites, plus les élèves risquent d'être motivés à s'impliquer dans leur propre histoire. Pourquoi les enseignants ne pourraient-ils pas inclure les expériences des femmes, des travailleurs, l'histoire des immigrants, la lutte de beaucoup de Canadiens pour obtenir le droit de vote (les femmes, les Premières nations, la fin des restrictions sur la base de la race). Tel que Carla Peck le note, «Étudier la relation entre l'identité ethnique et la construction des récits historiques peut aider les élèves, les enseignants et les chercheurs à comprendre certaines raisons pour lesquelles les gens interprètent le passé différemment.» (Peck)

Pourquoi les guerres du 20^e siècle sont-elles si bien couvertes dans les écoles de l'Ontario? En tant que formatrice d'enseignants l'année dernière à l'Université de Toronto (OISE), j'ai visité plusieurs cours d'histoire. Dans le cours obligatoire d'histoire de 10^e année qui débute en 1914, j'ai souvent observé des classes qui étudiaient toujours la Première Guerre mondiale alors qu'elles avaient débuté le cours un ou deux mois avant cela. (Ontario, Canadian and World Studies 2005, p.45). Tel que Phil Ryan le note dans son texte sur la «Mémoire partagée», «L'histoire militaire canadienne représente l'effort de rassembler les deux solitudes que nous ne

pouvons lier d'aucune autre manière. La guerre et la mémoire sont rapprochées aujourd'hui plus que jamais...l'apothéose de Vimy, qui s'est transformée d'une bataille presque oubliée à représenter «la naissance d'une nation». (Ryan)

Une deuxième approche pour engager les élèves en histoire de niveau secondaire est d'encourager les opportunités de performance qui peuvent inclure le travail ou l'examen traditionnel, mais aussi, on l'espère, des projets créatifs reliés au théâtre, à l'art et à la technologie, ce qui leur permet de «faire» de l'histoire. «Une salle de cours remplie d'affiches produites par les élèves pourrait suggérer que les élèves ont participé à une forme engagée d'apprentissage. Mais c'est le processus d'apprentissage de l'élève et l'engagement cognitif plutôt que le produit final — qui distingue les projets des travaux scolaires.» (Larmer John et Mergendoller, 2010) Le processus de «faire» de l'histoire n'exige pas des enseignants en histoire qu'ils connaissent absolument tout à propos de tout, mais plutôt d'apprendre aux côtés des élèves lors de l'exploration de grandes questions plutôt que de sujets spécifiques. Nous commençons tout juste à reconnaître la complexité de la culture et la manière dont les événements ont façonné les différents groupes et individus.

Comment, alors, enseigner l'histoire? Voulons-nous que les enseignants en histoire ne connaissent rien de l'histoire qu'ils enseignent? Est-ce que les enseignants en histoire peuvent tout savoir de toute manière? Deux questions auxquelles on ne peut répondre par un oui ou un non! Comme Stéphane Lévesque le note, «Développer la littératie historique nécessite un mode d'engagement particulier avec l'histoire — en termes de faits et de récit. Lorsque les élèves sont mis au défi de penser comme les historiens, ils doivent aborder une série de questions essentielles auxquelles on ne peut pas répondre à l'aide de textes de cours et de compétences littéraires interdisciplinaires» (Lévesque). La littératie historique et la pensée historique sont toutes deux requises dans nos cours aujourd'hui.

Le développement de ces compétences est une question qui nécessite le travail de l'enseignant et de l'élève. Choisir laquelle des compétences devrait être développée est une question posée par Christou et Sears dans leur réflexion sur la citoyenneté et l'histoire. «À noter était la description de l'histoire en enseignement en termes de dispositions et de perspectives plutôt qu'en termes de compétences ou simplement de contenu. Ces dispositions incluaient un détachement des pressions immédiates, une volonté de chercher des comparaisons et des analogies, une volonté de soumettre les émotions à la raison, la considération de perspectives multiples aux questions et l'évaluation des forces de continuité et de changement. L'importance de ces perspectives pour les éducateurs impliqués dans le développement d'une approche active et critique à la

pédagogie est due en grande partie au concept de présence d'esprit qui fait appel aux habitudes de l'esprit plutôt qu'à la rétention de données ou à une compétence particulière.» (Christou et Sears)

Une autre façon d'impliquer les élèves est d'inclure les identités, valeurs et expériences de plusieurs groupes différents. L'histoire, et l'histoire canadienne, nécessitent plus que le simple désir d'impliquer les élèves dans le processus d'examiner l'histoire. Les élèves démontreront de la curiosité et de l'engagement s'il existe une raison de vouloir en savoir plus sur les événements, les gens et les communautés. Comme Fine-Meyer l'identifie «Les expériences des femmes canadiennes ont été absentes des récits de construction de la nation, lesquels mettaient l'accent sur les accomplissements des élites et des hommes publics. Les leaders politiques et militaires, les juristes et les géants industriels ont aussi contribué à façonner la nation.» Si les élèves ne se voient pas dans l'histoire qui est enseignée, ils n'y porteront pas attention. Ceci se retrouve dans le commentaire de Sadlier: «comment avons-nous pu faire avancer une partie du récit canadien et en même temps trouvé le moyen d'exclure les Canadiens qui étaient ici au tout début?»

Markus nous donne un aperçu de la façon dont les artistes répondent à la question du choix des histoires en racontant leur propre histoire sous de nouvelles formes et présentée selon de nouvelles interprétations. «Les images d'archives, les récits d'histoires vécues et les artefacts soigneusement préservés, donnent aux artistes des informations et des messages qui peuvent créer des témoignages symboliques. Le résultat produit des oeuvres d'art qui offrent des preuves visuelles de l'évolution des identités et des relations dans l'expérience et la culture canadiennes.» L'histoire n'est pas statique, mais est plutôt une expérience vécue du présent et du passé.

La prochaine étape pour les enseignants peut être soulevée dans la suggestion de Mackenzie sur la considération de la question de réparation pour les gouvernements au sujet des décisions historiques. «Peut-être que la meilleure façon d'examiner et d'évaluer les questions entourant les excuses et la réparation dans la salle de classe serait d'emprunter une technique employée dans l'étude des relations internationales, parmi d'autres disciplines — la méthode de «l'étude de cas». Ceci inciterait des questions sur la justification ou les preuves utilisées pour chaque revendication, ainsi que la considération du contexte et du contenu du processus original de prise de décision, incluant les objectifs et les résultats anticipés ainsi que la validité et l'impact possible des mesures correctives. Ceci pourrait aussi démontrer que ces questions sont complexes et donc, en conséquence, peu simple.»

Comment aider nos élèves à s'impliquer dans l'histoire et à vouloir faire des liens entre le passé et le présent? L'histoire pose beaucoup de questions, et révèle bon nombre de perspectives différentes. Avec la méthodologie utilisée par *Facing History and Ourselves*, «les élèves réfléchissent sur la question de l'héritage et de comment l'histoire est préservée, interprétée et enseignée aux générations futures. Dans les dernières parties de leur étude, les cours de Facing History examinent souvent le rôle des monuments et des mémoriaux dans la société. «Ils sont les repères d'injustices passées que l'on ne veut pas répéter dans la prochaine génération,» a écrit un élève à propos des monuments et de leur promotion de la mémoire historique. «Nous avons besoin de savoir ce qui s'est passé dans l'histoire afin de comprendre clairement ce à quoi nous ferons face dans le futur.» À travers cette interaction entre le passé et le présent, les élèves peuvent en tirer leur propre sens et devenir des penseurs informés, actifs et engagés.

L'enseignement de l'histoire au 21^e siècle signifie que l'on enseigne aux élèves des compétences de pensée historique et pensée critique qui leur permettront de «faire» de l'histoire. En mettant l'accent sur l'enseignement des compétences d'un historien, les élèves auront une meilleure chance d'explorer un contenu qui les intéresse et de développer un regard critique. Les historiens dans les écoles, les facultés d'éducation et les universités peuvent travailler ensemble à faire de l'histoire au 21^e siècle un champ significatif et pertinent, et à comprendre les différentes voix et perspectives qui font partie de ces histoires.

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POSITIONING WOMEN'S NARRATIVES IN CANADIAN HISTORY COURSE MATERIALS

Rose Fine-Meyer, University of Toronto instructor, author, doctoral student and recipient of the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History in 2007. Rose is currently completing her dissertation in history education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. Her thesis, titled: "Including women: the establishment and integration of Canadian women's history narratives into Toronto, Ontario, classrooms and historic sites 1965-1995", examines the ways in which women's narratives entered into history curriculum in Ontario. The study traces the work of historians, educators, women's organizations, historical site workers and small publishers to include the narratives of women in history courses and the overall impact it had on history education in Ontario. In 2005, Rose developed a senior level secondary school interdisciplinary course entitled "Archives and Local History" linking students to communities and organizations engaged in maintaining and preserving local history. Rose has published a number of supplementary materials for secondary school history courses, and has contributed to articles, workshops and panels on Canadian women's history, archives and local history.

ABSTRACT

Historical narratives about and by women have been predominantly absent from history courses in Ontario. School textbooks and supplementary course materials, developed in the 19th century as part of state goals related to nation building and good citizenship, dominate history course narratives. The women's movement, affirmative action and equal opportunity policies helped bring issues of gender inequity to the forefront of education beginning in the 1970s, but it did little to alter history curriculum, which remained androcentric. Most history textbooks and course materials either marginalized women's narratives or presented women through a series of women's "firsts." Recent discussions about history education in Canada have focused on the purpose and the methods of effective history teaching. This discussion must also include a re-examination of traditional historical frameworks and the inclusion of women in history course narratives.

RÉSUMÉ

Les récits historiques à propos et par des femmes ont été majoritairement absents des cours d'histoire en Ontario. Les manuels scolaires et le matériel de classe supplémentaire, développés au 19^e siècle dans le cadre des objectifs gouvernementaux reliés à la construction de la nation et de la citoyenneté, dominent les récits historiques des cours d'histoire. Le mouvement des femmes, l'action positive et les politiques d'égalité des chances ont contribué à porter ces questions d'inégalité des sexes au devant de l'enseignement, débutant dans les années 1970, mais ceci n'a pas beaucoup changé le curriculum d'histoire, qui est demeuré androcentrique. La plupart des manuels d'histoire et du matériel de cours ont soit marginalisé les récits de femmes, soit présenté les femmes par l'entremise d'une série de « premières » pour les femmes. Les discussions récentes portant sur l'enseignement de l'histoire au Canada ont mis l'accent sur les objectifs et les méthodes de l'enseignement efficace de l'histoire. Cette discussion doit aussi inclure un réexamen des cadres traditionnels historiques et l'inclusion des femmes dans les récits historiques des cours d'histoire.

The experiences of Canadian women were absent from nation building narratives that embraced the achievements of elite and public men. Political and military leaders, lawmakers and industrial giants helped shape the national polity. Restricted by legislation that deprived them of rights and privileges, women were

denied access to government, academic and economic positions of authority, removing them from national narratives or restricting them to supportive roles that validated the public discourse. Canadian history taught in schools has been shaped by the development of the country as a whole. Nation building narratives, centered

within Euro-Canadian frameworks, focused on the growth of the nation. The history of Canada, presented in well-established chronological frameworks, began with the arrival of French missionaries and advanced with achievements in industry and the mass settlement of the west.¹ Students in Ontario were presented a history of Canada that celebrated the successes of a predominately Anglo British middle class society, with little room for alternative narratives. Historians Paul Axelrod, Alison Prentice and Desmond Morton have examined the ways in which notions of patriotism and good citizenship were supported through the 19th century mass public school initiatives, designed to “create loyal and dutiful citizens” and history “was its sharpest blade.”² History educators, throughout the first half of the 20th century, supported traditional narratives in the textbooks and materials they employed in their classrooms. This remained the standard in history classrooms until the 1970s, when social historians affirmed that power elites had directed historical narratives. Social historians concentrated instead on a “history from below,”³ which focused on an examination of the working class: narratives about immigration, work and family,⁴ and how relationships of power had intersected with race, class and ethnicity.⁵ They uncovered narratives about the lives and experiences of people who had been formally marginalized or omitted from traditional history education.⁶

Historical narratives about and by women have been predominantly absent from history courses in Ontario. Interested history teachers were incorporating women into their classes through stories of working class women and an examination of families.⁷ Social historians as well as feminist scholars supported a broader framework in which to examine the past, uncovering historical narratives about women that eventually became part of standard college and university history courses. Uncovering these narratives meant looking beyond traditional sources and asking different questions, resulting in a wide range of newly developed historical materials that employed innovative methods for historical analysis.⁸ The new scholarship in history, along with public demands for gender equity, and school board affirmative action and equal opportunity legislation, had an impact on history teachers, who developed awareness for the necessity to employ diverse historical narratives and perspectives for history courses. History education in secondary schools had initially limited the inclusion of women’s historical narratives within textbooks and course guidelines, affirming women’s secondary status, depriving students of viable historical female role models, and reinforcing traditional understandings about the past.

By the 1980s, public school boards had responded to provincial human rights codes that prohibited discrimi-

nation based on gender and developed affirmative action and equal opportunity policies that focused on “sex-role stereotyping” in the schools. The status of women and education councils established standards for gender accountability which aimed at countering blatant “sex discrimination” in schools. They were far less effective, however, at altering curriculum guidelines.⁹ History teachers interested in including narratives about Canadian women maintained the responsibility of accessing resource materials, as textbooks and school materials provided few resources.¹⁰ Teachers acquired materials through attendance at conferences, workshops and as members in various organizations. Materials were developed and published through small independent presses, such as the Canadian Women’s Educational Press.¹¹ Until the 21st century, including narratives about and by women required a major effort on the part of individual history teachers.

This paper provides a brief overview of some of the steps taken to add women to the Canadian history curriculum and ends with a discussion about the current challenges facing history educators. This paper is part of a larger research project that explores the ways in which women’s historical narratives have been integrated, subsumed, ignored or marginalized within schools and history courses. My examination traces the work of historians, educators, women’s organizations, historical site workers and small publishers to include the narratives of women in history curriculum and the impact it had on history education. The essential role schools play as cultural transmitters makes this study an essential part of the historiography of Canadian women’s history and history education.

TRANSFORMING HISTORY CURRICULUM: FIRST STEPS

The Hall-Dennis Report (1968) on the aims and objectives of education in Ontario entitled *Living and Learning* was broadly accepted as a new standard for education in Ontario.¹² The 18th annual Ontario Association for Curriculum Development (OACD) held in 1969 entitled *Human Relations in Education*, reflected this shift, through an examination of the ways to “humanize” schools and learning. The 1970 OACD theme was *Curriculum for a Canadian Identity*. Dr. Jean-Louis Gagnon, keynote speaker, stated, “the fact is that Canadians do not know their country and are very ignorant of its history.”¹³ In order to create a curriculum “for a Canadian identity” it was suggested that schools form stronger links with historical institutions. Readily accessible local museums and libraries in towns and cities provided opportunities to forge strong links between schools, curriculum and students. The result was significant funding for school

visits to historic sites within the province.¹⁴ The removal of standardized history provincial tests (1968 in Ontario) resulted in history teachers obtaining the responsibility of what and how to present historical narratives in their classrooms. History department heads discussed creating packages or “boxes of materials.” Teachers voiced a desire to do away with policies that restricted them to narrow and similar textbooks, often outmoded by the time they have been approved, advocating for a greater interdisciplinary approach to Canadian history teaching.¹⁵ The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education partnered with various groups to develop education kits. The “boxes”, as they were referred to, (except for the women’s kit) included an Ecology Box, Ten Years One Box, language boxes and the Women’s Kit. The Ten Years One Box contained a variety of documents, photos, art, records, filmstrips and slides that focus on the decade of the 1930s. Members of the advisory panel included Canadian historian Ramsay Cook. The “Women’s Kit”, the only kit focused completely on the narratives of women, was a giant cardboard box full of materials such as pamphlets, photos, poems, copies of newspaper articles, filmstrips, records and historical documents, produced in 1972. During 1973-1974, 170 of these kits were distributed to high schools and community colleges (mostly in Ontario) for field testing, with an additional 20 kits circulated within another 200 schools and community groups.¹⁶ Educators were encouraged to develop new materials to reflect broader narratives, and coupled with the focus on social history, helped introduce some space for the narratives about women.¹⁷ The rationale at the time to challenge traditional ideas within society, and within schools, was part of a broader movement focused on bringing the voices of those marginalized into public narratives, and women entered the curriculum through this lens.

In their 1980 bibliography, *True Daughters of the North*, Strong-Boag and Beth Light recognized the importance of looking beyond the “famous” or the “notorious” to narratives of ordinary Canadians. They stated: “The history of women, like that of men, includes that of the family, sexuality and work. The integration of these areas into a coherent whole will go far toward producing the first comprehensive histories of Canadians.”¹⁸ By expanding the arena, history teachers engaged in a more interdisciplinary approach to history teaching. For example, a historical examination of the suffrage movement in Canada and the fight for women to obtain greater rights as citizens, opened up a socio-political and economic analysis of the impact of paid and unpaid labour, the issues related to political participation, and the ways in which marginalization affected societal opportunities and quality of life, thus expanding the historical dialogue taking place in classrooms.¹⁹

By the mid 1980s, a significant feminist scholarship had emerged, which helped propel universities and colleges to establish women’s studies courses, to include women’s narratives in undergraduate survey courses, and to allow for feminist scholarship in graduate programs. Public schools in Ontario, however, did not parallel the academic changes taking place in post-secondary institutions and lagged significantly behind in integrating women into course materials. Although public school boards prohibited discrimination based on gender, and affirmative action and equal opportunity legislation focused on “sex-role stereotyping” in the schools, little was done to alter formal history curriculum.²⁰ Course guidelines in the humanities did not produce a more balanced and realistic portrayal of women in the curriculum and women’s narratives remained marginalized in course materials.²¹ The Toronto Board of Education Equal Opportunity Office, Affirmative Action Committee and Women’s Liaison Committees embraced strategies of gender accountability in terms of Sexism and Anti-Racist Education broadened considerations of gender by placing gender within issues of race and class. Although narratives in textbooks and resource materials were altered to avoid blatant discrimination, little effort was focused on major overhauls to the curriculum.

The Ministry of Education in Ontario has never formally developed a separate women’s history course and has yet to place women’s historical narratives as a required expectation for history courses within the province. Current history guidelines continue to divide historical periods into traditional notions of periodization and continue to place hierarchies on “major” and “minor” events in Canadian history, products still of the grand narrative. Since school boards have failed to adequately place women’s narratives as central to historical analysis or supply resource materials about and by women, teacher federations, women’s organizations and individual teachers have throughout the years taken action. Many teachers were, and continue to be, active in women’s groups who argue that sex-role stereotyping, the lack of strong female role-models and narratives about women are factors contributing to women’s inequality.²² Beginning in the 1970s, students and parents believed that schools needed to better reflect changes taking place in society.²³ Placed within this framework were the issues of the rights of women.²⁴ As a result, some teachers created individual courses that reflected their concerns over the omission of women in history course materials. One teacher, for example, developed a course called “women and art” and another developed a course called “women and society”.²⁵ Teachers were given special allowances to develop a women’s studies course at some schools. However, courses remained supplementary, the

purview of individual teachers and the developed materials were rarely integrated into mainstream history courses. The former Toronto Board of Education was progressive in terms of its leadership in developing policies around women's education and gender equity, often acting as a template for other boards in the province.²⁶ Committees organized Professional Development (PD) days for teachers to examine the problem of sex-role stereotypes in schools and course materials. Workshops and kits were developed to ensure that schools were accountable for affirmative action and gender equity. Affirmative action was part of a broader aim to provide greater opportunities for women to find leadership roles, and for women to find equal representation within the curriculum.²⁷ This aim resulted in an abundance of materials published to address school needs. Writing women "back into history" provided a focus for initiatives to reform sex-role stereotyping in schools and curriculum.²⁸ But changing history course outlines proved more of a challenge and by 1998 Bill 104 had amalgamated school boards in Metropolitan Toronto, dissolving many of the initiatives created by the equity branches of the former Toronto board.²⁹

Throughout this period, history textbooks continued to contain marginalized references to women.³⁰ Textbooks published before the 1970s did not include women, only in passing reference, such as photos showing women from the 1920s in swimsuits.³¹ *Call Us Canadians*, a textbook published in 1976, for example, was the first in Ontario to include a separate chapter devoted to women. In clear response to the United Nations International Women's Year (1975) the book created a chapter entitled "Profiles of Canadian Women", but placed these profiles in the last chapter of the book. The chapter features women such as Nellie McClung and Catherine Parr Trail, despite major inroads by women in Canada by this date. With the publication of *Spotlight Canada*, in 1980,³² marginal steps were introduced to include women by including "women" as a topic at points throughout the book.³³ Teachers clearly needed more, so they continued to access kits, audio-visual materials and films into their history classrooms. Many of the films used in history classrooms were available through The National Film Board's (NFB) Studio D, which produced dozens of films about Canadian women.³⁴

Throughout the 1990s, the number of available materials for teachers was staggering as national and local organizations, both grass-roots feminists and institutional feminists, provided accessible materials that documented the experiences of women, so accessing materials for history courses was no longer difficult. School boards also published posters about women, with accompanying teacher's guides, and thousands were placed in schools

across the province, and women's organizations, such as the Ontario Women's History Network (OWHN) held annual conferences where teachers accessed history course materials. The posters are still being published and the conferences provide an important network between current research work in the field of Canadian women's history and the work of teachers in classrooms.

