

The Stories Nations Tell: Sites of Pedagogy, Historical Consciousness, and National Narratives

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Abstract

As Canada prepares to turn 150, this article discusses what curricular shifts are necessary to reconcile history education's disciplinary tools with practices of historical consciousness that will encourage learners to consider the moral dilemmas associated with Canada's colonial legacy, silenced histories, and multiple shifting identities in the present. It introduces a conceptual Framework of Canadian National Narratives that captures current constructions of Canadian national identity communicated in Canadian sites of pedagogy. Taking into consideration debates around historical consciousness as a pedagogical project, this article recommends that curricular imperatives in history education critically expose students to a country's master national narrative templates and those narratives that contest and rebuke them through frameworks such as the Canadian one detailed in this article. Given the current historical moment, it suggests such national narrative frameworks would form part of a new curricular imperative titled the Narrative Dimension that would offer a way forward for history education in Canada and throughout the world.

Keywords: history education, historical consciousness, national identity, Indigenous history, national narratives, sites of pedagogy

Résumé

Alors que le Canada se prépare à fêter son anniversaire de 150 années, et en face du rapport récente de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation, ce manuscrit discute les changements scolaires nécessaires pour concilier les outils disciplinaires de l'histoire avec les pratiques de la conscience historique pour que les étudiants peuvent considérer les dilemmes moraux associés aux identités multiples et l'histoire coloniale du Canada. Prenant en considération les débats autour de la conscience historique come projet pédagogique, ce document distille un cadre de récits schémas narratifs maîtres nationaux, et ceux qui les réprimandes et contestes communiqués dans les sites de la pédagogie. Prenant ce moment historique actuel, il affirme qu'un engagement scolaire explicite, titré la dimension narrative, pourrait offrir une moyen à suivre pour l'enseignement de l'histoire au Canada et à travers le monde.

Mots-clés : histoire de l'éducation, la conscience historique, l'identité nationale, l'histoire autochtone, les récits nationaux, les sites de pédagogie

Introduction

In 1908, a monument to French explorer Samuel de Champlain, and founder of New France, was installed in Ottawa, the Canadian capital. The original had two statues. The first portrayed Champlain at one-and-a-half-times his life-size, resting atop a tall plinth, his triumphant gaze fixed into the distance. The second was a miniature loincloth-clad Indian scout crouched in a position of deference and servitude on a plinth at Champlain's feet. From the beginning, the monument became a lightning rod of contestation and debate (Neatby & Hodgins, 2012). Early critiques challenged how Champlain, the French colonial hero, had been appropriated into the triumphal history of British imperialism. Later, resentment and anger emerged in light of the monument's patronization and racialization of Canada's Indigenous peoples. In 1996, the Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Ovide Mercredi, demanded the offending statue be removed. Three years later, the scout was detached from the Champlain statue and placed at a park across the road.

Subsequently, in the 1990s, First Nations artist Jeffrey Thomas's photographic practice transformed the scout into a counternarrative of the initial monument's racialization and marginalization by "interrogating [it] in relation to the late twentieth-century realities of urban Indians like himself" (Phillips, 2012, p. 344). In one piece, Thomas's teenaged son, Bear, sits in front of Champlain, wearing a baseball cap backwards and a graphic T-shirt depicting a nineteenth-century Plains Indian sporting sunglasses, with the text Full Blooded Indian written above it (Phillips, 2012). In another photograph, titled *Onkwehonwe*, Greg Hill squats on the vacated plinth in the scout's pose, wearing regular clothing but outfitted in a traditional *gustoweh* headdress fashioned from cereal boxes (see Figure 1). Thomas's interventionist photography points to the power of art to both disrupt and counter dominant storylines of the colonial and national past by visually inscribing a "silenced Indigenous memory" (Phillips, 2012, p. 341). Moreover, it exemplifies Counter National Narratives 3.0, described later in this article.



Figure 1. Onkwehonwe, photograph by J.M. Thomas (2001). Reprinted with permission of the Art Bank.

The controversy around Canada’s Champlain Monument and others like it that is erupting around the world (see, e.g., Renzetti, 2015) reveals the power and controversy inherent in sites of pedagogy—classrooms, textbooks, monuments, memorials, national historic sites, news media, architectural spaces, arbitrated cityscapes, and public performances—that construct and communicate national narratives (Carretero, 2011; Donald, 2009; Ellsworth, 2005; Nora, 1996). These national narratives are discursive devices that combine history, collective memory, and myth into teleological communications of a nation’s past, present, and future, what Hobsbawm (1990) has called “the nation’s programmatic mythology” (p. 6). Often, they attempt to suture a country’s differences by representing its citizens as belonging to a larger national *famiglia*, the imagined community of the nation-state (Anderson, 1996).

The national narratives constructed and communicated in sites of pedagogy frequently encompass or reflect what Wertsch (2004, 2008) terms “schematic narrative templates”—underlying abstract structures belonging “to particular narrative traditions that can be expected to differ from one cultural setting to another...[and] are not readily available to conscious reflection” (2004, p. 57). These templates pervade through time

and “act as unnoticed yet very powerful coauthors when we attempt to tell ‘what really happened’” (2008, p. 142). Wertsch (2004, 2008) distinguishes between “specific narratives” and “schematic narrative templates,” noting that while the former “deal with ‘mid-level’ events that populate textbooks, examinations and other textual forms” the latter “involve a much more abstract level of representation and provide a narrative framework that is compatible with many instantiations in specific narratives” (2004, p. 51). For example, he identifies two American schematic narrative templates as “manifest destiny” and “quest for freedom” (p. 58), noting that “these abstract structures can underlie several specific narratives” (p. 57).

To better underscore the national element of Wertsch’s (2004, 2008) “schematic narrative templates,” I have termed them “master national narrative templates” in my work. Hence, master national narrative templates are ideal vehicles for what Novick (1999) describes as “some eternal or essential truth about the group...and along with it, an eternal identity for the members of the group” (p. 4). Lopez, Carretero, and Rodriguez-Moneo (2014) have observed that “schemes about a nation’s past are commonly used in a completely unreflective, unanalytical, and unwitting manner and remain uncontested and unrevised from a historiographical point of view” (p. 548). As Canadian Indigenous scholar Dwayne Donald (2009) has articulated: “Official versions of history, which begin as cultural and contextual interpretations of events, morph into hegemonic expressions of existing value structures and worldviews of dominant groups in a society” (p. 3). Thus, the master national narrative templates that