TRANSFORMING HISTORY CURRICULUM: SECOND STEPS

Recent textbooks, those published within the last ten years, have added larger sections and references to women, as well as references to supplementary materials, but still list "women" as a separate category within the index, reflecting a curriculum that continues to sidestep a full integration of women's historical narratives. Teachers are still in the position of searching out supplementary materials in order to provide a gendered balance study of Canadian history. Taking steps to include women's narratives as well as challenge traditional historical frameworks would be a bold step for history educators. A nation's historical narratives are deeply entrenched and feminist inquiry challenges both the narratives and the structures in which they are defined, cutting at the core of traditional disciplines and accepted definitions of knowledge. Despite efforts, beginning in the 1960s, to bring a more balanced human focus to historical inquiry, history curriculum continues to cling to many traditional narratives. We have taken steps to acknowledge large numbers of historical omissions, or what historian Jack Granatstein calls our "dirty laundry" and many of those stories of injustice, issues of race and class, have now become part of the general narrative in schools, but we have yet to take bold steps in terms of gender.³⁵ Despite the challenges that were raised by the second wave feminists and feminist scholars, the academic community remains skeptical towards the full integration of women's narratives into course materials.³⁶ This remains a challenge for women's organizations and reaffirms their importance in providing a platform for women's voices. Although school boards responded by creating new standards to remove bias in the schools, the results did not provide major changes to course materials. Pat Kincaid, a former women's studies consultant for the TBE stated that feminists in the 1970s believed that if they cultivated awareness about women's issues, teachers and schools boards would alter the curriculum. This did not materialize. School boards made public gestures to balance the gender divide in schools but did little to support gender equity in course materials. Rebecca Coulter argues that governments identified sexism as being simply a "wrong" attitude and targeted education, especially the schooling of children, as the means to change this attitude. She argues, "As a result,

governments often passed weak legislation or developed “soft” gender equity through education policies, designed to offend no one.³⁷ Guidance counselors were informed of ways to support career options for girls, and educators were mandated to attend affirmative action workshops to avoid sexist language and behavior in schools but the effort to infuse the humanities with the narratives of women never developed, and still today is left to the individual teacher who require membership in outside organizations in order to access resources.

Finally, this brings into question issues of change and an institution’s effectiveness in making permanent change. The women’s movement contained an optimism that saw wide ranging changes to social, political and economic institutions. Yet these changes have not completely permeated educational curriculum. Women’s history month provides one outlet for the inclusion of women’s narratives in schools, but like other designated months with a specific focus, result in one shot references of historical “firsts”. A more integrated curriculum is long overdue. History teachers need to evaluate history course materials to ensure that the narratives of both men and women are present in all historical examinations. This is possible to do, considering the wealth of available scholarship and resources about women. Publications, within the past ten years, that focus on Canadian women’s narratives provide excellent resources for history teachers but these resources remain supplementary.³⁸ In their 1982 pioneer article on the ways in which feminism applies to the writing and teaching of history, historians Alison Prentice and Ruth Pierson argued that students are unable to separate scholarly work with their own social and personal reality. Feminist consciousness and scholarship had exposed gender bias, altered historical questions and had uncovered links formally denied by traditional historical inquiry.³⁹ History textbooks were eventually altered to add specific women’s narratives, but the broader challenge facing teachers of history is in re-examining the benchmarks or defining markers of historical movements, which have simply placed women’s narratives within traditional paradigms that deny students exposure to authentic women’s narratives.

The heightened interest in history education in schools recently has brought forth a renewed dialogue of what history should be taught in schools. Gender equality in history curriculum needs to be included in this discussion. Radical feminists of the 1960s and 70s argued that full integration of women could only take place as a result of radical societal change. Schools, as state institutions, supported patriarchal narratives and interests. Historically, women held subordinate positions within state institutions and thus were never placed into the dominant public narratives. History students today need to learn to

think critically about the state systems and institutions, which form the basis of their society and examine the ways in which the past has shaped, maintained and altered these systems. History teachers provide the tools for historical inquiry, available through a critical examination of a wide range of primary documents. Good teachers also provide support for student analysis of the evidence presented in the primary documents, in order that they may draw balanced conclusions about the past.⁴⁰ But this inquiry and exposure of resource materials also requires a commitment to critical analysis of the societal systems and institutions that produced these documents. In his study with students in Northern Ireland, Keith Barton found that students often faced a history curriculum different from their own reality as history topics in schools are “rarely presented in a context that connects them to the present—rather they’re just part of a chronological march through the past.” Barton adds, “history deserves a place in public education only if we can develop a meaningful and publically articulated rationale for it, one rooted in pluralism, participation and deliberation.”⁴¹ I would add to Barton, the opportunity for students to question accepted historical frameworks, thus offering opportunities to develop new ways of thinking and understanding about our past. Changing the structure of history teaching involves more than introducing new tools in which to analyze the past, it also means re-evaluating the societal paradigms that framed past experiences. Challenging accepted constructed frameworks will offer a more realistic portrayal and analysis of the experiences of women. Joan Wallach Scott argues that feminist historical inquiry will “yield a history that will provide new perspectives on old questions, redefine the old questions in new terms, make women visible as active participants, and create analytic distance between the seemingly fixed language of the past and our own terminally.”⁴² Although narratives about and by women are currently present in Canadian history textbooks and course materials, they remain marginalized and framed within the dominant national discourse. Course guidelines do not feature women as central to historical periodization but rather continue to place women’s narratives in supporting roles. Women remain listed as a subject in most indexes, reflecting their supplementary status. Continuing to engage in open dialogue concerning the ways to create a more equitable portrayal of our past is the first step to developing meaningful history courses in school.

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¹ See: Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930) and A.L. Burt, *The Romance of Canada: A new history*. (Toronto: W.L.Gage, 1937).

² Desmond Morton, "Canadian History Teaching in Canada" in Ruth Sandwell, ed. *To the Past: History Education, Public Memory, and Citizenship in Canada*. (Toronto: U of T Press 2006), 26. Morton examines issues related to public school history teaching. See also Paul Axelrod, *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914*. (Toronto: U of T Press, 1997) and Alison Prentice, *The school promoters: education and social class in mid-nineteenth century Upper Canada*. (Toronto : McClelland and Stewart 1977)

³ See: Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid, *Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social history of Higher Education*. (Montreal, 1989), Paul Axelrod, "Historical Writing and Canadian Education", *History of Education Quarterly*. Vol. 36. no.1 (spring 1996).

⁴ Charles Edward Phillips, *The Development of Education in Canada*. (Toronto: Gage Publishers 1957).

⁵ Scholars had various reactions to changes in history scholarship. See: Jack Granatstein. *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Collins 1998) And a response to Granatstein in Timothy Stanley's "Why I killed Canadian History: Towards an Anti-Racist History in Canada", *Histoire sociale/Social History* 33, no. 65 (2001) and Stanley's "Whose Public?

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⁶ For example, by 1977 the Toronto Board of Education fully adopted an Affirmative Action Task Force Report, which called for a dedicated plan of action and the creation of an Affirmative Action Advisor.

⁷ Based on interviews with Toronto teachers. (Interviews took place fall 2009 as part of my dissertation work).

⁸ Natalie Zemon Davis and Joan Wallach Scott, *Women's History as Women's Education* (paper from a symposium at Smith College, April 17, 1985), 13. In the paper Dr. Davis states "the creative method in historical thinking from where I sat was to put the parts of society together in interchange rather than isolating them."

⁹ Lise Julien. *Women's Issues in Education in Canada: A survey of policies and practices at the elementary and secondary levels* (Government of Canada, 1987)

¹⁰ See: Chad Gaffield, "The Blossoming of Canadians Historical Research: Implications for Educational Policy and Content" in Ruth Sandwell, ed. *To the Past*. (Toronto: U of T Press, 2006) Gaffield examines the disconnect between new scholarship in the field of Canadian history and history course materials used in schools.

¹¹ Canadian Women's Movement Archives: University of Ottawa. *Canadian Women's Educational Press Collection* held at the library (X10-12) Ads were listed in: The Canadian Teacher, Books in Canada, City Magazine, Canadian Forum, Quill and Quire and others. Books from CWP are featured in many catalogues, with large circulations across the country. In 1988 the Women's Press split, with some members departing to form Second Story Press.

¹² Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario, *Living and Learning Report*. (Toronto: Published for the Committee by Newton Pub. Co., 1968)

¹³ 19th annual OACD Report, November 1970, *Curriculum for a Canadian Identity*. Dr. Jean-Louis Gagnon keynote speaker, Director General Information Canada, (Toronto, OACD)

¹⁴ For example, a 1967 report indicated the development of new educational field trip brochures, published for Fort York, where 4000 copies were sent to school Principals. 37,500 pupils had attended various sites in 1967. (Toronto Archives Library, *Toronto Historical Board 1968 Annual Report*, 12

- ¹⁵ 19th annual OACD Report: November 1970, *Curriculum for a Canadian Identity*. The Canadian Studies Foundation had \$3,500,000 of non-government money to be used over five years in an effort to improve the teaching of young Canadians about Canada. The Ontario Department of Education (Circular HS1) recommended a broad area of study which included communications, arts, pure and applied sciences and the social sciences, which included economics, geography, history, man and society, marketing and world politics, 25-29
- ¹⁶ The boxes are in storage at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education library: University of Toronto.
- ¹⁷ Feminist historians responded with social and labour narratives about women. See: Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, Veronica Strong-Boag and Joy Parr. See Parr, "Case records as sources for social history", *Archivaria* no 4 (Spring 1977), 122-36, and Alison Prentice and Susan Trofimenkoff, eds. *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History*, vol.1. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), Veronica Strong-Boag, "Raising Clío's Consciousness: Women's History and Archives in Canada", *Archivaria* no.6 (summer 1978), 70-82.
- ¹⁸ Beth Light and Veronica Strong-Boag, *True Daughters of the North: Canadian Women's History: An Annotated Bibliography*. (Toronto: OISE Press, 1980), 1-6. Beth Light also produced a curriculum document entitled *Family History: A Method for the Study of Social History* as part of the Women in Canadian History Project (Feb. 1977)
- ¹⁹ Throughout the 1980s The Toronto Board of Education had its own resource centre, which had a large staff and a large budget. Teachers requested items to supplement course work, including materials about women. By the 1990s, it became standard for textbooks to include narratives on the suffrage movement, the Persons' case and the role of women during the wars, providing teachers with opportunities for broader examination.
- ²⁰ Toronto Board of education Archives: Status of Women files. "Sex-role stereotyping" policies began in 1972.
- ²¹ *A Non-Sexist Bibliography- Affirmative Action folders*. The introduction stated "the writing team compiled this bibliography to meet the special aim of helping teachers ensure there is a good representation in classrooms and programs of acceptable books by and about females. If this aim is achieved, teachers will have contributed greatly to the elimination of sex-role stereotyping and sexual bias from the curriculum."
- ²² During the 1970s several research studies were conducted. See: Ad Hoc Committee Respecting the Status of Women in the North York System, 1975; Elaine Batcher, Alison Winter, Vicki Wright, *The more things change – the more they stay the same* (Toronto: Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, 1987) Conferences on *Sex-Role Stereotyping and Women's Studies: Report* (Toronto :Ontario Ministry of Education, 1978)
- ²³ *The Toronto Community Schools Newspaper*, for example, published between 1971-1974, represented a group of parents, students, teachers and other community members who were concerned about the quality of education in Toronto. They believed that a community paper would provide an important communication link for shared dialogue and action plans within their communities and beyond. The paper, similar to others during the 1970s, contained articles about current issues in education and provided updates on legislative changes in education.
- ²⁴ To name only a few: *The Velvet Fist* (Toronto Women's Caucus); *We are Women*; Joyce Cowley, *Pioneers in Women's Liberation* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971), 15 pages. All pamphlets in OISE/UT WERC collection
- ²⁵ Interviews with history teachers 2009-2010. One year, in a *Man and Society* course, a Toronto teacher had a large number of girls who argued for a women's studies course. In response to their demands, and her own beliefs, this teacher developed course materials. She added, "I realized that the board allowed me to add curriculum materials, and still award a credit, but I didn't want that-this provided me an opportunity to make a political statement."
- ²⁶ Toronto Board of Education Archives: Status of Women file, Affirmative Action file: The Status of Women Committees developed Affirmative Action programs beginning in the 1970s that included changes to guidance, general curriculum, textbooks and ancillary services.
- ²⁷ TBE Archives: TBE-EAO-AAAction envelope #5. Kit from Awareness workshops Nov. 1979 Data included in this file: Full time teaching positions schedule II: 1976=170, and in 1979=182. The number of women is 27 (16%) and 35(19%) Secondary teacher's percentage that is female in 1976 was 37.8%. Percentage of female Principals and Vice-Principals was 37.8% for secondary schools in 1979. The 'kit' contained a suggested bibliography with a few of the following titles: Paula Bourne: *Women in Canadian Society*, (OISE 1978); V. D'Oyley, *Black Presence in Multi-Ethnic Canada* (1978) H. Troper: *Native Survival*. (OISE 1973); B. Kane. And P. Harris: *The Women's Kit* (OISE 1974). Envelope #2: Numerous conferences took place at the TBE during the 1970s and 1980s. April 26, 1979 conference was called *Free to Choose: An evening of Speakers* sponsored by the Women's Studies Dept. Speakers included Marion Colby and Dr. Ouida Wright. Topics included women

in law, in advertising, battered women, Jan Tennant spoke about women in the news and Abby Hoffman spoke about human rights.

- ²⁸“Writing women back into history” is the theme of the *National Women’s History project* (NWHM) for 2010 and represents a focus of women’s groups in Canada and the United States since the 1960s.
- ²⁹Tim McCaskell, *Race To Equity: Disrupting Educational Inequality*. (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 237.
- ³⁰Throughout the 1970s, textbooks continued to reflect traditional narratives forcing teachers to seek supplementary materials. By the end of the decade, some textbooks responded to changes taking place in board policies but the high cost of textbooks meant old history textbooks remained in school classrooms for 10-15 years.
- ³¹For example see two popular history textbooks: *Decisive Decades* written by A.B. Hodgetts (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1961) and *Challenge and Survival: The History of Canada* by H.H. Herstein (Prentice Hall, 1970) both books do not include “women” as a category in the book or listed in the index.
- ³²J. Bradley Cruyton and W. Douglas, *Spotlight Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1980)
- ³³J. Bradley Cruyton, *Spotlight Canada* presented the theme “women”, depicted in a cloche hat from the 1920s. Women appear in a paragraph about the WCTU, Dr. Emily Stowe, in an examination of the home front in both world wars, for their efforts to support the war, and as British war brides arriving in Canada. This reflects the common places where women entered history curriculum in most textbooks by the early 1990s.
- ³⁴Pioneer work was published by the BC Teachers Federation (BCTF). Many of those classroom materials could be found in libraries in Ontario. For example, *Famous Canadian Women, Early Canadian Women, From Captivity to Choice: Native Women in Canadian Literature*. The Corrective Collective published *She named it Canada: Because that’s what it was called*. (Vancouver: Press Gang Press, 1971). There were copies of this book at the Toronto Board of Education. See: NFB film discussion in a report on the NFB/Educators Forum on Women’s Studies in Secondary Schools. (Montreal, 1986) and Gail Vanstone, *D is for Daring: the women behind the films of Studio D*. (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2007)
- ³⁵See: Jack Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Collins 1998) Desmond Morton, “Canadian history teaching in Canada: What’s the Big deal” and Timothy Stanley, “Whose Public? Whose memory? Racism Grand Narratives and Canadian History” in Ruth Sandwell, ed. *To the Past: History Education, Public Memory, and Citizenship in Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006)
- ³⁶Alison Prentice et al. *Canadian Women: A History*. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, first published in 1988, now in its 3rd edition) In preparing *Canadian Women: A History*, the authors were cognizant that conventional history remained problematic in the history of women as language, definitions, and even designated turning points were often unrelated to women’s experiences.
- ³⁷Rebecca Priegert Coulter. “Gender Equity and Schooling: Linking Research and Policy”, *Canadian Journal of Education* 21, 4 (1996) 433-452.
- ³⁸See books by Green Dragon Press: Pat Staton with Paula Bourne, *Claiming women’s lives: history and contemporary studies, grade 7-OAC* (Toronto: Green Dragon Press 1994); Pat Staton, Rose Fine-Meyer, S.K. Gibson, *Unfolding power: Documents in 20th century Canadian women’s history* (Toronto: Green Dragon Press 2004) Marguerite Alfred and Pat Staton, *Black women in Canada: past and present*. (Toronto: Green Dragon Press 2004) Pat Staton, *It was their war too : Canadian women and World War I* (Toronto: Green Dragon Press 2006)
- ³⁹Ruth Pierson and Alison Prentice, “Feminism and the writing and teaching of history “ in A. Miles and G. Finn eds. *Feminism in Canada: from Pressure to Politics* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982) Prentice and Pierson had hoped that feminist inquiry would expose how women’s roles had been framed and distorted within traditional historical writing. They challenged, for example, the established divisions between private and public spheres.
- ⁴⁰There is a great deal of scholarship in the study of critical thinking and humanistic education. See two collections: Ruth Sandwell, ed., *To the Past: History Education, Public Memory, and Citizenship in Canada*. (Toronto: U of T. Press 2006) and also Peter Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg, eds., *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*. (New York: New York University Press 2000)
- ⁴¹Keith Barton, “History, Humanistic Education, and participatory democracy” in Ruth Sandwell, ed. *To the Past: History Education, Public Memory, and Citizenship in Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2006) 50-69.
- ⁴²Joan Wallach Scott ed., *Feminism and History*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 175.

RAPPROCHEMENT: TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO HISTORY AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN CANADA

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ABSTRACT

Democratic societies around the world, including Canada, have made fostering social cohesion a key priority for education generally and citizenship education in particular. In this article we argue that citizenship education is largely failing in that task because it lacks significant attention to history and that history education often seems to forget its civic purposes. We contend that an appropriate integration of the two makes it possible to develop a deep sense of being Canadian without being simplistic, narrow, or final about what that means. Citizenship education and history education should be seen as intertwined, the questions of one discipline enriching the other. Cultivating a spirit of historical mindedness is one means of developing the reflective and critical habits of mind that are essential for any robust definition of Canadian citizenship.

RÉSUMÉ

Les sociétés démocratiques du monde, incluant le Canada, ont fait de la cohésion sociale une priorité pour l'éducation, de façon générale, et pour l'éducation citoyenne, en particulier. Dans ce texte, nous suggérons que l'éducation citoyenne en grande partie échoue à cette tâche parce qu'elle ne porte pas une attention suffisante à l'histoire, et parce que l'enseignement de l'histoire semble souvent oublier ses objectifs civiques. Nous soutenons qu'une intégration appropriée des deux rendrait possible le développement d'un sens profond d'être Canadien sans être simpliste, étroit ou final en termes de ce que cela signifie. L'éducation citoyenne et l'enseignement de l'histoire devraient être compris comme étant interreliés, les questions d'une discipline pouvant enrichir l'autre. Le fait de cultiver l'esprit historique représente un moyen de développer les habitudes d'esprit critique et réfléchi qui sont essentielles pour toute définition robuste de la citoyenneté canadienne.

INTRODUCTION

This article addresses the challenge of constructing an inclusive national approach to history and citizenship in Canada. First, the Canadian context is situated in a broader debate concerning the adequacy of citizenship education programs to develop belonging and social cohesion. Second, it argues that history education and citizenship education are best seen as intertwined, each asking questions vital to the other. Lastly, the article argues that historical mindedness, defined as a disposition to contemporary social contexts that is derived from a way of looking at the past, can cultivate habits of mind enabling Canadian students to critically examine citizenship and history in their world.

CITIZENSHIP AND CANADIAN HISTORY IN A BROADER CONTEXT

A recent collection of national case studies of citizenship and citizenship education representing jurisdictions from six continents demonstrated there is a widespread sense that citizenship education is not living up to its promise in a range of ways. A particular concern in virtually every state, including Canada, is the perception that citizenship education is not doing well in the development of a deep sense of belonging and social cohesion among diverse citizens.¹ This has resulted in calls to give the subject more substantial focus and priority in the curriculum and to explicitly address issues related to identity, diversity, and cohesion. Perhaps the

most overt examples of the latter have come from England through the *Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review*, the so-called Ajegbo report, which concluded:

The changing nature of the UK and potential for tension to arise now makes it ever more pressing for us to work towards community cohesion, fostering mutual understanding within schools so that valuing difference and understanding what binds us together become part of the way pupils think and behave.²

This report fostered calls for teaching *Britishness* in English schools and led directly to reforms of the National Curriculum including much more explicit attention to issues of identity and diversity.³

There are real issues to be faced regarding identity and cohesion in democratic societies. Prior to World War II, citizenship education was almost exclusively assimilationist in nature and, particularly in the immigrant societies of Australia and Canada (or English Canada, at least), sought to create a common sense of national identity rooted in allegiance to the Empire and/or Commonwealth. Following the war there was a slow move away from assimilation as a goal for citizenship education for two reasons: it was immoral and ineffective.⁴

Assimilationist approaches to citizenship education centred on teaching and learning a single, heroic, grand narrative of the nation's (or, the empire's, as the case may be) history were replaced by a much more generic brand of citizenship education focused on creating engaged and active citizens. Inclusion is a key aspect of this approach but it is important to note, that what citizens are being included in is not citizenship in the ethnic or sociological sense of belonging to a community but, rather, they are being included in the community of those who participate, who join in a process. Specific national context is largely irrelevant and, therefore, national history has been downgraded or simply ignored in many civics and social studies programs.

In the post 9/11 world, social cohesion has become a huge concern of Western nation states as reflected in debates in France about religious dress in public spaces, prohibitions on the construction of minarets on mosques in Switzerland, and the search for what constitutes 'reasonable accommodation' in Canada. In Britain, the London subway bombings in July 2007, and particularly the fact the bombers were native born citizens, was the catalyst stimulating national introspection and policy development in this area including the work of the Diversity and Citizenship Review Committee and the revised citizenship curriculum mentioned above.

As in Canada and other states, the promotion of social cohesion became a key government policy priority,

and more attention to history education was seen as an important component of revised citizenship curricula. The Diversity and Citizenship Review Committee, while recommending more focus on history in citizenship education also expressed concern that "teaching Citizenship with History could mean a return to the old curriculum of British constitutional history and civics." Of course, if students are going to pay attention to the British context of English citizenship they must learn about British constitutional history and civics.⁵ The committee was concerned with pedagogical approaches more than with subject matter. They worried about a traditionalist approach that presented constitutional and legal structures as fixed and final, where students were akin to sponges whose main function was to absorb that material and release it again when squeezed at exam time. Gardner calls this "the correct answer compromise" where knowing is reduced to "a ritualistic memorization of meaningless facts and disembodied procedures."⁶ This approach to history teaching has been all too common across the world.

In discarding the overweening focus on nation, or empire, because it was impractical and assimilationist, citizenship educators have thrown the baby out with the bathwater. We concur with Barton and Levstik who write: "Some form of identification is necessary for democratic life, because without attachment to community individuals would be unlikely to take part in the hard work of seeking the common good."⁷ A substantial part of that identification, we believe, should be with the nation state for two reasons.

First, paying attention to specific state contexts is important in citizenship education because while there are common or generic aspects to democratic citizenship that exist across jurisdictions, it is most often lived out on the ground in specific contexts that give it both form and function. We are not claiming that there is no such thing as democratic theory apart from states but, rather, are arguing that democratic citizenship is operationalized differently across jurisdictions and those differences are important to understand. Second, while we acknowledge profound shifts in geopolitics that are causing fundamental changes to the status and role of nation states, we believe that for the foreseeable future they will remain key sites for the formation of identity and the exercise of citizenship.⁸

Citizenship and history education have been described for years as being at war, and even with current signs of rapprochement scholars and practitioners on both sides worry about being overrun by those on the other.⁹ The members of the Diversity and Citizenship Review Committee in England recommended more history but worried about it skewing civics in the wrong direction and

history educators in that country, reacting to the calls to include more history in citizenship education, express concern this might “compromise history’s integrity or sacrifice purposes and objectives particular to history education.”¹⁰ We believe it is possible to bring history and citizenship education together in ways that can foster an inclusive national history and promote engaged and critical citizenship.

HISTORY AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION INTERTWINED

In arguing for substantive attention to national context in civics we concur with Kiwan in calling for a move from “pedagogy of acceptance” towards “pedagogy of process.”¹¹ Specifically, we advocate involving students in the process of constructing the meaning of democratic ideas for their own time and place. In other words, not telling them what it means to be Australian, Canadian or English but introducing them, in an informed way, to the discussion of what those identities have been, are, and might be in the future. This can best be done by engaging students with both the internal complexity of national identity in their particular context as well as with alternative constructions of national identity across the world.

In reflecting on the struggle for democracy to take hold in the states of the former Soviet Union and Soviet Block, Tsilevich contends that one of the major difficulties is the importation of democratic ideas developed over many years in the West. He writes, “Post-Communist countries [are] consumers, rather than co-authors, of this modern and generally accepted liberal democratic political philosophy.”¹² The same has been true of traditionalist approaches to history and civics, wherein students have been treated as consumers of ideas rather than co-authors and consequently develop neither deep understanding of the ideas nor commitment to them. Democratic citizenship is fostered in co-authoring democratic ideas and practices through wrestling with what they have meant, what they mean, how they are, how they could be manifested in particular times and contexts. The assimilationist nature of national content can be mitigated by attention to the fluid and contested nature of democratic ideas across time both within the nation and beyond it.

In her comprehensive study of students’ experiences with school history in Australia and Canada, Anna Clark found that students from across both countries believed national history was important to know, but that the history education they experienced was excessively content-driven and teacher-focused; students found that such education almost never allowed opportunities for the consideration of multiple perspectives or focused on

developing deep understanding.¹³ Reports from around the world echo these findings, where students claim that “debates are practically nonexistent” in their history classes, and teaching focuses “on memorization and repetition of teachers’ explanations (through taking of class notes) and the contents of textbooks as the core of their history education experiences.”¹⁴

As a range of recent work in history education around the world makes clear, this need not be so. History can contribute to building democracies that are “participatory, pluralist, and deliberative.”¹⁵ American researchers Keith Barton and Linda Levstik make a compelling case that History can and should be taught in such a way as to “promote reasoned judgment,” “promote an expanded view of humanity,” and “involve deliberation over the common good.”¹⁶ They have shown how this might be done in ways that are consistent with Situated Learning and Anchored Instruction discussed above.

Barton and Levstik argue that it is possible to teach history in a way that both develops a sense of national identity and explores the contested and complex nature of that identity; that opens up the discussions of difference, exclusion and inclusion. National history should focus in part on the struggle by various groups over time to be included in the national community in the formal, legal and political sense, as well as in the sociological sense. Canada, like Britain and Australia, is recognized as a multi-national state. Traditional and conservative approaches to history teaching regard this as a problem that can be fixed through the presentation of compelling and heroic versions of the nation’s past. Barton and Levstik propose opening up this investigation of multinationalism. This requires asking questions that compel the student to address what groups or nations have been included in the state, how they came to be included, and how their perceptions of that inclusion shape or affect their civic participation. What, if any, legal and administrative structures are in place to recognize the various nations and provide them with some autonomy?

Kymlicka and Norman point out that national minorities are only one of a range of minority groups that exist in most modern nation states.¹⁷ It is important in history and citizenship education to explore the range of experiences of exclusion, inclusion and social justice. Nuanced history programs “can help to establish a new narrative of the nation, including a new portrayal of the self and those previously designated as Other.”¹⁸ It is also possible for young children to begin to develop fairly complex understandings of diversity and principled approaches to accommodation when there is specific attention to it by skilled teachers.

APPEALING FOR HISTORICAL MINDEDNESS

In many ways, we are arguing that the construction of an inclusive national narrative via citizenship and history education requires the cultivation of *historical mindedness* in Canadian students. This term, not to be conflated with other concepts such as historical thinking or historical consciousness, appeals to a habit of mind introduced at the dawn of the nineteenth century by The American Historical Society, which formed a Committee of Seven to report on *The Study of History in Schools*.¹⁹ In its discussion of the “Value of Historical Study,” the Committee recommended that attention be given to the cultivation of present- and historical-mindedness, which were habits conducive to a critical awareness of contemporary life and the past.²⁰

Notable was the depiction of history in education in terms of dispositions and outlooks rather than skills or merely content. These dispositions included a detachment from immediate pressures, a willingness to search for comparisons and analogies, a readiness to subject emotions to reason, consideration of multiple perspectives in issues, and weighing the forces of continuity or change.²¹ The importance of these outlooks for educationists committed to the development of an active and critical approach to pedagogy is in no small part because the concept of *mindedness* is used in appealing to habits of mind and human life as opposed to retention of data or dexterity with particular skills.

A hundred years following the American Historical Association’s report, Ken Osborne, reviewing two texts on the subject of history education for the *Canadian Historical Review*, reintroduced the notion of historical-mindedness, describing it as “a valuable, indeed indispensable, attribute of democratic citizenship.”²² Osborne called on budding research in history to attend not only to the thoughts, habits, and morsels of knowledge that mature in studying the past, but to consider how history affects actions, worldviews, and the meanings of being human. It is in reflecting this last point that the potential for philosophical mindedness to constitute a way of considering the entire enterprise of education in the context of human life, values, and norms gains force.

Rosa Bruno-Jofré and Karen Steiner reformulated the notion of historical mindedness and articulated it as an educational aim, which they argued is vital to the promotion and establishment of an “ethically defensible vision of education.”²³ The development of historical understanding was depicted as a path towards the construction of a literate and critically minded citizenry. Historical mindedness requires, at the very least, an understanding of the implications of our actions, discourse, and ideas within various and overlapping spheres of civic activity.

Historian Herbert Kliebard explained this reflection by arguing that history’s purpose addresses and strengthens habits of deliberative and critical reflective inquiry into contemporary civic and educational contexts:

It is the habit of holding up the taken-for-granted world to critical scrutiny, something that usually can be accomplished more easily in a historical context than in a contemporary one. Ideas and practices that seem so normal and natural in a contemporary setting often take on a certain strangeness when viewed in a historical setting, and that strangeness often permits us to see those ideas and practices in a different light.²⁴

Kliebard’s position follows that of Emile Durkheim, who held out the promise that studying history taught us neither to revel in the past, nor to be seduced by whatever is new or technological. History leads us “away from the prejudices both of neophobia and neophilia: and this is the beginning of wisdom.”²⁵

CONCLUSIONS

Citizenship education can contribute to fostering Canadian citizens committed to pluralism, deliberation, and the wider national community. This requires substantial commitment including substantive materials, opportunities for teacher education at the pre and in-service levels and dedicated space within the curriculum. It requires sustained attention to the national context. It is possible to develop a sense of being Canadian without being simplistic, narrow, or final about what those labels mean. Citizenship education and history education should be seen as intertwined, the questions of one discipline enriching the other. Cultivating a spirit of historical mindedness is one means of developing the reflective and critical habits of mind that are essential for any robust definition of Canadian citizenship.

NOTES

¹ Reid, A., Gill, J., & Sears, A. (Eds.). (2010). *Globalization, the Nation-State and the Citizen: Dilemmas and Directions for Civics and Citizenship Education*. New York and London: Routledge.

² K. Ajegbo, D. Kiwan and S. Sharma. 2007. *Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review*. London: DFES, 18.

³ Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. 2007. *Citizenship: Program of Study for Key Stage 3 and Attainment Target*. London: QAC.

- ⁴ For a fuller discussion of these trends see, Sears, A., Davies, I., & Reid, A. (2011). From Britishness to Nothingness and Back Again. In C. McGlynn & A. Mycock (Eds.), *Britishness, The View from Abroad* (pp. in press). New York: Peter Lang.
- ⁵ K. Ajegbo, D. Kiwan and S. Sharma, *Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review*, 9.
- ⁶ H. Gardner. 2006. *The Development and Education of the Mind: The Selected Works of Howard Gardner*. London and New York: Routledge, 146-147.
- ⁷ Barton, K. C., & Levstik, L. S. (2004). *Teaching History for the Common Good* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 46.
- ⁸ For a fuller discussion of both these arguments see, Sears, Davies and Reid, 'From Britishness,' and Reid, Gill and Sears, eds., *Globalization*.
- ⁹ Sears, A. (2011). Historical Thinking and Citizenship Education: It is Time to End the War. In P. Clark (Ed.), *Cliffs and Chasms: The Landscape of History Education Research History in Canada* (pp. in press). Vancouver: UBC Press.
- ¹⁰ Lee, P., & Shemilt, D. (2007). New Alchemy or Fatal Attraction? History and Citizenship. *Teaching History* (129), 14.
- ¹¹ Kiwan, D. (2008). Citizenship Education in England at the Crossroads? Four Models of Citizenship and their Implications for Ethnic and Religious Diversity. *Oxford Review of Education*, 34(1), 54.
- ¹² Tsilevich, B. (2001). New Democracies in the Old World: Remarks on Will Kymlicka's Approach to Nation-building in Post-Communist Europe. In W. Kymlicka & M. Opalski (Eds.), *Can Liberalism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe* (pp. 154-170). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 156.
- ¹³ Clark, A. (2008). *History's Children: History Wars in the Classroom*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press. Clark, A. (2009). Teaching the Nation's Story: Comparing Public Debates and Classroom Perspectives of History Education in Australia and Canada. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41(6), 745-762.
- ¹⁴ Rafael Valls, "The Spanish Civil War and the Franco Dictatorship: The Challenges of Representing a Conflictive Past in Secondary Schools," in Elizabeth A. Cole, ed., *Teaching the Violent Past: Reconciliation and History Education* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007): 164. See the other chapters in the same volume for similar reports from a variety of countries.
- ¹⁵ K. C. Barton and L. S. Levstik. 2004. *Teaching History for the Common Good* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 34-35.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 36-38.
- ¹⁷ Kymlicka, W., & Norman, W. (Eds.). (2000). *Citizenship and Diverse Societies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ¹⁸ E. A. Cole, 'Introduction: Reconciliation and History Education', in E. A. Cole, ed., *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 20.
- ¹⁹ The Report was published in 1899. The Committee, chaired by Andrew C. McLaughlin, included Herbert B. Adams, George L. Fox, Albert Bushnell Hart, Charles H. Haskins, Lucy M. Salmon, and H. Morse Stephens. The Report, in its entirety, can be found at <http://www.historians.org/pubs/archives/CommitteeofSeven/index.cfm>.
- ²⁰ <http://www.historians.org/pubs/archives/CommitteeofSeven/ReportValue.cfm> (accessed June 15, 2010).
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Osborne, Ken. 2001. "Review of the books – Knowing, teaching and learning history. Edited by P. Stearns, P. Seixas, and S. Weinburg (2000) New York University Press and – L'histoire à l' école: matière à penser. Robert Martineau (1999) Paris/Montreal: L'Harmattan," in *The Canadian Historical Review*, 82(3), 553.
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- ²⁴ Kliebard, H. M. 1995. Why history of education? *The Journal of Educational Research*, 88(4), 195.
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L'HISTOIRE ENSEIGNÉE AU QUÉBEC, L'HISTOIRE ENSEIGNÉE AU CANADA : 1995 ET 2010

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RÉSUMÉ

Un enseignement de l'histoire différent au Québec et au Canada, pensent certains, serait une source des tensions que connaît le pays. Est-ce bien fondé ? En 1995, une étude comparative de l'enseignement de l'histoire au Québec et ailleurs au Canada montrait plus de similitudes que de différences. Quinze ans plus tard, il est montré dans l'article que les similitudes restent partagées sur les choses essentielles : principes de sélection des contenus, objectifs de formation, et philosophie pédagogique. Que conclure alors ?

ABSTRACT

A different history education in Quebec than in the rest of Canada, as some people think, is a source for the tensions witnessed in this country. Is that justified? In 1995, a comparative study of history education in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada showed more similarities than differences. Fifteen years later, this article demonstrates that the similarities continue to be found in some essential aspects: principles of content selection, training objectives and pedagogical philosophy. What should we conclude from this?

*Canadian history has always been seen
and taught differently in Quebec*
– Graham Fraser, 1994

*Studying Canada's past is parochial –
Not to mention divisive*
– John Ibbitson, 2007

En 1995, dans le cadre du congrès annuel de la Société historique du Canada, je participai à une table ronde comparant l'enseignement de l'histoire au Canada français et au Canada anglais¹. Le texte était publié l'année suivante dans *Canadian Social Studies*². La perspective de cette comparaison et du texte m'était inspirée d'un article alors récent de Graham Fraser, dans le *Globe and Mail*³, qui écrivait «Canadian history has always been seen and taught differently in Quebec», la citation placée en exergue du présent article. Plus récemment, c'est le chroniqueur John Ibbitson, du même journal, qui

écrivait : «Studying Canada's past is parochial – Not to mention divisive»⁴, l'autre citation en exergue. Pour l'un et l'autre, c'était exprimer un point de vue qui semblait et semble encore courant au Canada anglais. Il entretient l'opinion que l'enseignement de l'histoire, particulièrement un enseignement de l'histoire au Québec différent de celui du Canada, serait une cause importante de division entre les Québécois de langue française et les Canadiens anglais, qu'il serait une des sources principales des tensions constitutionnelles qui n'en finissent pas d'occuper la scène politique.

À mon avis, ce n'est pas si simple. Il y a quinze ans, quand que je comparais les situations de l'enseignement de l'histoire au Québec et dans les provinces canadiennes, il me semblait voir plus de similitudes que de différences. J'examinais alors, de façon particulière, l'enseignement de l'histoire nationale, vu l'enjeu évoqué ci-devant, en me centrant sur le secondaire, à partir des septième ou huitième années dans certaines provinces. J'y considérais

d'abord l'offre d'histoire et les contenus, puis les objectifs visés. Dans la plupart des provinces, les programmes en vigueur dataient des années 1980. Ici, je commencerai par rappeler mes observations d'il y a quinze ans, puis j'examinerai la situation actuelle pour voir ce qui en est advenu. Toujours avec le même regard comparatif.

PREMIÈRE PARTIE : IL Y A QUINZE ANS

PERSPECTIVES ET CONTENUS

En 1995, je constatais d'abord que ce que certains semblaient considérer comme une manifestation de nationalisme dans les programmes du Québec, c'est-à-dire le fait de se centrer sur la population de la province et sembler ignorer le Canada, pouvait n'être que la simple application du vieux principe pédagogique qui consiste à partir du milieu de vie, à aller du connu vers l'inconnu, du concret vers l'abstrait. Le programme d'histoire nationale, intitulé *Histoire du Québec et du Canada*, était effectivement centré sur le Québec et les Québécois, c'est-à-dire sur les réalités qu'un élève peut rencontrer dans son milieu de vie, telles des traces concrètes de la colonisation française du XVII^e siècle ou la réalité contemporaine de l'immigration. Mais ce n'était pas un enfermement sur soi, puisqu'il s'agissait bien de faire comprendre «les principales conditions qui ont façonné le Québec *dans le contexte canadien*»⁵, comme demandait le premier objectif du programme.

On procédait de la même façon dans les autres provinces, en inscrivant les programmes d'histoire nationale dans la réalité et le milieu de vie des élèves. Ainsi, à Terre-Neuve et Labrador, le cours d'histoire de 9^e année ne retournait en arrière que jusqu'à la Confédération, comme si le pays dont le Terre-Neuve est membre depuis 1949 n'avait pas de racines antérieures, et était explicitement élaboré dans la perspective des Maritimes⁶. À l'autre bout du pays, en Colombie-Britannique, le cours de 10^e année sur le développement de la nation canadienne commençait aussi avec la Confédération et consacrait deux de ses quatre thèmes, l'un au développement de l'Ouest, l'autre aux rapports du Canada avec les régions du Pacifique et du sous-continent indien. La même centration sur les rapports avec les nations du Pacifique se trouvait dans le programme de 7^e année en Saskatchewan⁷. Dans certaines provinces, des cours spécifiques d'histoire étaient offerts en fonction des origines culturelles ou linguistiques des élèves. À l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, par exemple, un cours d'histoire de l'Île était destiné aux anglophones, mais un cours d'histoire des Acadiennes et des Acadiens pour les francophones⁸. C'était bien prendre en compte, comme dans les programmes du Québec, la réalité du milieu des élèves auxquels les cours étaient destinés.

Quant aux contenus, les paramètres appliqués dans les programmes étaient substantiellement semblables au Québec et dans les provinces anglophones du Canada. Inspirés par les grandes tendances historiographiques de l'époque, les programmes s'étaient largement tournés vers l'histoire sociale. Dans la perspective d'une histoire qui tienne compte de tous et de toute la réalité sociale présente, on avait vu apparaître les nombreux groupes auparavant ignorés ainsi que la variété de leurs apports : amérindiens, femmes, ouvriers, paysans, minorités diverses, etc., et notamment les communautés culturelles et les Canadiens et Québécois issus de l'immigration. Car au Québec comme ailleurs au Canada, l'enseignement de l'histoire s'était ouvert à une perspective multiculturelle, (ou interculturelle, comme on préfère dire au Québec) : «l'histoire nationale concerne tous les Québécois, quelle que soit leur origine ethnique, linguistique, sociale ou religieuse, déclarait d'entrée le programme québécois. Par conséquent, elle doit refléter leur diversité.»

OBJECTIFS ET CITOYENNETÉ

Au Québec comme ailleurs au Canada, l'objectif de formation des citoyens par l'histoire était central, plus affirmé peut-être dans les provinces anglaises, du fait de la tradition des *social studies* qui se sont toujours largement définies en fonction de cet objectif. Dans certaines de ces provinces, le cours d'histoire était doublé d'un cours de *civics*, ce qui n'était pas le cas au Québec, où l'histoire gardait une situation quasi monopoliste en égard à la formation du citoyen. Mais partout au Canada, le citoyen visé n'était pas celui auquel un discours historique préétabli dictait l'identité, les valeurs auxquelles adhérer et le comportement à tenir. C'était au contraire le citoyen vivant en démocratie, c'est-à-dire un citoyen informé et capable de s'informer par lui-même, capable aussi de participation libre, active et réfléchie aux multiples niveaux de la vie dans une société démocratique⁹.

En conséquence, les programmes d'histoire se montraient moins préoccupés de faire acquérir des savoirs construits d'avance — sans les exclure toutefois — que d'amener les élèves à développer leurs capacités à traiter de tels savoirs, et à en construire eux-mêmes éventuellement. Au Québec, et dans la plupart des provinces, les programmes étaient ordonnés autour d'habiletés, intellectuelles et autres, à faire acquérir et se développer : les fameuses *skills* au Canada, que certains ne manquèrent pas de vilipender, comme l'Ontarien Bob Davis¹⁰, ou les savoir-faire et les savoir-être, comme on écrivait dans les programmes du Québec. Présentés en objectifs de capacités à exercer, les programmes ne donnaient pas toujours le détail des contenus factuels à enseigner, les laissant largement à la discrétion des enseignants. Ce qui ne veut pas dire que ces programmes

étaient dénués d'orientation. Pas moins au Québec qu'ailleurs, puisque l'inscription dans le Canada transparaissait clairement, à travers des objectifs tels : « Expliquer les origines de la fédération canadienne et les principaux rouages de l'Acte de l'Amérique du Nord britannique »; « Caractériser l'évolution du Québec au sein de la nouvelle réalité canadienne ».

Au Québec, comme dans les autres provinces canadiennes, l'apprentissage de ces *skills* et savoir-faire passait par une attention particulière accordée à l'apprentissage du mode de pensée historien. On utilisait pour cela l'expression « démarche historique » ou, ailleurs au Canada, diverses appellations tournant autour d'*historical thinking* (*method, methodology of history, historical problem solving, etc.*). Mais il s'agissait toujours, à terme, d'enseigner aux élèves à appliquer sur diverses réalités historiques et sociales du passé des capacités de connaissance et de compréhension qu'ils auraient à exercer de façon réfléchie et autonome dans leur vie de citoyen.

En 1995, donc, l'enseignement de l'histoire au Québec français et au Canada anglais partageait des similitudes sur l'essentiel, c'est-à-dire la façon de déterminer les contenus d'enseignement et la nature des objectifs visés. Qu'en est-il quinze ans après ?

SECONDE PARTIE : QUINZE ANS PLUS TARD

PERSPECTIVES ET CONTENUS

En 1995, déjà, il y avait davantage de cours d'histoire obligatoires au Québec que dans la plupart des provinces du Canada, et la réussite d'un cours d'histoire nationale était exigée pour l'obtention du diplôme d'études secondaires. Maintenant, il existe au Québec un cours d'histoire obligatoire à chacune des cinq années du secondaire et la réussite du cours d'histoire nationale des 3^e et 4^e années du secondaire reste requise, alors qu'aucune province canadienne ne paraît offrir un telle somme d'histoire et que trois seulement exigent de suivre et réussir un cours d'histoire du Canada pour le diplôme de fin d'études¹¹. Les provinces anglaises offrent cependant des cours de *social studies* qui comprennent souvent de larges portions d'histoire, dont celle du Canada. Mais ce n'est pas un enjeu auquel je souhaite m'arrêter.

Quinze ans après ma première étude, je constate qu'au Québec et dans les autres provinces canadiennes la profondeur dans la durée et la couverture spatiale de référence des programmes d'histoire continuent de se distinguer, mais de façon analogue. Ces deux dimensions ont d'ailleurs connu en cours de route divers changements de perspective et de contenus. Au Québec, le programme s'est resserré plus sur l'histoire du Québec et des Québécois. La perspective canadienne était encore soulignée dans le titre, le contenu et les objectifs du

programme antérieur : son titre comprenait le mot Canada, et comme je l'ai rappelé plus tôt, son premier « objectif de formation » était de faire comprendre à l'élève « les principales conditions [...] qui ont façonné le Québec *dans le contexte canadien*¹² ». Depuis, le programme d'histoire est devenu plus qu'avant un programme d'histoire *nationale* du Québec¹³. Incidemment, quand l'Institut du Dominion affirme dans son *Bulletin en histoire au Canada* « que la portée du nouveau programme scolaire en histoire est plus nationale (au sens Canadien) que jadis¹⁴ », on se demande où ils ont pris ça.

Il reste que cette tendance à se centrer sur soi-même n'est pas plus aujourd'hui qu'il y a quinze ans un caractère particulièrement québécois. Le même Institut du Dominion constate d'ailleurs, dans son *Bulletin*, qu'« en ce qui concerne l'équilibre entre l'histoire provinciale/régionale et nationale, plusieurs provinces ont obtenu des résultats plutôt faibles à cet égard, étant donné le contenu négligeable en histoire nationale¹⁵ ». Ainsi, à Terre-Neuve et au Labrador, le cours d'histoire de 8^e année se centre sur l'histoire de la province et ne commence qu'au tournant du XIX^e siècle. Celui de 10^e année, qui est le seul cours d'histoire du Canada, est facultatif et commence en 1759 seulement, oubliant les racines dans l'histoire du Canada actuel. Quant au cours de *social studies* obligatoire de 10^e année, s'il contient une bonne part d'histoire, il est centré sur le Canada atlantique. On retrouve d'ailleurs une telle centration dans un ou des cours construits dans le même esprit dans les autres provinces maritimes. En Nouvelle Écosse, c'est sous ce chapeau que l'on retrouve un *Atlantic Canada in the Global Community* en 9^e année. Quant au cours d'histoire du Canada facultatif de 11^e année, il est en concurrence dans les choix des élèves pour des cours comme *African Canadian Studies* ou *Gaelic Studies*, ce qui correspond encore à des préoccupations locales. Il est vrai que si les provinces maritimes semblent cultiver plus que d'autres leur identité particulière, c'est peut-être un effet de leur association dans le consortium *Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum*. Ailleurs au Canada anglais, on voit maintenant des programmes qui, en additionnant différents cours, finissent par offrir les quatre siècles d'histoire du pays. En Colombie-Britannique, par exemple, si le seul cours à porter principalement sur l'histoire du Canada est facultatif et ne s'intéresse qu'au 20^e siècle, les élèves auront eu auparavant de substantiels morceaux d'histoire, couvrant de 1500 à 1815, dans les cours obligatoires de *Social studies* de 9^e et 10^e années. De même en Alberta, où les élèves de 7^e année auront eu un survol de l'histoire du Canada dans leurs cours de *Social studies*, avant de passer à un autre cours portant sur le nationalisme (11^e année) — une question importante au Canada s'il en est une — puis à un nouveau

cours d'histoire du Canada pour ceux et celles qui le voudraient. Ces provinces et les autres ne se priveront pas, ce faisant, de souligner leurs conditions historiques particulières, tout comme on le fait au Québec. Par exemple, en Alberta, la phase de développement des Prairies dans la période post-confédération reçoit une attention spéciale en 7^e année.

Au Québec comme au Canada, les contenus sont de plus en plus composés d'histoire sociale. Certaines provinces tiennent à le souligner : « Stronger emphasis on economic history, increased awareness of social history », et « Less emphasis on Political History », est-il précisé en présentation du programme à Terre-Neuve. Les provinces anglaises restent fortement attachées aux principes du multiculturalisme, à sa mise en valeur et à son contenu historique. Le Québec était déjà attentif au pluralisme en 1995, mais son nouveau programme a nettement renforcé l'attention portée aux communautés culturelles et aux minorités. Cela vaut aussi pour la place accordée aux amérindiens. Ainsi, une unité complète parmi les sept que comporte le programme de 3^e année du secondaire leur est consacrée, et ils apparaissent aussi fréquemment que le réel historique le permet dans les autres unités et dans les sujets de l'année suivante. Cela reste cependant bien moindre que ce qu'offrent à leurs élèves plusieurs des provinces canadiennes-anglaises, où la part faite aux amérindiens dans les programmes d'histoire du Canada est souvent plus que substantielle, où on trouve des cours autonomes à leur sujet, et même des programmes complets de *Native Studies* (Saskatchewan, Nouveau-Brunswick), *Mi'kaq Studies* (Nouvelle-Écosse), *First Nation Studies* (Colombie-Britannique), *Aboriginal Studies* (Alberta) et autres du genre. Souvent, encore, on a cette attention mais en restant replié sur sa région, comme au Nouveau-Brunswick où le programme de *Native Studies* se centre sur les Micmacs et les Malécites, habitants historiques de la région, de la même façon qu'au Québec on privilégie les Amérindiens ayant vécu dans la vallée du St-Laurent.

Avec la même volonté de tenir compte de leur population particulière dans l'offre de cours d'histoire, des provinces qui abritent une forte minorité francophone ont des programmes adaptés ou des programmes spécifiques pour cette partie de la population. Ainsi, en Ontario, un programme d'histoire du Canada, qui en trois cours va de la Nouvelle-France à nos jours, a été traduit et adapté pour les Canadiens français. Un cours spécifique intitulé *L'Ontario français* leur est également offert en 12^e année. Au Nouveau-Brunswick, ce sont des programmes carrément différents de ceux des anglophones qui sont offerts aux francophones. En place de l'obligatoire *Canadian identity* de 9^e année et du cours facultatif d'histoire du Canada de 12^e qui ne commence

qu'en 1967, les francophones suivent un cours d'histoire du Canada en 11^e année, puis un cours d'histoire de l'Acadie l'année suivante, l'un et l'autre des origines à nos jours. La plupart des autres provinces anglaises offrent leurs programmes en traduction française, avec nulle ou peu d'adaptation toutefois, à l'intention des classes d'immersion notamment. C'est aussi sans l'adapter que le Québec offre son programme d'histoire nationale dans les écoles de langue anglaise. Ce qui lui est souvent reproché dans la communauté.

En termes de perspective et de contenus, le programme d'histoire nationale au Québec manifeste une préoccupation d'ouverture au monde que l'on perçoit également dans les provinces anglaises. Encore que dans celles-ci, c'est plutôt à l'extérieur des programmes d'histoire nationale, mais à l'occasion dans des programmes de *social studies* comprenant une part d'histoire du Canada. Ainsi dans le nouveau *Canada and Our Pacific and Northern Neighbours* de 7^e année en Saskatchewan, où il est suggéré aux enseignants « *to have students explore other countries of immediate global importance or that are currently in the news* ». Une vingtaine de pays sont alors proposés. Au Québec, cela prend la forme d'invitations systématiques à aller voir ailleurs dans le monde, dans une perspective comparative, pour chacun des chapitres du programme. Par exemple, à l'occasion du chapitre sur la colonisation en Nouvelle-France, le programme suggère d'aller jeter un coup d'œil sur des entreprises coloniales à la même époque au Brésil, à Pondichéry, aux Moluques, en Virginie.

OBJECTIFS ET CITOYENNETÉ

Quinze ans plus tard, dans les provinces du Canada anglais, les cours d'histoire ont conservé et même dans plusieurs cas ont accentué l'objectif de formation du citoyen, tant dans les programmes d'histoire que dans le contenu historique des cours de *social studies*. Un semblable objectif était énoncé en 1995 au Québec dans les programmes d'histoire, mais sans toujours recevoir dans la réalité des classes l'attention qu'il aurait méritée. Alors, pour mieux en souligner l'importance et bien attirer l'attention sur cet objectif, il a été décidé de nommer tous les cours d'histoire, dont ceux d'histoire « nationale » des 3^e et 4^e années du secondaire : *Histoire et éducation à la citoyenneté*. Alors que dans quelques provinces anglaises l'histoire partage cette mission avec des cours intitulés *Civics* ou *Civics studies*, comme en Ontario et en Colombie-Britannique, dans l'école québécoise c'est l'histoire qui reçoit la responsabilité première de la formation du citoyen.

Au Québec comme ailleurs, ce qui est souhaité, c'est un citoyen informé, lucide, disposé à agir aux multiples niveaux de la réalité sociale, comme il est supposé du

citoyen en démocratie. Ainsi à Terre-Neuve et Labrador, où le programme de *social studies*, qui comprend l'histoire, vise à «*empower students to be informed, responsible citizens of Canada and the world, and to participate in the democratic process to improve society.*» Chaque province anglaise annonce un objectif de ce genre. Au Québec, on parle de «préparer les élèves à participer de façon responsable, en tant que citoyens, à la délibération, aux choix de société et au vivre-ensemble dans une société démocratique, pluraliste et ouverte sur un monde complexe.» Ce qui est bien dans le même esprit. Partout, alors, développer la capacité de penser par soi-même et d'agir socialement est préféré à la simple acquisition de connaissances factuelles.

Plus encore de nos jours qu'en 1995, les programmes entendent remplir leur mission en favorisant le développement de la pensée historique. Quinze ans plus tard, on préfère voir ce mode de pensée dans le cheminement logique de ses opérations successives, plutôt que sous la forme des savoir-faire ponctuels (les *skills*), isolés les uns des autres, que les programmes proposaient antérieurement. Ce qui est plutôt envisagé, c'est d'apprendre aux élèves à acquérir des connaissances par eux-mêmes et à résoudre des problèmes complets et complexes, comme on doit le faire dans la vie, en s'exerçant pour cela sur des objets d'histoire. La démarche compte alors plus que le contenu. Le programme de 9^e année d'Ontario décrit une telle démarche : «*They should develop a clear focus for their investigations by formulating appropriate questions on historical topics. Students must learn to consider chronology and cause-and-effect relationships in order to successfully organize, analyze, interpret, and apply their findings.*» Le Québec participe entièrement à cet esprit, mais va un pas plus loin en soulignant franchement l'association entre l'apprentissage de l'histoire et l'éducation à la citoyenneté. Le programme d'histoire y est ordonné autour de trois compétences — le mot que l'on a préféré pour remplacer ceux de savoir-faire, de savoir-être ou d'habiletés : 1) «Interroger les réalités sociales dans une perspective historique», 2) «Interpréter les réalités sociales à l'aide de la méthode historique», les deux se conjuguant pour fonder la troisième compétence : «Consolider l'exercice de sa citoyenneté à l'aide de l'histoire». «Interroger» et «interpréter», c'est-à-dire les mêmes opérations intellectuelles mentionnées dans le programme ontarien ci-devant, et qui sont bien les articulations fondamentales d'une démarche historique, pour ensuite, ces compétences une fois acquises, servir de fondements aux compétences citoyennes des élèves. «C'est par l'interrogation et l'interprétation fréquentes des réalités sociales, explique le programme, qu'ils établis-

sent les assises historiques de leur citoyenneté et en consolident l'exercice». Sauf cette insistance pour souligner au grand jour le rapport entre l'apprentissage de l'histoire et la formation du citoyen, les programmes du Québec procèdent encore là du même esprit que ceux d'ailleurs au Canada.

CONCLUSION

En 1995, je terminais mon intervention au congrès de la Société historique du Canada de la façon suivante : «Le regard que nous avons porté ici sur l'enseignement de l'histoire au Québec francophone, en le comparant à celui offert chez les anglophones du Canada, a surtout montré des similitudes, d'esprit du moins, dans le type de perspective historique appliquée et d'objectifs poursuivis.»¹⁶ Quinze ans plus tard, nous avons constaté que le Québec comme la plupart des provinces anglaises sélectionnent encore les contenus et la durée d'histoire couverte en fonction de leur réalité historique et géographique particulière, avec comme conséquence que la part d'histoire régionale prend souvent le pas sur l'histoire nationale du Canada, que l'histoire sociale a continué à s'imposer dans les programmes, avec une attention accrue portée aux amérindiens et aux minorités, que la fonction de formation du citoyen reste forte, jusqu'à devenir la cible terminale des programmes d'histoire au Québec, et que, sauf exception, cette formation passe par le développement de la pensée, avec notamment un accent mis sur ce qui est généralement nommé la pensée historique. Un autre regard aurait certainement noté et souligné des différences, mais je continue à croire que les enseignements de l'histoire respectifs se spécifient d'abord ces grandes similitudes.

Dans ces conditions, laisser supposer qu'un enseignement de l'histoire différent au Québec de celui du Canada serait une cause importante de division entre les Québécois de langue française et les Canadiens, qu'il serait une des sources principales des tensions constitutionnelles qui n'en finissent pas d'occuper la scène politique, cela pourrait bien n'être qu'une exagération sinon une illusion. C'est pourtant ce que font les deux auteurs cités en exergue, et de nombreux autres qui au Canada anglais semblent penser de même. Une illusion malheureuse possible, car elle risquerait de conduire à négliger ou sous-estimer d'autres facteurs de plus grande importance.

NOTES

- ¹ *A Comparison of Franco-Canadian and Anglo-Canadian Approaches to teaching history and social studies in schools*. Montréal, 74th Annual Conference of The Canadian Historical Association, 26 août 1995.
- ² “History Taught in Quebec is not Really that Different from the History Taught Elsewhere in Canada”. *Canadian Social Studies*, vol. 31, no 1 (automne 1996), p. 22-24 et 42).
- ³ Le 6 février 1994.
- ⁴ *The Globe and Mail*, 30 juin 2007.
- ⁵ Mon souligné.
- ⁶ Le titre du manuel recommandé, *Canada since Confederation – an Atlantic perspective*, en témoignait d’ailleurs clairement.
- ⁷ Voir *ibid.*, p. 70.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 144.
- ⁹ Le programme d’histoire de dernière année au Québec proposait même l’engagement social de l’élève comme objectif final de la formation.
- ¹⁰ *Whatever happened to high school history? : burying the political memory of youth: Ontario, 1945-1995*, Toronto, J. Lorimer, 1995. Il a depuis repris sa charge avec *Skills mania: snake oil in our schools ?* Toronto, Between the Lines, 2000.
- ¹¹ Selon une étude récente de L’Institut du Dominion. Voir *Bulletin en histoire au Canada*, [Toronto], l’Institut du Dominion, 2009. On peut accéder au *Bulletin* en question à <http://bulletin.dominion.ca/>
- ¹² Notre souligné.
- ¹³ Bien que certains en doutent. Une vive polémique a éclaté à ce sujet en 1996. On lirait les principaux points de vue dans les nos 4 vol. 60 et 2 vol. 61 de la *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française* (2007).
- ¹⁴ *Bulletin...*, p. 6.
- ¹⁵ *Id.*
- ¹⁶ Voir aussi « History Taught in Quebec... », *op. cit.*, p. 24.

BEWARE “SHARED MEMORY”

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ABSTRACT

Influential pundits have lamented the lack of a shared history that might somehow bind Canadians together. But we are better off without “shared memory”: a pluralism of interpretations of history keeps us from confusing any particular interpretation with History itself. We need to share, not memory, but a willingness to keep arguing about our past.

RÉSUMÉ

Des experts influents ont déploré l’absence d’une histoire partagée qui pourrait, d’une manière quelconque, rassembler les Canadiens. Mais on ne devrait pas souhaiter avoir une “mémoire partagée”: une pluralité d’interprétations de l’histoire nous aide à ne pas confondre une interprétation particulière avec l’Histoire elle-même. Nous devons partager, pas la mémoire, mais la volonté de continuer à discuter de notre passé.

“Traditions, when vital, embody continuities of conflict.”

– Alasdair MacIntyre,
After Virtue

A stupid dog chases a car. At each instant, it aims at the current location of the vehicle. Since the car is moving, the dog’s path traces out a curve, and it runs farther than necessary. Thus the stupid dog. A clever dog chases a car. It makes a rough estimate of its speed and that of the car, and runs in a straight line to where the car will be when the paths of the dog and car intersect. Thus the clever dog. And the wise dog? It calmly watches the car pass by, saying to itself “Just what would I do with a car were I to catch it?”¹

Throughout history, many clever thinkers have laboured to develop a shared memory. And no wonder: in his famous talk on the nation, French historian Ernest Renan commented:

“Prenez une ville comme Salonique ou Smyrne, vous y trouverez cinq ou six communautés dont chacune a ses souvenirs et qui n’ont entre elles presque rien en commun. Or l’essence d’une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses.”

If Renan is right, then a people becomes a nation only when a shared memory has been constructed

through a determined effort of highlighting... and erasing.

In this case, could we ever be a nation? I began my education at the École St-Joachim in Pointe-Claire, Quebec. There we learned the glorious history of New France. I still carry vivid images of Dollard blowing himself up in a heroic attempt to protect Ville-Marie from attack, of de Maisonneuve carrying a cross up Mt. Royal in thanksgiving after floodwaters receded. Given the history that my friends in English school were studying at the time, it has always struck me that Canada’s chances of forging a shared memory are close to non-existent.

This has not stopped clever people from trying to develop a “shared narrative” that might bind, if not Canada, then at least the Rest of Canada, that place where history begins, rather than ends, in 1759. So let us ask the question of the wise dog: just what would we do with a shared memory were we able to invent one?

One answer is sadly obvious: there has always been an intimate link between memory and militarism. Near the beginning of Homer’s *Iliad*, the Greeks discuss whether to withdraw from the siege of Troy. Agamemnon declares: “Shameful indeed that future men should hear, we fought so long here, with such weight of arms, all uselessly! We made long war for nothing” (Para. 2.119-22). A storyteller begins his story by imagining his characters thinking about the history that will be told about them: the verdict of history is a tool of discipline. An argument ever ancient and ever new: throughout the Vietnam War it was argued that the U.S. would dishonour its dead were

it to pull out. The only way properly to honour the dead, apparently, was to send more off to die.

War and memory are as closely linked today as they ever were. One writer quite conscious of this is Jack Granatstein. Consider his musings on Afghanistan and Iraq. Granatstein cites an official's claim that Canada moved its troops to the Kandahar region, a decision that has cost many Canadian lives, as atonement for our refusal to join the 2003 invasion of Iraq (2007, 92). One might think that Canada should not atone for what has clearly turned out to be a wise choice, but Granatstein feels otherwise: "Canada's economy depends on trade with the United States, and this dependence cannot be changed. We are extremely vulnerable if the administration in Washington is unhappy with us, and we are in peril if border crossings are slowed for even a few minutes more for each truck or if passports are required to cross the border. The need to keep the economy strong ought to have determined the Iraq question for us" (2007, 151).

But there is a problem: would anyone be willing to risk being killed by an IED in order that Ford Canada's shipments to Ford U.S. might spend two minutes less at the border? As G. K. Chesterton once observed, the reasons of *realpolitik* are "almost insanely unreal" for those who must die for them (1925, 158). And so: Enters history, stage right. History being a tremendously pliable thing, a new story can be built and sold, one which constructs Canada as a warrior nation, whose legacy of courage and valour will inspire young Canadians: Inspire them to "Take up our quarrel with the foe," without inquiring too closely just how this foe became a foe, or whether this is a "quarrel" that it is prudent to pursue.

We can observe various expressions of this effort to invent a new warrior history. Granatstein himself strives to destroy the "myth" of Canada as a peacekeeping nation, and ridicules Canadians for embracing that myth.² Canada's new citizenship guide mentions Canada's peacekeeping history just once, but gives extensive space to our military history.³ And, of course, we have the apotheosis of Vimy Ridge, which has morphed from a generally forgotten battle to represent "the birth of a nation" (CIC 2009, 21).⁴

But not every attempt to build a shared memory is linked to the ideological demands of war. Rudyard Griffiths's *Who We Are: A Citizen's Manifesto* emphasizes, not Vimy, but episodes such as the 1840s' reform efforts of LaFontaine and Baldwin. His highlighting of particular moments in Canadian history allows him to make such claims as: "Hard-wired into our collective memory is an awareness of the harm nineteenth-century sectarian variants caused to the country" (2009, 151).⁵

Juxtaposition of the efforts of Griffiths, Granatstein, and the Harper Conservatives, suggests a useful

metaphor: their use of history is akin to the firebrand preacher's recourse to "proof texts." The prooftexter "mines" scripture (or history) in order to support a pre-established argument. This is the polar opposite of approaching a text or history with a willingness to learn something that we don't already know, something that may even unsettle us (Gadamer 1989, 269).⁶ The prooftexter masquerading as a historian, then, is a ventriloquist. The 'voice' is that of the oracle History: "History proves that..." But the words are not: 'history' is not free to speak its own lines. "Pay attention to history" really means "Pay attention to the argument I wish to make."

Dragging in this or that historical event as support for one's current political agenda is an immortal tactic of rhetoric, and in itself need not be too damaging.⁷ But prooftexters become truly noxious when people don't realize just what they are up to: a particular reading of scripture becomes *the* "literal" truth. A particular invocation of history becomes our *true* history, the history of "the Canadian nation and people," as opposed to the history of "the grievors among us" (Granatstein 1998, xiii).

The best way not to be bamboozled in this respect is probably to sustain a pluralism of prooftexters. And that means that the thing we have most to fear is a unified "understanding" of Canadian history: under today's political conditions at least, that unity will not be forged by a patient and honest search to understand all that our history might have to teach us, but through an authoritarian imposition of a politically useful narrative. So we need diversity, not merely ethnic diversity, but political diversity as well, in our readings of history, in order to maintain our very openness to history, to sustain the awareness that it has more to tell us, that history never speaks its last word.

Thus, for example: the conservative wishing to support the war in Afghanistan declares that World War II was when "Canada joined with its democratic allies in the fight to defeat tyranny by force of arms" (CIC 2009, 23). But one who seeks to challenge Canada's close alliance with the U.S. might present the war as a time when Canada had the courage to confront a world power that had demonstrated its contempt for smaller nations and international law. And the environmental activist, observing our government's strategy of taking the climate challenge no more seriously than our neighbours, might present Canada's early declaration of war as a crucial occasion when Canada was not content timidly to follow the lead of the U.S. Other invocations of that single event are no doubt possible.

As the example suggests, the goal is simply to sustain openness to different invocations and interpretations of history, not to encourage the proliferation of parallel

histories in which anyone is free to concoct whatever “facts” suit their agenda.⁸ Nor does openness to different interpretations entail a relativism that says that all interpretations are equally valid. One can make a reasonable case, for example, that Trudeau announced a policy of multiculturalism in 1971 as a means to counter Quebec nationalism, or that he sought to bolster Liberal support within various ethnic communities. The claim that he hoped that multiculturalism would convert Canada into “an advance pawn of the Third World in the Western Hemisphere” (Jonas 2006), on the other hand, cannot withstand scrutiny. Different interpretations and invocations of history should be tested against each other, not juxtaposed in untouchable cocoons.

This argument for a pluralism of invocations of history might sound like a brief for cacophony. To return to Renan’s argument, am I saying that Canada should content itself with being another “Salonica or Smyrna,” fractured by our private memories? On the contrary, *history shows* (see, I can do it too!) that we can be united through our pluralism. The unity we need with respect to our history is the shared understanding that we must continue to argue about our past, continue to put forward different readings of it. This is no small thing: to have a shared commitment to argument about our history really would mark us off from so many nations today that are obsessed with imposing a single reading upon their past.

So do we have the courage to be comfortable with a pluralism of historical understandings, or shall we continue, like the dog who is clever, but not wise, to chase after something we really shouldn’t want to attain?

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NOTES

- ¹ In the language of critical theory, the clever dog displays “cognitive-instrumental” rationality: its methods are well tailored to its goal, but the goal itself is unquestioned. The wise dog displays “practical” rationality: it can question the goals themselves. See, e.g, Habermas (1984, 238).
- ² “I am Canadian, I am a peacekeeper, our citizens say, and we are the world’s moral superpower with armed forces that can threaten no one. And, we add, there is no one to threaten us and, were any to try, well, the Americans would defend us ” (Granatstein 2007, 54).
- ³ This is in stark contrast to the previous citizenship guide. There, the header for the section “What Does Canadian Citizenship Mean?” declares: “We are proud of the fact that we are a peaceful nation. In fact, Canadians act as peacekeepers in many countries around the world” (CIC 2005, 7).
- ⁴ I examined Globe and Mail mentions of Vimy Ridge from 1950 to 2009. From 1950-1984, slightly over three articles per year mention the battle, often just in obituaries. Interest picks up in the new century: nineteen articles annually from 2000-2004, and thirty-six per year in the subsequent five years. As the battle occurred in April, coverage often increases in that month. April 2007 alone saw forty-six articles. In contrast, I can find only two April mentions from 1950-1962: a 1952 obituary and a letter from a reader who was “amazed and discouraged” that the paper gave the battle “not one line” on its 1951 anniversary.
- ⁵ The claim provokes a question: were the memory truly “hard-wired,” why would Griffiths have to write a book to remind us of it?

- ⁶ This openness does not require that we be free of biases, that we have attained a "view from nowhere" (Nagel 1979). On the contrary, our openness can reveal our biases to us, so long as we are sensitive to the moments when we are "pulled up short" by our reading of a text or of history (Gadamer 1989, 268).
- ⁷ This rhetorical invocation of history is not limited to any particular part of the political spectrum. In 1987, I was picking coffee with my Nicaraguan government coworkers at La Sorpresa, within the war zone. Our return to Managua was delayed by a couple of weeks, which led to much grumbling. We were then gathered together and told that our privations were as nothing compared to the "heroic resistance" of the citizens of Stalingrad during World War II, privations depicted at some length. (In case this history failed to inspire us to heights of stoic heroism, the speaker added: "Oh, and if you do try to leave, we will have to shoot you.")
- ⁸ It surely cannot be healthy for the body politic, for example, that many Americans continue to believe that weapons of mass destruction were actually found in Iraq.

WHAT'S IN YOUR TOP TEN? ETHNIC IDENTITY AND SIGNIFICANCE IN CANADIAN HISTORY¹

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ABSTRACT

Out of everything that has happened in Canada's history, how do you decide which people, events, or developments are the most significant? This is the task I put before an ethnically diverse group of grade twelve students living in British Columbia in an effort to understand what they would denote as significant in Canadian history and the criteria they would use to make their decisions. In this article, I explore the concept of historical significance and investigate how students' ethnic identities influenced their ascriptions of significance and their subsequent narrations of Canadian history.

RÉSUMÉ

Parmi tout ce qui s'est passé historiquement au Canada, comment choisir quels personnages, événements ou évolutions sont les plus importants? C'est la tâche que j'assigne à un groupe ethniquement divers composé d'élèves de Colombie-Britannique de 12^e année, afin de comprendre ce qu'ils considèrent important dans l'histoire canadienne et les critères qu'ils utilisent pour prendre ces décisions. Dans ce texte, j'explore le concept de l'importance historique et cherche à comprendre comment les identités ethniques des élèves influencent l'octroi de l'importance historique et la narration subséquente de l'histoire canadienne.

If you were asked to create a timeline of the ten most significant events in Canadian history, what events would you include? Confederation? The creation of Residential Schools? The Japanese Internment? Pearson's Nobel Peace Prize? One or both of the World Wars? Out of everything that has happened in Canada's history, how would you narrow down your choices? This is the task I put before an ethnically diverse group of grade twelve students living in British Columbia in an effort to understand what events they would denote as significant in Canadian history and, more importantly, the criteria they used to select the events that they did. In this article, I explore the concept of historical significance and investigate how students' ethnic identities influenced their ascriptions of significance and their subsequent narrations of Canadian history.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVES AND SIGNIFICANCE

The construction of historical narratives involves, among other things, the purposeful selection of historical

people, places, and events and the explanation of the relationships between them. At a very basic level, historical narratives answer the questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how? In consideration of these questions, historians mobilize evidence, establish causation, and make decisions about significance. "What is the narrative about?" is the essential starting point. Establish this, and historians can more easily answer questions about timeframe (beginnings and endings), actors and their actions, and context.

Another approach to constructing historical narratives is to focus on a particular event and then build a narrative around it. Instead of starting with the question, "What is this narrative about?" some may begin by asking, "What matters in history?", "What am I interested in?" or "Why is it important to know about this?" An example of this in Canadian history is the World War I battle at Vimy Ridge. For decades, historians and Canadian history textbook authors have pointed to this battle as the precise moment that a modern Canadian identity was formed; an

identity based on collaborative achievement and sacrifice. Vimy became the anchor to which historians and textbook authors hung narratives of the forging of Canada's national identity.

In either approach, the historian's central concern is historical significance. According to Peter Seixas (1997), decisions about historical significance involve understanding the connections people in the present establish with people, places, and events of the past. Questions about historical significance are not asked and answered in a vacuum, devoid of context. They are answered by every generation in response to the question, "How is this moment in history relevant (or not) to me/us/our time?"

The significance of any particular event is derived from how it fits into a larger narrative, and, ultimately, how the historian (or student, or member of the public) relates to that narrative. Although many factors shape how an individual ascribes significance to historical events, including knowledge of the subject matter, interest, past experiences, familial influences, and type of narrative in which the person situates the event, recent work has demonstrated that an important and thus far under-researched influence on students' historical understandings is identity.

IDENTITY AND HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING

Several scholars have begun to recognize the impact of socioeconomic, cultural, political, and gendered factors on students' understanding of various aspects of history, and have incorporated these elements into their research design and data analysis procedures (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Epstein, 2009). This research tells us that students from ethnically diverse backgrounds may find it difficult to make connections between their family and/or ethnic histories and those which are taught in school. This is particularly true when neither the school nor the teacher make explicit attempts to establish such links. This is problematic for both majority and minority students; the potential to significantly enrich both groups' understandings of history is lessened when these connections are neither sought nor explored.

To date, little attention has been paid to how Canadian students from diverse ethnic backgrounds understand and negotiate the histories they encounter both in and out of school. With multiple histories to contend with, students are faced with the task of deciding which events and people from the past can and should be included in the narrative(s) of Canadian history they construct. Implicit in this process of separating the significant from the inconsequential are frameworks and values that shape a student's historical understanding (Seixas, 1997).

INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND THEIR CONSTRUCTIONS OF CANADIAN HISTORY

In the larger study that provides the backdrop for the work reported here, I investigated the influence students' ethnic identities may have on their understandings of Canadian history generally and historical significance in particular (Peck, 2009a). Twenty-six grade twelve students (16–18 year olds) from an urban centre in British Columbia participated in the study. Most (n=17) of the participants were born in Canada. Seven of the participants were immigrants to Canada, and two were Aboriginal. A range of ethnic identities was reflected in each of these sub-groups. Due to space constraints, in this article I report on only one aspect of this study and include data from two Canadian-born students who worked together during the research task. I am profiling these students because, although they worked on the research task together, each student offered a different interpretation of Canadian history and thus their data provide a rich portrayal of how ethnic identity can influence a person's historical thinking. I have reported on other aspects of this research elsewhere (Peck, 2009b, in press).

CONSTRUCTING NARRATIVES OF CANADIAN HISTORY

Before beginning the central research task (described below), students were asked to complete a questionnaire on their demographic information and they wrote a paragraph describing their ethnic identity. Next, heterogeneous groups of two to four students completed a "picture-selection" task, modelled on well-established American and European research (Barton, 2004; Lee & Ashby, 2000). In the first part of the picture-selection task, students were asked to create a timeline of the ten most significant events in Canadian history. Students were given thirty event cards that provided brief descriptions of events in Canadian history and were instructed to create a timeline by selecting ten events from the thirty provided. Each event card included the name and date of the event, a brief caption, and between one and three images. Events were selected from Canadian history and social studies secondary school curricula. In the second part of the picture-selection task, I conducted follow-up group interviews with each of the groups of students to further probe their understandings of historical significance. Finally, I interviewed students individually in order to probe their understanding of how their ethnic identity may have influenced the decisions they made during the timeline task.

TABLE 1: Narrative Templates and Historical Significance Criteria

NARRATIVE TEMPLATE ²	KEY CHARACTERISTICS	HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA EMPLOYED IN NARRATIVE TEMPLATE
Founding of the Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recounts the history of the first inhabitants of Canada and the events that “built” the country. • Stories of Aboriginal peoples seem to disappear after Confederation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pattern Significance</i>: Ascribed to events that were “firsts,” groundbreaking or turning points.
Diverse and Harmonious Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recounts the history of Canadians overcoming prejudice and discrimination to establish a unified, multicultural country. • Conflicts, if included, are seen as aberrations in an otherwise positive and progress-oriented history of Canada. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Symbolic Significance</i>: Ascribed to events that were symbolic of the development and growth of the nation, unity, Canadian identity, iconic individuals, or offered a lesson. • <i>Significance for the Present-future</i>: Ascribed to events that students see as relevant in the present-day; students may establish connections between historical and current events
Diverse but Conflicted Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recounts the history of multiculturalism in Canada with an explicit focus on conflicts and tensions that have arisen as a result of Canada’s changing demography. • Provides a template for critiques of racism and discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Symbolic Significance</i> • <i>Significance for the Present-future</i> (as described above)

Although the central research activity in this study was presented to students in terms of “creating a timeline,” in essence, what I asked students to do was construct narratives of Canadian history. In this study, three narrative templates (Wertsch, 1998) course through the data (Table 1).

Will and Ethan, two Canadian-born students, completed the picture-selection task together. Will was third generation Canadian and described himself as follows: “Most of my ancestors are Canadian, including my great grandparents. However, I consider myself a Canadian with British heritage.” He reported that his great-grandfather was one of the first people to ride the railway in Canada from coast to coast, and reflected that he (Will) was “so Canadian” because of this.

When asked to reflect on if and how his ethnic identity may have influenced the kind of timeline he and

his partner constructed, Will drew on the “Founding of the Nation” narrative:

So I found a lot of the original establishing things important but – I mean, I can look back and see maybe, maybe some of the stuff in the 20th century is just as important or more important – But for me, cause this [referring to the first five events on their timeline] is sort of when my ancestry came and started to do things, it’s important.

Will’s identity as “so Canadian,” and the fact that he could trace his roots back to early Canadian history, meant that he selected events related to the development of the nation during the timeline activity. His reference to when his “ancestry came and started to do things” is an example of pattern significance. That is, he denotes the arrival of his ancestors as a starting point for his own family’s history and involvement in the development of the nation, and a reason for ascribing pattern historical significance and constructing the narrative he did.

Will’s partner, Ethan, described his ethnic identity as follows:

I would describe myself as Canadian. For reasons or because of my personality [*sic*] qualities I’ve inherited from living here. I, myself, as being a person with many different racial origins feel as if I am the epitome of Canadian culture. I feel as [if] I am a mosaic, which is what Canada is on a national level.

TABLE 2: Timeline Created by Will and Ethan

1670	Granting of Royal Charter for Fur Trade
1759	The Siege of Québec
1778	Europeans Arrive on the West Coast of Canada
1881-1885	Building of the Canadian Pacific Railway
1867	Confederation
1916-1918	The Women’s Suffrage Movement
1939-1945	Canada Enters World War II
1957	Pearson Wins Nobel Peace Prize
1971, 1988	Canada Enacts Multiculturalism Policy and Act
1982	Canada Act Passed

When I asked Ethan to reflect on the role, if any, his ethnic identity may have had on the decisions he made during the picture-selection task, he argued that, “I wasn’t really thinking about myself, I was thinking more on how people were perceiving Canada; I was thinking of Canada more on a general level.” However, when asked if he could explain his thinking further, Ethan referred explicitly to his own identity as a visible minority:

When I was going through [the picture cards]... I took out all the racial things right – because it didn’t bother me, right, and hopefully it doesn’t bother people now because Canada was in a different place 100 years ago... Canada now is a multicultural place... and that is the most important thing.

This statement reflects Ethan’s earlier comment on his identity (“a person with many different racial origins”) being the “epitome of Canadian culture” and is an example of symbolic historical significance in that his explanation is tied to a mythic Canadian identity. For Ethan, what was paramount in his decision-making process was that the timeline reflect a multicultural Canadian society, and therefore he constructed Canadian history using the “Diverse and Harmonious” narrative. This, in turn, reflects both his perception of his ethnic identity and his understanding of Canadian history.

IDENTITY KITS AND CULTURAL TOOLS

James Gee (2006) posits that individuals use “identity kits” with which they “live out [their] social lives as different and multiple kinds of people” (p. 33). According to Gee, students use identity kits to interpret texts. Identity kits involve socio-culturally situated identities, the performance of identities, the use of cultural tools, and particular ways of acting and interacting with others. Will and Ethan’s ethnic identities (or “identity kits”) influenced their selection of significant events for their timeline. The most striking example of this is Will’s comment that he selected events related to when his ancestors “came here and started to do things.”

However, Will and Ethan also employed particular narratives as “identity resources” in order to better locate themselves in particular narratives of Canadian history. James Wertsch (1998) argues that historical narratives are “cultural tools” (p. 24) that people use to understand the past, and notes that “texts [such as narrative texts] serve as ‘identity resources’ to be mastered and to be employed in particular contexts in a variety of flexible ways” (p. 45). For Ethan, this meant constructing a narrative about Canada’s multicultural identity, which he employed to locate himself in the narrative that he wove during the research exercise.

Ethan and Will’s ethnic identities influenced their ascriptions of historical significance, as well as the different narratives they employed to explain their timeline. As mentioned earlier, Will’s identity as “so Canadian,” and the fact that he could trace his roots back to early Canadian history meant that he used pattern historical significance to select events related to the beginning of the nation. And while Ethan argued that he “tried to step out of my own sort of bias... to make it [the timeline] represent everyone,” he also remarked that Canada’s passing of the Multiculturalism Act was the most important event for him because of his ethnic identity: “Where would Canada be if it wasn’t multicultural, right? Like I might not be able to live here if it didn’t accept multiculturalism.” Throughout the interviews Ethan was quite adamant that his ethnic identity did not really have any influence on his selection of events. Nevertheless, when asked to explain which one was most important to him, he expressed quite a different viewpoint. Ethan was not fully aware of the disjuncture between his earlier statements about setting aside his “bias” (as he put it) and the significance he placed on multiculturalism in Canada. Will and Ethan’s sense of their ethnic identities helped shape the different narratives they ultimately selected to interpret the timeline they had created together.³

CONCLUSION

Studying the relationship between ethnic identity and the construction of historical narratives can help students, teachers, and researchers understand some of the reasons why people have different interpretations of the past. A focus on developing students’ capacity to think historically can provide students with a means to not only construct historical narratives, but also to sift through the layers of identity that influence their own understandings and interpretations of history. For example, a key concept in historical thinking is the evaluation of evidence. One question historians (and students being taught how to think historically) ask about a piece of evidence is how an author’s perspective may be reflected in that evidence. If students can begin to understand how an historical actor’s perspective, including his/her identity, could have shaped the production of a newspaper article or journal entry, for example, they might be more likely to consider how their own identity influences their own interpretations of the past, including their constructions of historical narratives. Doing so may help students understand that narratives taught in school and/or espoused in society represent only possible interpretations of the past and lead students to more sophisticated historical understandings.

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NOTES

- ¹ This is a revised and abbreviated version of "Peering through a kaleidoscope" published in the journal, *Citizenship, Teaching and Learning*, 2009.
- ² An important limitation needs to be acknowledged at this point. There is no question that, because students were provided with thirty events from which they were to choose ten for their timeline, certain narrative explanations were possible while others were not. To address this, I asked students questions during the follow-up group interviews and the individual interviews, in order to provide them with opportunities to challenge the narratives embedded in the task. For example, I asked students if they thought the timeline "told the story of Canada as they would tell it?" and offered them opportunities to add, change, or otherwise modify the timeline they had created with their group.
- ³ Other students employed the "Diverse but Conflicted Canada" narrative, and some relied on more than one narrative as they drew relationships between their ethnic identities and their understandings of Canadian history (See Peck, in press).

BLACK HISTORY

Dr. Rosemary Sadlier is passionate about Black history as a means of extending inclusion and justice. She is the president of the Ontario Black History Society, the first such organization in Canada (a Provincial Heritage Organization of the Government of Ontario). The OBHS is responsible for initiating the local, provincial and national observances of February as Black History Month and the local and Provincial celebration of August 1st as Emancipation Day. She is the author of 4 books on African-Canadian history and consultant/co-author of a fifth.

ABSTRACT

While the provision of Black history education has been taking place within the African-Canadian community, it also is taught to varying degrees at various points in the K-12 curriculum. What are some of the main points connected to Black history in Canada? What affects our ability as educators to teach this material? Is it more the way that this topic is addressed – how do we value non-traditional stories? Do we have a greater need to challenge our own levels of awareness?

RÉSUMÉ

Bien que l'offre d'un enseignement de l'histoire des noirs soit mise en place dans la communauté Afro-Canadienne, cette histoire est aussi enseignée à divers degrés à divers moments dans le curriculum K-12. Quels sont quelques-uns des points principaux reliés à l'histoire des noirs au Canada? Qu'est-ce qui affecte notre capacité en tant qu'éducateurs à enseigner ce matériel? C'est plus que de penser à la manière avec laquelle ce thème est abordé — comment valoriser les histoires non-traditionnelles? Devons-nous remettre en question nos propres niveaux de conscience?

Is it the *way* that we teach that needs to be queried, and certainly, there is always a need to improve our practice, or is it what we bring to the learning environment to inform, inspire and include, that needs to be challenged or reframed?

This is a seminal question for all educators because among those aspects that support and impact our efforts would be the nature of **required** Provincial curriculum leading to the teaching of a range of African-Canadian history topics through to our own understanding about who and what a 'real' Canadian is – along with their experiences and contributions to the building of this country. What is the national narrative that informs what stories are collected, preserved, deemed necessary? What is 'Canada' for those who are of African descent? What role does our interpretation of history have in reinforcing white privilege? What do we want Canada to become and how do we see our teaching of history moving us in the appropriate direction?

To begin this discussion, it is important that we are working from the same general Black history background. Black history is as much a part of Canadian history as African history is to world history. The disciplines are connected and mutually reinforce each other. To begin to discuss this, we might ask of ourselves, how is it that we have managed to further a part of a Canadian narrative that has managed to exclude Canadians who were here from the

earliest times? If we as a community of educators were including Black history in a regular and routine way, why then was there a need for the creation of an African-Canadian historical organization? How is it that the UN has declared 2011 to be the International Year for People of African Descent with the opportunity to focus on recognition, justice and development issues? History is about recognition. It reflects, reports and influences our understanding of justice. It results in the fair development of communities based on an adequate understanding of their contributions and achievements. History raises awareness while creating our national story and we channel that story to those we teach.

BACKGROUND

Africans are known to have been in Canada since the 1500's, but it was not until the early 1600's that the first *named* African arrived. Multilingual Mathieu Da Costa was a free African man who acted as a translator for the French explorer Samuel de Champlain with the aboriginal peoples on Canada's east coast. However, the largest early group of Africans to enter Canada did so as enslaved people – involuntarily forfeiting much of their history, heritage, culture and power. The first known Canadian-born slave was a child of eight years of age, Olivier Le Jeune. He arrived in 1628.

By the mid 1700's, the French ownership of enslaved Africans increased. When the British took control of Canada, they did nothing to end slavery and continued the practice. More Blacks arrived, following the American War of Independence, some as the slaves of Loyalists, others promised land and freedom for their role in defending the British Crown. African people continued to come into Canada primarily through the United States or via the Caribbean from 1793 until the end of the American Civil War in the 1860's.

That Canada was a haven for escaped slaves on the Underground Railroad obscures the agency that African peoples had in making themselves free and suggests that there was national support for them. However, their treatment and the stereotypes connected to slavery have instead encouraged discrimination against them, perpetuated negative stereotypes and held them responsible for many of Canada's problems. The record of Black presence in Canada has been diminished, overlooked and sanitized. It is as if Black people in Canada were invisible and their contributions unimportant.

Yet the diverse nature of Canada's population is still becoming widely known as some of the more accessible and progressive historical materials have been published since the 1970's. The possibility for broad community appreciation of the contributions and achievements of African Canadians is therefore a relatively new phenomenon despite the 400 year experience of this group in Canada. Why is it that Black people – peoples of African origin, a group that has contributed to the development of Canada, have not been included in the national script? Were they not founding peoples just like the French and the British? Why is it that African-Canadians are significantly portrayed as newcomers, or as crime mongers, why is our presence marginalized?

There are approximately 600,000 Canadians of African descent, the third largest racialized group in Canada; Asians and Southeast Asian communities are the largest groups. However, African-Canadians are unique due to their colour and its connection to their historical experience of enslavement and the legacy of slavery, as well as the impact of racism distinct from others which has affected immigration, education, employment, the justice system and Canadian mass media and culture.

Similarly, the notion that Canada is a racist country is not widely accepted. Canada does not have a significant incidence of lynchings, race riots, or mass destruction of several communities. It does have continuous episodes of racial discrimination which have resulted with the deaths of Black people at the hands of other community members or the police. The continuous nature of the discrimination, combined with their marginalized experience educationally, economically and culturally, creates

the distinct experience of African-Canadians. However, the racist definition is not only a measure of the frequency, intensity and duration of racist acts, nor is it only connected to acts of violence – it is a definition that is related to race based differential treatment involving notions of superiority and inferiority of one race over others enforced by power. That being the case, Canada is a racist country according to the UN definition, and the work of countless researchers, given its founding as a slave society.

This is not to say that the Black Canadian community is without success stories, the educated, the sports or entertainment figures, the politicians, lawyers, teachers, social workers, artists or affluent individuals, but comparatively, the Black community does not fare as well as others.

Most Black people in early Canada were held in bondage. While the numbers were relatively small, perhaps 1000 by 1760, there were still laws created about their treatment and disposition. The 47th Article of Capitulation of Montreal, among other things, ensured that African and Panis (Indian) slaves remained the legally recognized property of their owners. This legal recognition of Blacks and Panis as property was further supported by the Peace Treaty of 1763 and the Quebec Act of 1774.

In Ontario, then called Upper Canada, the last will and testaments of individuals were supported through the courts, allowing slave ownership for the next of kin to be recognized. Without this guarantee, many slave-owning Loyalists would have lost their remaining property – their slaves. At least 500 slaves arrived in Ontario with the Loyalists although most Loyalists headed for the Maritime provinces. Black Loyalists consisted of 10% of the total number of Loyalists; there were about 30,000 Loyalists and 3500 were African. They got their freedom but the land allotted to them was poor, remote and not sufficient to sustain a family sometimes as little as one acre, often about ten. Many were forced to abandon their land, to squat on property to which they had no legal title only to lose it later with formal land claims (e.g. Priceville, ON), or to face the modern removal of their homes and community, such as the most severe example of anti-Black racism in Canada – Africville, near Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Africville was created out of the long wait by Black Loyalists for surveyed land. White officers were taken care of first, but with the shortage of surveyors, the process took not weeks but years. Taking ownership of land on the water, close to Halifax, the residents forged out a community of mutual aid. The strong community of over 400 boasted a church and businesses and many depended on Halifax for work. Instead, Halifax built the town dump, a railroad, factories, sewage drains, a slaughter house, and later a prison very close to where residents lived and

played. By 1970, despite paying taxes, Africville was without clean water or electricity.

To fix the intolerable situation, Halifax Town Council proposed to move the residents and tear down the settlement in order to use the lands for other purposes. The residents of Africville wanted to remain, but to have services such as electricity brought into their community. The city started to buy people's homes at less than the market value for prime waterfront real estate, and then in the middle of the night, the heart of the community, the church, was bulldozed. Many residents then opted to leave, often receiving little (\$500) or nothing for the homes they had built or maintained, and the city further obliged by providing garbage trucks to haul their possessions. From living in multigenerational households, they were placed in cramped public housing – separating extended families. To date, redress is still being sought. The land remains vacant except for a cairn dedicated to the spirit of Africville – the resilient residents.

Much earlier, another forced relocation in the Maritimes ended poorly. The Maroons, while in Jamaica, had successfully warded off the invading British through their superior guerilla-style raids. When confronted in 1795 with ferocious hunting hounds and tricked into leaving their mountainous home, they were evacuated to the hills of Halifax, Nova Scotia, to serve as a defense force and to help to build a fort, the Citadel. Within a very short time, they demanded to be taken to a more hospitable place, socially and climatically, and were removed to Sierra Leone in 1800. In Sierra Leone, some 1200 Black Loyalists had already made this West African country their home since they too were so disenchanted with their lives in Canada that they left the Maritimes and settled in Sierra Leone by 1792.

In Ontario, the poor treatment of slaves is evidenced by the treatment of Chloe Cooley, even while the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario at the time, John Graves Simcoe, was an abolitionist. In 1793, Simcoe was informed of a slave woman's forcible capture, and her sale to southern slave owners. She, Chloe Cooley, had been bound and taken across the river in Niagara to be sold by her owner. Simcoe was outraged and sought to create legislation to prevent a future occurrence. Since his slave-owning peers, including Peter Russell and William Jarvis, the secretary of the Executive Council, were not as passionate about seeing Canadian slavery end, the only compromise legislation passed shortened the period of enslavement to the age of 25 and halted the importation of slaves. It ended the length of time of servitude for European indentures, but did not end the enslavement of Africans. In fact, Black people continued to be bought and sold well into the 1800's. Slavery was finally eliminated in

Canada through the British Imperial Act of 1833, which abolished slavery throughout the British Empire, effective in Canada on August 1, 1834. This is the major spark that brought about the Underground Railroad.

The Underground Railroad was the first freedom movement of the Americas and fuelled the image of Canada as a benevolent country to be found by following the North Star. However, while between 20,000 to 100,000 African Americans fled to Canada, freedom rang hollow when other rights were not guaranteed. In fact, at the height of the UGRR movement, the Common Schools Act of 1850 (Ontario) was passed, creating schools separated along religious or racial lines. Already disadvantaged by slavery and by limited opportunity, Black communities were often hard-pressed to raise the funds to create the segregated schools that they had not even requested. Areas well supported by abolitionists, such as Toronto, did not see the creation of Black schools. This law did not come off the books until 1964.

Oro, near Barrie, Ontario, was the only government-sponsored Black settlement in Canada. It was remote and bordered the southern end of Georgian Bay. It was important for the security of Canada to have a cadre of trained soldiers who were both committed and loyal to the British living there in the event that a surprise attack were to be launched by Americans. However, with the American threat waning, and the nature of the land difficult, most left for the work to be offered in Barrie, Collingwood or Toronto. Their efforts to be free, to be truly self-sufficient were lost. To survive, they had to start again, often in capacities similar to slavery since they could not sell the homes that they had built, nor could they sell the land – clear title was not possible until it was all cleared.

In 1849, a Presbyterian minister living in the United States conceived of a way to handle the slaves he had inherited through marriage to a Southern woman, he would bring them to the Chatham area of Ontario and assist them in the formation of a primarily Black settlement. This would prevent their recapture in the U.S. and allow them to bask in freedom and self-sufficiency. However, his efforts to create the Elgin Settlement and Buxton Mission was threatened by a powerful politician, Edwin Larwill, who argued that Black people were inferior, not to mention that white women and children would be in danger from the 'threatening' free Blacks. His extreme campaign backfired, and his supporters abandoned him, leaving Rev. William King to proceed. To date, Buxton has survived and is a national historic site.

That Black people had been enslaved, as if other groups did not have slavery in their histories, was enough to cause many people to feel personally insulted by the mere presence of a Black person, never mind one in

uniform. Their colour was synonymous with being inferior. On June 28, 1852 in St. Catharines, Ontario, Black militiamen were conducting their annual exercises at a parade ground. Whites continually provoked them until a scuffle ensued. A Black man, Harris, who was not part of the scuffle, was attacked, and when he sought the support of the constabulary, he was ignored. So he took matters into his own hands and, with the aid of his friends, assaulted the attacker. The situation flared up, resulting in the destruction of several Black-owned houses. Situations like this were repeated across the country. A Black family moving into a new home in a “white” district in 1937 Trenton, Nova Scotia, was faced with scores of white attackers over a 2 day period. Since the mayor would not intervene, the attackers demolished their home and the homes of two other Black families, and even outside: Black Canadian military men were jeered at, attacked, and beaten as they attempted to march in the Victory Parade in Liverpool, England after WWII. What were they guilty of? Living their lives as Black people.

All Americans were attracted to Canada’s West by the 1900’s since land prices were much more reasonable than in the United States (\$2 compared to \$50). The government encouraged settlers to come in, and many Black people did. However, by 1910, attitudes began to change when it was anticipated that throngs of Blacks would attempt to come to Canada from Oklahoma due to changes in segregation laws there. The media was used to reinforce negative stereotypes about Black people including their sexual aggressiveness. One newspaper story, about a young white girl who claimed to have been assaulted and to have had her ring stolen by a Black man, alarmed people across the country. When it was later determined that she had fabricated the story to avoid punishment for losing the ring, the damage had been done – community groups had already made strong statements about their fear, loathing and contempt for Black people.

It was decided to send in a Black doctor to speak to prospective settlers, “exodusters”, and dissuade them from coming with ludicrous stories about Canada. When this proved unsuccessful, restrictions were placed only on Black settlers at the border, but because they had money, property and were in good health, they were admitted. Finally, the government passed a regulation that stated that Black people were “deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada”. While this did not become law, it effectively sent a message that Canada was not interested in Black immigration. In total, perhaps 1500 exodusters entered Canada. It would not be until after the end of WWII that Black immigration would increase.

Following the end of WWI in 1919, Prime Minister Borden shared the position of his party on the potential union with Newfoundland, then independent, as well as several Caribbean islands. While clear that such a union would benefit Canada through an expansion of administrative opportunities, he was nevertheless concerned that Black West Indians would expect representation in Parliament. He went on to say that the “backward” mixed race West Indian societies were a threat to the values and democracy of Canada. Without anti-Black racist attitudes, Canada would have gained a Caribbean province.

Following the strong tradition of defending Canada, Black men were eager to enlist during WWI, and thousands were denied entry into the military. Since government policy supported Black enlistment, but recruiting officers rejected them, Black people decided to create their own units much as they had done for the War of 1812 with the Colored Corps. The Number Two Construction Battalion, a Black battalion under White leadership, was formed with enlistees from across Canada.

African Canadians did not necessarily want to have their own regiments, communities, schools or churches, but it was the exclusion, rejection or uncomfortable experiences they had with “mainstream” institutions that facilitated the formation of all-Black supports.

The distinct history of African Canadians has resulted in the perpetuation of anti-Black racism in Canada. Just being of a darker hue has been connected to being a slave. Being a slave is connected to being inferior. Being enslaved meant taking orders, not giving them; it meant being policed, not policing oneself... It meant socializing another’s definition and perception of you, and your beauty and your traditions. It meant not knowing one’s own history so that one could readily develop a strong sense of heritage and culture as part of a process of empowering oneself and strengthening the community.

Being seen as inferior has resulted in discriminatory acts being taken against the Black community actively or passively, by individuals, groups or government, to reduce their experience of freedom, to narrow their ability to obtain educational or employment goals, to limit the nature and type of housing they could access or to acknowledge their presence and contribution to the building of this country for over 400 years. Why is it that as a group, people of African origin, from places around the world, now in Canada find themselves at the bottom of society? Is it not our distinct history and experience as African-Canadians?

This is not to say that the Black Canadian community is without success stories: the educated, the sports or entertainment figures, the politicians, lawyers,

teachers, social workers, artists or affluent individuals, but comparatively, the Black community does not fare as well as others. For example:

- unemployment rates for Blacks in Toronto are twice as high as they are for a non-Black
- a Black university graduate will fare as well as a non-Black who has not completed high school
- over half of all Black children in Toronto live below the poverty line

In terms of history, what can be done to improve the situation for African-Canadians? For all Canadians since we are connected. What can be done to improve what we bring to the educational experience so that we are empowering? The OBHS hopes to develop broad support for the national cultural centre/museum of African Canadian museum project of the OBHS to be a touchstone for the Black community, especially our youth. It will also be a place of honor for extant African-Canadian artifacts, documents and other historical materials. It will serve as a repository for our history and a vehicle for the expression of our souls.

Among the proposals of the UN:

That governments be encouraged to include in their education activities awareness-raising events relating to the observance of the International Year for People of African Descent, including, inter alia, through art competitions, cultural events, awards, academic events, films and documentaries with a view to the restoration of the dignity of people of African descent.

As history educators the promotion of African-Canadian history will help to develop a sense of connection to Canada and to global communities while extending and challenging social justice ideals.

ON HISTORICAL LITERACY: LEARNING TO THINK LIKE HISTORIANS¹

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ABSTRACT

Knowing history is more complex than mastering historical facts. It necessitates a particular mode of engagement with history. This paper looks at what it means to become historically literate using Canadian historian Tim Cook as an example.

RÉSUMÉ

Le fait de comprendre l'histoire est plus complexe que de connaître des faits historiques. Cela nécessite un mode d'engagement particulier avec l'histoire. Ce texte examine ce que comprendre historiquement signifie en utilisant l'historien canadien Tim Cook en exemple.

What should history students know when they graduate from high school? The *Ontario Teachers' Manual* for History of 1915 indicates that “history is usually called a ‘memory’ subject, and is accordingly often taught as a mere memorizing of facts, names, and dates.”² Surely, for most educators today memorizing content knowledge is no longer an adequate answer to this fundamental question that has puzzled schools and society for over a century. Nowadays, there is widespread talks and beliefs in “critical thinking,” “skills” and “literacy” as overarching goals of education. Yet, there is not always agreement as to what these mean. In Ontario, the Ministry of Education has responded with a series of documents and reports, including resource packages to help students “develop as fully literate readers, writers, talkers, and thinkers.”³

Despite the value of all these, much of what is currently available on “cross-curricular literacy” only serves to obscure fundamental differences in disciplinary expertise – or what my colleague Perry Klein refers to as content literacy.⁴ To claim, for instance, that learning to read in mathematics reinforces the ability to read history suggests very naive epistemological distinctions between domains of knowledge and also flawed assumptions about text meaning.⁵ As Sam Wineburg rightly observes, “in our zeal to arrive at overarching models of reading, we often ignore qualities of the text that give it shape and meaning.”⁶ Although sharing some common symbol systems, understanding in history and understanding in mathematics or in literature pose radically different challenges to the mind.

The process of disciplinary homogenization, which leads teachers to use a common *parlance* and set of strategies across subjects, prevents students from taking advantage of the disciplines. Here it is important to differentiate between “subjects” and “disciplines.” Subjects are organized departments of knowledge devised for structuring schedules and assessing learning objectives. Disciplines consist of “approaches devised by scholars over the centuries in order to address essential questions, issues, and phenomena drawn from the natural and human worlds.”⁷ They include distinctive methods of inquiry, theoretical framework, networks of concepts and ideas, symbols systems and modes of representations. History, with all of these refinements, is that discipline which seeks to make sense of the past. History is not the past; rather it is the process and the result of making meaning out of bits and fragments of the past.

LITERACY AND DISCIPLINARY EXPERTISE

Literacy is the ability to read, write, and think critically about a range of media including print texts, images, and electronic texts. It is a cognitive and social practice, an “essential tool for personal growth and active participation in a democratic society.”⁸ Becoming literate is critical in this information age and it is no surprise that the Ontario curriculum places great emphasis on early literacy instruction and progression in reading and writing.⁹

Yet despite significant progress in students’ performance in standard literacy tests (EQAO results

2002–2008), there is still no clear evidence of improvement in students' ability to read, write, interpret, or think critically in history. Part of the problem has been our inability to teach "historical literacy." For Tony Taylor, becoming literate in history necessitates "a range of abilities and understandings required to grasp the nature of history."¹⁰ Thirty years of research in the field has shown that expertise in history – disciplinary competence – is counter-intuitive, best cultivated when students (1) understand history and (2) understand the nature of history.

Students come to school with powerful beliefs and stories about the past. These so-called "common-sense" ideas acquired at home, in the media or in everyday life experiences, are gradually challenged in higher learning by some more complex and scientific ones.¹¹ But does public education really challenge learners to replace these intuitive ideas with more warranted ones as produced by historians? A central principle of history education continues to be that students need a firm ground of knowledge about the past (around the community, the nation, democracy, etc.) to be competent – and ultimately "good" citizens.

But historical understanding is more complex than understanding the substance of the past, i.e., the stagnant pieces of facts. As Peter Seixas contends, students are exposed to a variety of conflicting historical accounts (inside and outside the school) and "need the means to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations."¹² Transforming students' intuitive ideas and equipping them with the tools to make sense of the past necessitate what Peter Lee calls procedural knowledge – or "metahistorical" knowledge.¹³ Unlike the substance of the past, this knowledge shapes the way we go about doing history. What makes historians experts is not only, or so much, their vast knowledge of historical periods but their sophisticated beliefs about history and critical use of key concepts like evidence, historical empathy, and narrative. Instead of naively asking "What is the best story to know?" historians face the complexity of the past with such fundamental questions as "How do we know about the past?" "Why did it happen?" "What was it like back then?" Questions of this sort engage historians in a research process of investigating past events and producing evidence-based accounts. This disciplinary enterprise is dynamic and never complete, subject to debate and revision.

FROM "READING" TO "KNOWING" HISTORY

The strategies to develop cross-curricular literacy are useful in helping students develop everyday skills to read, write, and interpret a range of media. With such techniques as decoding, skimming, making predictions, and

reading between the lines, it is possible to comprehend and engage more efficiently in a variety of so-called fiction and non-fiction texts. Because of the kind of habits of mind it develops, cross-curricular literacy promotes what might be called "proto-disciplinary" knowledge, that is knowledge extending beyond common sense to include some general features of higher-order thinking.¹⁴ At this level, for instance, students can read a variety of texts and make a distinction between a historical narrative and a novel or between "facts" and "opinions." But this type of literacy is largely inadequate to sophisticated understanding in history because it does not originate from the texts and methods of the discipline. One cannot read the development of the BNA Act in the same way as the development of DNA.¹⁵ To illustrate my point, I will consider an example on World War I: *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War* by War Museum historian Tim Cook.¹⁶

In *Shock Troops*, Cook follows the Canadian fighting forces during the key battles of Vimy Ridge, Hill 70, Passchendaele, and the Hundred Days campaign. Through the eyes of the officers and soldiers who fought and died in the trenches on the Western Front, and based on newly uncovered archival sources, Cook "presents a new view of the Canadian Corps' battles in the Great War," looking with a refreshing eye at how this small but cohesive military force quickly earned the title of "shock troops."¹⁷ In his study, Cook aims to reveal the largely ignored yet significant contribution of Canada's army as part of the British Expeditionary Force. Aware of the challenging task facing him, Cook is cautious to observe that "having read almost every book published in Canada on the war, and hundreds by international scholars, I am only too aware that even a two-volume history can present just a fraction of the nation's experience in the Great War."¹⁸ To offer a compelling account of this unique experience, his analysis is based on over a decade of study of official and private documents, including letters, diaries, memoirs, artefacts, postcards, photographs, and artworks. "An understanding of the complexity of battle," he points out, "can be achieved only by consulting these multiple sources of information – not to mention walking the battlefields to explore the very ground upon which the soldiers fought."¹⁹

In history, understanding World War I and the contribution of Canadian soldiers requires more than recalling stagnant facts about war and battles. By themselves, facts alone would have no historical significance if they were not connected together by the historian in a narrative that seeks to represent the past by explaining what happened. "Historical intelligibility," Lowenthal reminds us, "requires that not only past events occurring

TABLE 1: General distinctions between cross-curricular and historical literacy

CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERACY (PROTO-DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE)	HISTORICAL LITERACY (DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE)
What are the different types of texts?	What is a historical narrative? How is it constructed?
What are the features of the text? (main idea, facts, opinions, information, details)	What is the argument of the author? Is it convincing? How is it supported by historical evidence derived from sources?
What process, event or subject is being explained?	What is the sequence of events? What are the causes/consequences? What historical period is considered?
What “good guess” can you make from this text/passage?	What does the evidence tell you about the events? When was it produced? What are the subtexts of the sources? How is the evidence corroborated with other sources?
What do you know about the topic?	How is the past different from the present? What was it like to be there?
What do you think of the text? Why?	What story should you believe in? On what grounds? With what reservation?

at particular times, but a coherent story in which many events are skipped, others are coalesced, and temporal sequence is often subordinated to explanation and interpretation.”²⁰ The historian thus needs a set of disciplinary standards and tools to critically assess the significance of the selected events and the particular perspective and beliefs that he brings to the study – that is, his own positionality.

But unlike other types of stories, the narrative of history is dependent upon empirical evidence derived from sources that must be analyzed carefully with a deep sense of historical perspective and empathy. As Wineburg observes, “texts are not lifeless strings of facts... Words have texture and shape, and it is their almost tactile quality that lets readers sculpt images of the authors who use them.”²¹ In other words, historical texts do not speak on their own. They have their own subtexts as human artefacts with latent intention, motive and purpose. They must be selected, interrogated, contextualized, compared, and sometimes dismissed depending on the context or the argument presented by the historian.

Through careful empathetic reading of various Canadian, British and German historical sources, Cook is able to imagine – to re-enact – what it was like back then and make a convincing evidence-based argument on the unique Canadian system of waging war. In the second volume alone, he dedicates no less than 59 pages to footnotes and references; a key feature of historical writing that has somehow mysteriously disappeared from school textbooks. Concepts and ideas like “shock troops,” “trench system,” “No Men’s Land,” and “anticonscription crisis” emerge from a particular World War I context that Cook skilfully brings to life. This dynamic interplay between the texts and language of the past and Cook’s own interpretative lens produces an account that avoids naïve presentist interpretations. Cook’s account is more vivid and compelling than any textbook, yet

measured and not fanciful like “Hollywood.” Creative interpretation in history must be accompanied by legitimate use of the evidence. Textbooks belie historical sources by avoiding the hedging that historians make transparent in their writing.

Developing historical literacy necessitates a particular mode of engaging with history – both in terms of evidence and narrative. When students are challenged to think like historians they must tackle a series of essential questions that cannot be answered with classroom texts and cross-curricular literacy skills. Defining contextualized historical reading, writing, and thinking is more complicated than simply outlining a set of heuristics as so much depends on the questions, the texts, and the context. Still, it is possible to outline some of the questions that historians bring to the task:²²

1. **Use of inquiry:** How do we know about World War I?
2. **Need of significance:** Why is it important to study World War I? The Canadian contribution to it?
3. **Role of self/identity:** How does my identity shape the way I engage with the past?
4. **Sense of empathy:** What was it like to be soldiers back then?
5. **Use of evidence:** What evidence do we have that Canadians were “shock troops” of the Empire? How “re-enactable” are the sources used? What perspective(s) do they (re)present?
6. **Importance of causation:** What were the causes and effects of the selected events?
7. **Connection to the present:** In what ways does the present shape the way we make sense of the war? How is the present in continuity with the past?
8. **Role of judgment:** Why should I believe in the argument presented by Cook? With what reservation? What is the moral of his story?
9. **Language of history:** How do we use and deal with the language of the past? How do we represent it?

10. Use of historical narrative: What is the organization and structure of a convincing story? How are historical narratives different from/similar to historical novels?

Helping our students learn to answer these (and many other such) questions provides one, perhaps the most effective way of introducing them to the power and limits of historical thinking (see table 1).²³ Schools are in a privileged position to challenge popular, intuitive ideas about the past that students bring to class with “an orientation to the past informed by disciplinary canons of evidence and rules of argument.”²⁴ Of course, very few students will ever grow into historians like Cook, or even contemplate the profession, but introducing them to the “rules of the game” helps novices develop more sophisticated ideas and stories than provided by popular culture and other sites of memory. Faced with unfamiliar documents or conflicting accounts on an issue, students who have developed historical literacy are better equipped to read and question them and judge their merit than those who rely on the affordances of everyday life.

When we compare how students and historians engage with the past, we are in a better position to define *progression* in historical learning. School history is still dominated by a story-telling approach to the national past with approved textbooks that sanction what ought to be learned – or dismissed. They tend to be written in an authoritative voice without reference to the vary aspect of historical arguments: evidence. If we want our students to read history from a textbook or a blog differently and if we want them to become critical thinkers who can ultimately craft their own warranted stories of the past, we need to provide them with the means to develop historical literacy.

NOTES

¹ I owe special thanks to Stan Hallman-Chong and the members of the Literacy and History Working Group of the Ontario Ministry of Education for comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

² Ontario Teachers' Manuals, *History* (Toronto: The Copp, Clark Company, 1915), 38.

³ Ontario Ministry of Education, *Literacy for Learning: Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy in Grades 4 to 6 in Ontario* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2004), 1.

⁴ Perry Klein, “Content literacy,” *What Works? Research into Practice*, 13 (2008), 1-4. Retrieved May 4, 2010 from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/contentLiteracy.pdf>

⁵ As an example of this literacy trend, see the introduction of Ontario Ministry of Education, *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches – Grades 7-12* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2003), 1-5.

⁶ Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 79.

⁷ Howard Garner & Veronica Boix-Mansilla, “Teaching for Understanding in the Disciplines – And Beyond,” in *The Development and Education of the Mind*, ed. H. Garner (New York: Routledge, 2006), 147. Original work published in 1994.

⁸ Ontario Ministry of Education. (2004). *Literacy for Learning: Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy in Grades 4 to 6 in Ontario*, 5. See also Barbara Moss, “Making a case and a place for effective content area literacy instruction in the elementary grades,” *The Reading Teacher*, 59 (2005), 46-55.

⁹ Ontario Ministry of Education, *Literacy for Learning: Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy in Grades 4 to 6 in Ontario*, 5.

¹⁰ Tony Taylor, “From History Horror Stories to Historical Literacy,” *Monash Magazine* (2004), 2. Retrieved on May 5, 2010 from <http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/monmag/issue14-2004/news/history.html>

¹¹ See Howard Gardner, *The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 172-175.

¹² Peter Seixas, “Schweigen! Die Kinder! Or, Does Postmodern History Have a Place in the Schools?,” in *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, ed. P. Stearns, P. Seixas & S. Wineburg (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 25.

¹³ Peter Lee, “Putting Principles into Practice: Understanding History,” in *How Students Learn: History, Mathematics, and Science in the Classroom*, ed. S. Donovan & J. Bransford (Washington DC: National Academies Press, 2005), 32.

¹⁴ Garner & Boix-Mansilla, Teaching for Understanding in the Disciplines – And Beyond, 151. On the proto-disciplinary knowledge developed by students in history, see Sam Wineburg and Jack Schneider, “Was Bloom's Taxonomy Pointed in the Wrong Direction?” *Phi Delta Kappa*, 91 (December 2009/January 2010), 56-61.

¹⁵ On parallel challenges facing students in the US curriculum, see Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*, 79-80.

¹⁶ Tim Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War, 1917-1918 (2 vol.)* (Toronto: Penguin, 2007-2008).

¹⁷Tim Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War, 1917-1918 (vol. 2)* (Toronto: Penguin, 2008), 8.

¹⁸Ibid., 7-8

¹⁹Ibid., 7.

²⁰David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 223.

²¹Sam Wineburg, "On the Reading of Historical Texts: Notes on the Breach Between School and Academy," *American Educational Research Journal*, 28 (1991), 507.

²²The Benchmarks of Historical Thinking (www.historic.ca/benchmarks) is studying some of these key concepts (and set of related questions) as well as the ways of making progression in historical thinking.

²³Stéphane Lévesque, *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the 21st century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

²⁴Sam Wineburg, "Unnatural and Essential: The Nature of Historical Thinking," *Teaching History*, 129 (2007), 6.

DOES HISTORY MEAN ALWAYS HAVING TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY?

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with one intersection of public policy with history: the recent tendency for governments, in Canada and elsewhere, to apologize for the wrongs of the past. This contrasts with the former exclusive emphasis by governments on celebratory commemorations. The author contends that both trends may oversimplify or misrepresent historical events or themes, but that possibility does not preclude learning from examination of these interpretations and their use of evidence.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce texte examine un des croisements de la politique publique et de l'histoire: la récente tendance des gouvernements, au Canada et ailleurs, d'émettre une apologie pour les injustices passées. Ceci s'oppose à l'accent traditionnel mis par les gouvernements sur les célébrations commémoratives. L'auteur suggère que ces deux tendances peuvent trop simplifier ou mal représenter les événements ou thèmes historiques, mais cette possibilité ne devrait pas nous empêcher d'apprendre de l'examen de ces interprétations et de leur utilisation des faits.

Once upon a time, national governments in Canada and elsewhere tended to regard history, when they considered it at all, as an inspirational story of collective accomplishments. Noteworthy anniversaries were marked by patriotic ceremonies and popular celebrations of the glorious past. Awkward complications or contradictions were ignored, downplayed or treated as proof of modern superiority. As part of this process, political leaders would make solemn speeches, while documents with "background information" or educational materials were distributed. For government publicists, teachers and their students were key audiences.

Overall, the messages tended to be celebratory and uncritical. A similar spirit animated citizenship guides and other official publications about Canada's history. As the recent attention to the centenaries of Canada's foreign ministry and its naval service attest, such commemorations remain popular ways to highlight the contributions of national institutions. Past celebrations sometimes attracted critics and nay-sayers who dissented from the overall mood of satisfaction and pride, but those discordant voices rarely spoiled the party.

For many years, what governments generally did not do was apologise for past policies and/or their consequences. That is not to say that governments were depicted or regarded as perfect. However, compensation for injustice, whether for individuals or groups, was left for the courts or for tribunals such as royal commissions to assess, with governments simply complying with their findings. Only in exceptional circumstances, as with the conduct of Germany and Japan in the Second World War, was there an expectation, in Canada or elsewhere, of national accountability and official contrition. In other words, it was generally regarded as inappropriate for a current government to condemn, explicitly or implicitly, a former government for its actions and to legislate restitution, financial or otherwise, for those represented as victims of past decisions. Responsibility for historic wrongs could neither be inherited nor redeemed by a successor.

Perhaps the most outspoken expression of that attitude in Canada came from a Liberal prime minister whose remarks often provoked controversy, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. In response to a public campaign, Trudeau

expressed regret for the experience of Japanese Canadians who were interned during the Second World War but insisted that the government could not correct all past injustices, including those of the colonial period, so that it would be invidious and inappropriate to offer an official apology and redress in any one case. "I do not think it is the purpose of a government to right the past," he stated on his last day in Parliament as prime minister. "I cannot rewrite history."¹ That attitude could easily be misconstrued as indifference by the majority, as represented by the government, to the experience of minorities, so that his tart comments simply rekindled the debate over redress.

Trudeau's Progressive Conservative successor, Brian Mulroney, reversed this stance. Shortly after American president Ronald Reagan had made an equivalent pronouncement, the Canadian prime minister declared his government's intent to apologize and later to compensate those who had been interned. "We have all learned from personal experience," Mulroney contended, "that as inadequate as apologies are they are the only way we can cleanse the past so that we may, as best we can, in good conscience face the future."² In the event, it took four years before a deal was negotiated and the prime minister made the formal statement in the House of Commons. Still later, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation was established by the government of Jean Chrétien as one aspect of the accord, though its mandate was explicitly not linked to the treatment of one community.

Mulroney had stressed the exceptional nature of the wartime internment of Japanese Canadians and associated measures and he insisted that the settlement which he had announced would be "the only and last one."³ With that precedent, however, it was likely inevitable that other groups would emulate the approach of the National Association of Japanese Canadians. The most prominent of these petitions for remedial action were: the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, about the registration, disfranchisement and internment of approximately 5,000 Canadians of Ukrainian background in the First World War as "enemy aliens" from the Austro-Hungarian empire; the National Congress of Italian Canadians, with respect to the "shameful" internment of 600 "politically unsophisticated people from 'all walks of life'"⁴ in the Second World War; and the Chinese Canadian National Council, concerning the "racist legislation" which imposed a head tax on all immigrants to Canada of Chinese origin from 1885 to 1923.

The disgraceful treatment of native students in residential schools, which was illuminated over the years by former students and aboriginal groups and which elicited a formal government apology in 1998, more recently prompted not only another apology, financial compensa-

tion and healing measures for survivors but also the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. "Canada is now coming to terms with its dark past," observed National Chief Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of First Nations on the eve of the prime minister's apology in June 2008, "a past that's been covered up and hidden from its own citizens."⁵

The Canadian examples were part of a global trend, not parochial phenomena. "An outbreak of apology has swept the globe," an American professor of philosophy observed in October 2000.⁶ That observation was prompted by a series of apologies, including President Bill Clinton's for slavery, Prime Minister Tony Blair's for British policy during the Irish potato famine, Queen Elizabeth's for British treatment of the Maoris of New Zealand, Japan's for its exploitation and abuse of Korean "comfort women" in the Second World War, as well as the Canadian apologies to the Japanese Canadians and to indigenous peoples. Since then, there have been further successful campaigns abroad to extract apologies and redress from governments over past policies, including the "home children" in the United Kingdom and Australia. "Public apologies and gestures of regret became more frequent over the second half of the twentieth century and continue to be offered in the early years of the twenty-first," as one analyst noted.⁷ Michael Marrus has memorably referred to "the temper of our time of millenarian contrition" and justifiably stressed the need to distinguish between the "trivial and highly consequential."⁸

In each of the Canadian campaigns, the advocates marshalled evidence of past injustice and justification for present redress, with a particular emphasis in their strategy on persuading politicians and political parties. Research on these questions was almost invariably left to the respective crusades and occasional scholars, some of whom disputed the proof and the motivations ascribed to past authorities.

In spite of questions thus raised, there does not appear to have been a significant effort or disposition on the part of governments to investigate or to contest the various claims. That attitude tacitly acknowledged that, ultimately, the verdicts were political, not legal or historical. Moreover, a political consensus gradually developed in favour of apology and redress for earlier misdeeds which crossed party lines.

After more than two decades of consideration, this revisionist trend culminated in the Community Historical Recognition Program, announced in June 2006 by Prime Minister Stephen Harper when he apologized for the head tax and initiated symbolic payments to head tax payers and surviving partners of deceased payers. In an effort "to formally turn the page on an unfortunate period in

Canada's past," the government would "establish funds to help finance community projects aimed at acknowledging the impact of past wartime measures and immigration restrictions on ethno-cultural communities."⁹ That program was elaborated two years later by the secretary of state for multiculturalism and Canadian identity, Jason Kenney, with particular reference to the experience of prospective immigrants and refugees from China, India and Jewish communities in Europe, as well as the internment of Ukrainian Canadians.¹⁰ The laudable goal articulated by Kenney was that "all Canadians" should "understand our history, including the more difficult periods." With that in mind, the principal aims of the program were acknowledgement, commemoration and education, rather than compensation or redress.¹¹

Earlier this year, the House of Commons passed a private member's bill calling for a formal apology to Italian Canadians for internment during the Second World War and for establishment of a commemorative and educational fund of \$2.5 million.¹² The fact that government Members of Parliament opposed the bill and that Canadian and international scholars regarded the "blanket apology to Italian Canadians for the 'wrongs' committed to them" as mistaken, indicates that there are significant doubts about whether all such claims are valid. As Franco Iacovetta and Roberto Perin observed a decade ago, "current debates on internment generate much emotion but are often woefully uninformed by history."¹³

Meanwhile, there has been much attention in academe and in the media to what one scholar has called *The Politics of Official Apologies* and a journalist has described aptly as "a delicate art."¹⁴ With the abundance of recent official pronouncements worldwide, teachers and students of history could have been forgiven for concluding that the past is an inventory of errors and wrongs. Yet there are still national commemorations of anniversaries associated with worthy institutions or significant achievements which adopt a more eulogistic tone.

As with most attempts to depict complex events simply, both tendencies may imperfectly depict the past. However, that issue of interpretations itself may provide an opportunity to explore in the classroom and outside it some familiar preoccupations of historians: the importance of context; the evaluation of evidence; the need for critical scrutiny of perspectives and motivations; the often awkward intersection between group and national (or international) consciousness; and, the relationship between an understanding of the past and conduct in the present. There are also vital associated questions of justice and dignity for those to whom apologies may be addressed.

Perhaps the best way to examine and evaluate the issues surrounding apologies and redress in the classroom would be to borrow a technique employed in the study of international relations, among other disciplines – the "case study" method. That would prompt questions about the justification or evidence employed for each claim, as well as consideration of the context and the content of the original decision-making, including purposes and anticipated results, as well as the validity and likely impact of remedial action. It could also demonstrate that these questions are complicated and that consequently the answers are not simple. Some of the writings on the overall theme, as well as the scholarship on specific cases, could be used in this evaluation.

Statistics could be analysed for comparisons. Thus, for each wartime example, what percentage of the community then resident in Canada was subjected to internment or other "anti-alien" measures? That is, was the action directed arbitrarily and universally at an entire group or was it applied selectively? If the latter, then what criteria may have been employed for selection? These factual questions are essential for any assessment of decision-making, including an examination of the intent of policy-makers and the consequences of their decisions.

There are also important points of interpretation, not only of the policies adopted but also of alternatives which may have been worse. The head tax on Chinese immigrants was repugnant, but it was then the price of admission to Canada. It was replaced by outright exclusion. How could one fairly compensate those who could not afford to be admitted in one era or those who were later denied entry?

Undoubtedly, teachers, the general public and policy-makers can all benefit from a better understanding of past decisions and their implications. A principal purpose of this exercise should be to learn from the past and, one hopes, to avoid similar mistakes or errors in the present and the future. Learning must begin with an appreciation of the complexity and uncertainty of history.

Please note that a web search would generate considerable hits of postings from newspapers and magazines, as well as from the organisations involved in the quests for apologies, so that this topic could also be employed to highlight the possibilities as well as the pitfalls of on-line research for the study of history and contemporary politics.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING (IN ADDITION TO WORKS CITED IN THE NOTES):

Patrick Martin, "When is an apology not enough? or too much?" *The Globe and Mail*, 12 June 2008 (posted on website).

Frances Swyripa and John Herd Thompson, eds., *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1983).

NOTES

- ¹ Quoted in Mitch Miyagawa, "A Sorry State," *The Walrus*, December 2009. "It is our purpose to be just in our time," Trudeau added, "and that is what we have done in bringing in the Charter of Rights."
- ² *House of Commons Debates*, 22 September 1988.
- ³ Statement by Brian Mulroney paraphrased in Jeffrey Simpson, "Sorry to say, but the apology-seeking industry is thriving," *The Globe and Mail*, 20 May 2008.
- ⁴ Franco Iacovetta and Roberto Perin, "Introduction: Italians and Internment" in Franco Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe, eds., *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 6.
- ⁵ Quoted in Anne McIlroy and Bill Curry, "97 years later, apology at last," *The Globe and Mail*, 9 June 2008.
- ⁶ Janna Thompson, "The Apology Paradox," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 201 (October 2000), 470-5.
- ⁷ Melissa Nobles, *The Politics of Official Apologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4.
- ⁸ Michael R. Marrus, "Official Apologies and the Quest for Historical Justice," Occasional Paper No. III (2006), Munk Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto, 2.
- ⁹ "Address by the Prime Minister on the Chinese Head Tax Redress," 22 June 2006; "PM Addresses Head Tax and lauds accomplishments of Chinese Canadians," 10 October 2006. The texts of both speeches are posted on the website of the Prime Minister of Canada.
- ¹⁰ One prominent columnist questioned the validity and purpose of this emphasis. Jeffrey Simpson, "Sorry to say, but the apology-seeking industry is thriving," *The Globe and Mail*, 20 May 2008. On the announcements which prompted Simpson's comments, see news releases in following note and the following articles: Omar el Akkad, "Ottawa rolls out string of apologies: Conservatives earmark \$29 million to atone for wrongdoings" and Robert Matas and Justine Hunter, "It's a shameful part of our history" in *The Globe and Mail*, 14 May 2008.
- ¹¹ Canadian Heritage, News Release, 8 May 2008: "The Government of Canada Promotes Historical Recognition for Chinese-Canadian Community's Immigration Experiences." See also news releases from the same department for 9 May 2008 (Ukrainian-Canadian Community) and 10 May 2008 (Indo-Canadian Community).
- ¹² The bill passed by a vote of 143-134 on 28 April 2010. In November 2005, then Prime Minister Paul Martin and Minister of Immigration and Citizenship Joe Volpe had pledged the same amount, without an apology, only weeks before a general election in which the government was defeated. Fifteen years earlier, Mulroney had apologized informally at a banquet, but there had been no official statement or compensation package.
- ¹³ "MP's vote for apology to Italian-Canadians, but Tories opposed," *The Canadian Press*, 28 April 2010; Iacovetta, Perin and Principe, *Enemies Within*, especially the preface and introduction. Of those interned, about 100 were seamen from Italy who were in Canadian waters when Canada declared war on Italy on 10 June 1940. The approximately 500 others were drawn from a population of 112,625 Italian Canadians. The most thorough and dispassionate analysis of the internees and of the context for the internment may be found in an excellent article by Luigi Bruti Liberati, "The Internment of Italian Canadians," in *Enemies Within*, 76-98. Liberati concludes that, though some mistakes may have been made in identifying individuals, the actions of Canadian authorities were neither arbitrary nor directed at the Italian Canadian community as a whole.
- ¹⁴ Melissa Nobles, *The Politics of Official Apologies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Jim Bronskill, "Political apologies: a delicate art," *The Globe and Mail*, 24 April 2010.

FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES

Margaret Wells is an instructor in the Initial Teacher Education Program at OISE, University of Toronto and the chair of the board of directors for Facing History and Ourselves in Canada. Margaret has been involved with FHAO since 1982 when she attended a summer seminar and appreciated the opportunities for enhancing her teaching practice and to be a part of a network of educators who value self-reflection and continuing their own learning.

Leora Schaefer directs the Canadian program of Facing History and Ourselves, which includes professional development opportunities for teachers, curricular initiatives, and educational events for the greater community. Leora works with public and Catholic school boards across Canada. Leora oversees and facilitates summer seminars for educators as well as workshops on teaching practice and pedagogy. She has written study guides to accompany films, most recently for a new documentary on the life of Hannah Senesh. Leora has been a member of adjunct summer faculty at several institutes of higher learning and has presented at conferences throughout North America. Leora has a Bachelor's in Education from the University of Winnipeg and Masters of Arts from Brandeis University.

ABSTRACT

Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational and professional development organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. By studying the historical development of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide and collective violence, students make the essential connection between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives. This article examines how Facing History's methodology and resources are implemented in Canadian schools; specifically the challenges and opportunities that Canadian educators face when making connection between the core case study of the Holocaust and Canadian history.

RÉSUMÉ

Facing History and Ourselves est un organisme international de développement éducationnel et professionnel dont la mission est d'impliquer des étudiants d'origines diverses dans une évaluation du racisme, des préjugés et de l'antisémitisme afin de promouvoir le développement d'une citoyenneté plus humaniste et plus informée. En étudiant le développement historique de l'Holocauste et d'autres exemples de génocides et de violence collective, les élèves font des liens essentiels entre l'histoire et les choix moraux auxquels ils font face dans leurs vies. Ce texte examine comment la méthodologie et les ressources de *Facing History* sont mises en place dans les écoles canadiennes et plus spécifiquement les défis et les opportunités rencontrés par les éducateurs canadiens qui doivent lier l'étude de l'Holocauste et l'histoire canadienne.

Since 1976 Facing History and Ourselves (Facing History) has provided resources and professional learning opportunities to educators across North America and Europe. Here in Canada, Facing History and Ourselves has worked informally with teachers, school administrations, and school boards for over two decades, with a formal office opening in Toronto in 2008. Our materials and pedagogy have been integrated in middle and high school classrooms and across curricular areas, including History, English, Social Studies, Civics Law and Politics.

Facing History classes employ a carefully structured methodology that continually provokes thinking about complex questions of citizenship and human behavior.¹ The primary case study examines the failure of democracy in Germany, the systematic process of de-humanization of

a group of people, the rise and domination of Nazism, and the steps that led to genocide and the events of the Holocaust. To study and teach about this history is to investigate the deepest questions and issues of human behavior; to wrestle with the fullest range of moral and ethical choices and judgments; and to examine a history that engaged all of the political, economic, cultural, religious, and educational institutions of a society. In no other history are the steps that resulted in totalitarianism and ultimately genocide so carefully documented by the perpetrators, victims and bystanders. It is also a history that reveals the fragility of democracy and the critical role that choices made by all citizens play in building and preserving democratic institutions.

Much of the program's content is laid out in the Facing History and Ourselves primary resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. After the opening chapters on identity and membership, the program explores the history of the Weimar Republic in post World War I Germany and the rise of the Nazis. Students examine the societal conditions that put democracy at risk and learn how messages of hatred, racism and anti-Semitism that were initially put forth by fringe groups penetrated and eventually dominated mainstream thinking. They also encounter the range of responses to Nazi ideology and confront the power of propaganda and indoctrination. They think about the choices that people had for making a difference and learn that the available choices during the decades of the 1920's and 1930's were very different from those in later years. They read about the decisions that German citizens had to make about whether to take an oath of allegiance, befriend a classmate singled out for official ridicule or speak out in favor of a colleague in danger of being dismissed from a job or position. They confront the small steps that led to the total transformation of a society.

Facing History materials draw on content from history, literature, art and science. One document used in classrooms to study the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party is an excerpt from the 25 Point Nazi Party Platform issued in 1920. As students read the document, they refer to underlying factors like 19th century notions of race, anti-Semitism, World War I, and its legacies in the Versailles Peace Treaty. Students are asked how this party platform was used and why many Germans found the points of the platform to be so appealing. They examine other historical resources, such as propaganda posters that demonstrate the power of labeling and the use of words to turn neighbor against neighbor. Examples of actual lesson plans that taught anti-Semitism and racism which were used in schools in Germany provoke thinking about the roots of hatred and the type of education that is necessary to counteract prejudice and racism in a society. Throughout the unit, students learn and practice the skills of in-depth historical thinking and understanding, including knowledge of chronology, analyzing historical context, evaluating evidence, determining causality and confronting multiple perspectives.

Students learn that violence and injustice begin with small steps of indifference, conformity, accepting and not thinking about what is happening. They discuss what words like perpetrator, victim and bystander can mean in the context of both everyday and extreme situations. First person narrative, as expressed in writings, video testimonies and guest speakers, constitute a compelling core to the program. Holocaust survivors as well as victims of the

genocides in Cambodia or Rwanda tell of their experiences and talk about the need to confront and to bear witness to history. Students also hear about individuals whom Samantha Powers, in her writing about international response to genocide, calls "upstanders": people whose actions reflect courage and resilience and whose determination to stand up for human rights have influenced subsequent public policy.

Students think about the question of legacy and how history is preserved, interpreted and taught to future generations. In the latter parts of their study, Facing History classes often examine the role of monuments and memorials in a society. "They are the signposts of past wrongs we don't want to repeat in the next generation," wrote one student about the role of monuments in promoting historical memory. "We need to know what happened in the past to clearly understand what we face in the future."

Connections between the history and choices that are faced today take on deeper meaning as students move from thinking about history to confronting issues of responsibility and judgment. They ask: "Who knew? Who was responsible? How do we judge the actions and inactions of people in another time? What is the difference between being held guilty, as were the defendants at the Nuremberg Trials, and being responsible, as when someone knows about something wrong that is happening and does nothing about it?"

The concluding sections of the program examine the issue of participation in ways that can make a difference. Students are asked to think about individuals and groups who have taken small steps to build just and inclusive communities. In learning about these "upstanders", students consider the tools that each utilized in creating change. They identify issues about which they feel passionate, which may be on a local level in their school communities, neighbourhoods, or city or on a larger scale nationally or globally. Students are moved to action not from an imposed "community service" model, but rather from a place of genuine motivation, passion and sense of moral outrage.

In Facing History and Ourselves classrooms, middle and high school students learn to think about individual decision making and to exercise the faculty of making moral judgments. The pedagogy speaks to the adolescent's newly discovered ideas of subjectivity, competing truths and differing perspectives, along with the growing capacity to think hypothetically and the inclination to find personal meaning in newly introduced phenomena. Young people come to their schooling already struggling with matters of obedience, loyalty, fairness, difference, and acceptance, rooted in their own identities and experience. By exploring a question in an historical case – such

as why some people willingly conform to the norms of a group even when those norms encourage wrongdoing, while others speak out and resist. Facing History offers students a framework and a vocabulary for making connections and to ask how they can make a difference in the present and future.

Although Facing History and Ourselves began its work with teachers in the United States, the organization now works globally in schools in countries as diverse as Rwanda, Northern Ireland, Germany, France, England and Canada. While the core content and pedagogy in a Facing History course is the same in every country where we work, each country's own history helps to shape the way a classroom engages with the material. In Facing History classrooms across Canada educators and students make connections not only to their own lives and experiences, but also to Canadian history. These bridges are critical as they add to the impact that the course has on students. It is the role of the educator, however, with the support that the program staff at Facing History continually offers, to insure that any associations are not oversimplified or facile in nature, but rather serve to deepen the understanding of connections between past and present, and of universal themes in human behavior.

The vocabulary that students develop in a Facing History classroom, terms such as perpetrator, victim, bystander, judgment, forgiveness, restitution, and reconciliation, offers a language which can help them think about other moments in history which encompassed collective violence based upon prejudice and de-humanization. Using the case study of the failure of democracy in Weimar Germany and the steps leading to the Holocaust as its core, Facing History and Ourselves has developed additional resource books and educational materials that examine such times, including the Armenian Genocide, the history of the eugenics movement, the Civil Rights struggle in the United States, resistance in Pinochet's Chile, and most recently the controversy surrounding women wearing head scarves in France. Each of these case studies not only introduces students to new content but also deepens their understanding of Facing History themes, and concepts. In the same way, when teachers and students who are learning about the Holocaust in a Facing History course make bridges to Canadian history in appropriate and meaningful ways it brings further depth and richness to the learning experience.

In Facing History course students make connections not only between the history that they are studying and their own lives, but also to other historical moments that they may have learned about. As students make these bridges to other histories, teachers face the challenge of balancing the universal themes and ideas

from a study of the Holocaust with the particulars of each specific history. For example, as students learn about the process of separation and de-humanization through which ghettos were established in Nazi Germany, they may legitimately wonder about the establishment of the Reservation system in Canada. While there may be many parallels between Ghettos and Reservations, and much can be learned by examination of the similarities, it is also critical to study each in its specifics and unique historical context. It is important that students learn to examine and define similarities as well as differences between historical moments in ways that adds depth to the study of any historical case study.

Bridging between historical moments is one way that a Facing History course may connect to Canadian content. In addition to these connections, Canadian current events will also make their way into the classroom. A Canadian student may read or hear about, court cases, social issues, or politics and make links to the content that they are studying. For example, many Facing History classes examine ways in which countries like South Africa or Rwanda that have experienced collective violence are now attempting to promote healing and renewal through truth and reconciliation commissions. As Canada engages in a Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the Residential schools, students will certainly be comparing and connecting to those that have been held in other countries.

To support teachers as they look at current events in their classrooms, Facing History has developed a section on their website, www.facinghistory.org, called *Facing Today*. This resource is a compilation of global events, with links to helpful articles and teaching strategies. The site provides media literacy strategies as well as teaching techniques which will be helpful to teachers in Canada.

As Facing History and Ourselves program staff work in classrooms across Canada we anticipate that it will help the teachers and students in those classrooms that will help us sharpen and deepen connections to Canadian History and current events. As we continue to develop our Canadian presence, we look forward to developing resources specifically developed for Canadian educational settings.

NOTE

For a complete description of Facing History and Ourselves see Martin E. Sleeper and Margot Stern Strom, "Facing History and Ourselves" in Maurice Elias and Harriett Arnold, eds, *The Educator's Guide to Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement* (Corwin Press, 2006) pp. 240-246.

ART AND HISTORY: CREATING A VISION OF THE PAST

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ABSTRACT

Many Canadian artists are interested in looking back in history as a way to understand current individual and group identity, and the complex relationships between cultures. Today, artists are using anecdotal evidence and events from Canadian social and political history to create new ways of understanding the events and personalities that shape identity in Canadian communities.

RÉSUMÉ

Plusieurs artistes canadiens s'intéressent à l'histoire et au passé en tant que moyens pour comprendre les identités individuelles et de groupe, et la relation complexe entre les cultures. Certains artistes d'aujourd'hui utilisent des faits anecdotiques et des événements de l'histoire sociale et politique du Canada afin de créer de nouvelles façons de comprendre ces événements et personnages qui forment l'identité des communautés canadiennes.

Art and history have been closely connected since the beginning of human existence. Artists have always been involved in documenting events through images and sculpture, recordings of visual stories about individuals, communities and cultures, and the expression of ideas and messages related to many aspects of human existence. Art from all cultures describes certain kinds of experience, and tells stories and history based on cultural values and beliefs. In many ways, the study of art is the study of our human past.

Artists are interested in exploring and representing social issues in visual form. In cultures where freedom of expression is supported, artists have been able to produce work that is personally meaningful, and communicates shared experience. Artists are in the unique position to have the processes necessary for translating ideas, messages and experiences into visual form. Their work is something that can be seen, touched, and experienced by others.

CHANGING VALUES AND BELIEFS

Changes in values and beliefs in western culture have led to exploration and experimentation in the arts. New value has been placed in the ability to think about, discuss and pursue new ways of understanding individuals and society. Changes in social policy and political legislation to support equity and social justice have created a very different focus for emerging artists. The

shift to contemporary values and beliefs have encouraged and supported artists to think about their own experience, identity, associations and interests.

Changing social and cultural values and beliefs have had a dramatic effect on artists, and what they choose to pursue in creative work. New cultural ideas have opened previously closed doors in terms of subject matter, intent, and the kind of meaning that can be explored. Traditionally held beliefs about what was appropriate subject matter have now been lifted. Today, there are few guidelines, limits or conventions for choosing subject matter.

Multiculturalism as public policy, changes in national values and social attitudes, and a respect for equity and social justice encourage artists to revisit the cause and effect of political, social, religious, cultural and historical events and policies.

CHANGING EXPECTATIONS FOR THE ARTIST AND THE VIEWER

Changes in culture have effected what is expected of the artist, and the viewer. There are new demands placed on art work, in terms of its meaning and how that meaning will be interpreted. The artist is now seen as an individual who has something important to say about culture and understanding personal and cultural experience. The art-maker is perceived as an important conduit for thinking about, and translating experience, ideas or messages into visual form.

TABLE 1: The effect of contemporary western values on art and artists.

NEW CULTURAL IDEA	THE EFFECT ON ART AND ARTISTS
Social/Cultural: Every individual has rights and should be free to express them. Equity and social justice need to be developed through policy and practise. Self-esteem is very important. There needs to be support for the victims of abuse or trauma.	Art work has meaning if it is based on understanding identity, and real-life experience. Art work can be about telling the story of prejudice, trauma, abuse and stereotyping. The subject matter for art work can reveal what was previously hidden, considered taboo, or suppressed.
Intellectual: There are no right and wrong ideas. Critical thinking and asking questions is valued and important to develop deep understanding. Any subject matter is interesting.	Exploration of any subject matter is valued, including looking at traditional subject matter in new ways. Borrowing ideas from other cultures can lead to new ways of understanding ideas. There is value in exploring all subject matter, including what has not yet been revealed. Few sanctions or limits are imposed on what can be expressed, and how it is expressed.
Psychological: Self-expression and personal expression is very important. Sensitivity, awareness and compassion are very important skills to develop for the individual, and the group.	Exploration of identity, stereotypes, personal life experience, trauma, isolation, depression and mental illness is of therapeutic and social/cultural value.
Aesthetic: There are no standards for “good” or “bad” art. Being creative is very important for everyone.	Everyone is encouraged to make art; art-making is not just for classically trained artists. Combining new materials with traditional materials will result in new ways of communicating information. The process is often more important than the final product.

Another dramatic change in western culture has to do with the viewers, and what is expected of them when they look at art. The viewer today is expected to be an active participant instead of a passive recipient in the viewing process. The viewer of the past was expected to look at the art work in front of them, and accept the information and messages conveyed by the artist. Today, critical thinking, asking questions, and reflection are part of the viewing process. Viewers of every age are encouraged to make connections between visual information and lived experience.

ARTISTS IN CANADA

Artists in Canada are encouraged to tell the story of their own history, especially when it includes experiences of cultural transition, dislocation or change as the result of political, social or psychological influence. The initial expression of Canadian art may have been as a statement about the landscape, represented as The Group of Seven and their contemporaries.¹ Today, the statement has evolved into a question about what it means to be Canadian and live in a complex and changing social landscape. For many artists, the question has become, “What are the events and experiences that define different types of identities in Canada?”

HISTORY AS SUBJECT MATTER

Canada is a rich landscape for the exploration of ethnicity and experience. In 1901, the national census showed 25 ethnic groups: in 2006, the national census recorded more than 200 ethnic origins. More than 40% of the respondents said that they had multiple ethnic origins. In the recent past, a number of large cultural groups have

begun to collect and describe their experiences as new Canadians with references to specific historical events.

For many of these artists, their goal is to bring attention to what has already happened. In most cases, the event took place many years ago, and the artist is re-telling the story. The historical event has had an impact on the artist’s life, and some important part of the experience has not been acknowledged or understood. By making the experience visual, the artist brings new information to the viewer for consideration.

NEW VISIONS FOR OLD STORIES

The history of Canada has a great deal to do with the experience of different cultural groups, and how they developed a sense of belonging in a unique and complex social and geographical landscape. In 1956, 38,000 Hungarian refugees came to Canada to begin a new life. In 2006, the Hungarian-Canadian community celebrated its 50 year anniversary in Canada. To commemorate the event, a number of large retrospective exhibits were sponsored by national cultural organizations. Exhibits entitled, “New Lives” and “Crossroads to Culture” featured photographs and artefacts collected from families who experienced the transition and hardships of the immigrant experience.² This period of acknowledgement and reflection encouraged artists and film makers to take another look at this period in Canadian history. Multiple new art works have been inspired by the Hungarian refugee anniversary, and new information about the lives of the individuals involved.³

“The Ties That Bind” is the name of a large new (Fall 2010) exhibit launched to commemorate and revisit the Chinese Canadian experience of building the Canadian Pacific Railway 125 years ago. Descendents of Chinese

railway workers are now sharing family stories, photographs and artefacts about the lived experience of building the railway, and settling in Canada.

The curator of the exhibit explains, “The Ties That Bind project corrects the historical inaccuracy and omission of Chinese Canadian’s role in building this country.”⁷⁴ Revisiting and rethinking a shared past allows the artist to explore new perspectives and information about historical events. Exhibits like these are not merely showcases for memory and nostalgia. Archival footage, stories about lived history and artefacts carefully preserved, provide artists with the information and messages to create symbolic testimony. The result is art work that provides visual evidence of evolving identities and relationships with a Canadian experience and culture.

WHY LOOK BACK NOW?

Inspiration for reflection suggests that enough time has passed for descendants to look back and reflect on what happened. The most popular subject matter for revisiting history centres around an exploration of identity, belonging, and the effect of specific political and social policies and events on individuals and groups. More than one or two generations may need to pass for the repercussions or effects of an event to be understood. Stories told orally in closed family and community groups, may appear years later as visual narrative.

Disclosing experience takes place over a period of time. The reshaping of identity and nature of the experience of First Nations peoples, Inuit, Métis, immigrants, feminists, gay and lesbian groups and members of other cultural communities make take many decades to acknowledge and understand. Traumatic and complex changes to individuals and groups (as the result of an event or experience) also require time, thought and reflection before they emerge as subject matter for art work.

Changes in national values and social attitudes, the valuing of personal history, and a desire to explore what has previously been hidden has opened the door for artists to revisit the cause and effect of political and historical events and policies. Contemporary artists are motivated to create visual narratives using personal experience, symbols and imagery. Their work is a way of trying to understand what happened, and how it has affected our collective understanding of history and culture.

REVISITING AND RETELLING

How are artists using art to revisit history? There have been major changes in art media, materials, equipment and processes available to artists in the last 20 years. Changes in technology coupled with cultural changes have created new possibilities for composing art work.

Artists interested in revisiting history use media that allows them to represent ideas in new ways. Revisiting history requires a visual association with the past while representing information from the present. An artist has access to the processes and techniques to create images, sculptures, performances and installation art works describing multiple perspectives. Today there are a number of visual techniques that can effectively show layers of meaning.

The most popular techniques for artists working with images are the following: juxtaposition, words and pictures, text montage and collage. These techniques allow the artist to place multiple and contrasting images on a single surface. Images can be made using lens-based media such a cameras, film and video, scanners, and digital manipulation. Computer-based media allow artists to use software, scanners, holographs and other equipment to organize or project visual information on to any surface. Images of the lived experience of struggle, conflict, despair and isolation are placed beside reports circulated by the dominant culture.

NEW MEDIA FOR REVISITING HISTORY

Some well-known Canadian artists use juxtaposition for images, sculpture and media as a way to show contrast between the values and beliefs of cultures living side-by-side in Canadian communities. Brian Jungen uses symbols and objects from traditional aboriginal culture, but makes them out of western industrial materials or consumer products. His *Prototype for New Understanding #3* (1999) uses Nike Air Jordan running shoes made into contemporary tribal masks. In the series entitled, *Group of Sixty-Seven* (1996) Jin-Me Yoon takes photographs of members of the Korean-Canadian community placed in front of landscape painters by Lawren Harris and Emily Carr. Her work resonates with references to the difficulties of cultural assimilation for all immigrants and new Canadians.

Multiple images allow the artist to express ideas from two (or more) different sets of cultural values and beliefs. Using text in the form of words and pictures, or text montage, gives the artist the ability to reinforce the meaning of the work. Juxtaposition means that the artist can place two images side-by-side to emphasize the differences or similarities in the experience being revisited. Canadian indigenous artist Carl Beam used a combination of words and images to bring together subjects and events from different time periods. His art work communicates a powerful message about the experience of indigenous people. Through words and pictures, photo montage and collage the artist asks the viewer to think about how history has been told.

Multi-media and multi-disciplinary art work also makes it possible to describe multiple perspectives. An artist using these techniques can tell the story in a way that uses any combination of material and media. Multi-disciplinary art work can include recorded sound, music, drama or dance sequence, moving graphics, viewer clips and viewer participation. This kind of art can take place in a public place, beside an important historical monument, or even in a home. Multi-media art work provides the viewer with a very different experience of art work and meaning.

Installation artist Judy Radal reconstructed a high tech courtroom in the Morris and Helen Belkin gallery in Vancouver to re-enact the court proceedings for the Air India Trial.⁵ A taped video entitled, “World Rehearsal Court” of the trial proceedings were broadcast in a darkened room from 7 monitors. The re-enactment of the trial was filmed in a Vancouver school gym using a compilation of transcripts taken from the actual trial. The dark room and multiple monitors provided a viewing experience that brought history into the present, and forced the viewer to listen to and react to the testimony of the accused and victims. The installation was created more than 20 years after the crash.

Some artists from different cultures work together to revisit moments in Canadian history. A recent exhibit (Noise Ghost 2009) paired artists Shary Boyle with Shuvinai Ashoona in an exploration of themes related to the ways Inuit and White western culture have interacted in the past. In the art work entitled *Skirmish at Bloody Point*, Boyle retells the story of the first contact between Inuit and British soldiers on the coast of Baffin Island in the middle of the 1600s. When Boyle revisits the story, she documents the event as the moment of contact between the soldiers brandishing guns and the Inuit hunters in mid-air jumping into the water below. Every few minutes a gallery projector comes on, the gallery lights go out, and the event is retold as a moonlit scene.

Ashoona tells the factual story of an icebreaker that sunk near Cape Dorset in 1947. In the artist’s retelling, she is able to stay alive through a series of experiences taken from Inuit lore and legend. The revisiting of history with an alternate ending is created through use of traditional story-telling and imagery. The retelling of an event in history merged with traditional Inuit storytelling creates a new way of connecting history with culture.

CONCLUSION

Art and history today is not about defining a style or a single point in time. The history of Canada is still being written. Canadian artists might say that their experience of Canadian history has to do with the landscape, the people, the events and influences that

shape culture and identity. It is also about exploring and describing lived experience as a combination of conflicting elements and forces.

Key cultural ideas are shaping the way Canadian artists revisit events and experiences that took place in the past. A new lens has been created as the direct result of taking new cultural ideas and applying them to subject matter inspired by personal or shared experience.

Many artists are focussing on defining a new cultural and social identity within the context of historical information and past events. They are making art to revisit events, values and beliefs from the past, and create a new way of seeing and discussing what took place. Canadian artists who revisit the history of the nation, are involved in a process of seeking to understand what happened, why it happened, and the nature of the experience for those involved. Their intention is to identify the experience, reveal what has been hidden or forgotten, and to bear witness for the individuals and cultures affected by the experience.

NOTES

¹ In visual arts, a great deal of attention has been paid to the idea that Canada’s identity is closely tied to the landscape. Painting, drawing, photographing and filming the landscape has long been of interest to Canadian artists

² The Hungarian Presence in Canada website: <http://www.hungarianpresence.ca/Anniversary/anniversary.cfm>

³ Film-maker Lester Alfonso recently released a National Film Board documentary “12” (2008) recording the experience of 12 immigrants who came to Canada at the age of 12. Two of the stories are told by Hungarian-Canadian immigrants revisiting their experience of coming to Canada. This documentary is being used by educators to better understand the experience of new immigrants into Canadian culture.

⁴ Brad Lee is the curator of the “Ties That Bind Exhibit” exhibit. The exhibit was launched on August 28th, 2010. More information can be found through their website: <http://www.mhso.ca/tiesthatbind>

⁵ Air India Flight 182 was a flight from Montreal to Bombay. On June 23, 1985, a bomb exploded on board and 329 people died. The incident was the largest mass murder in modern Canadian history.



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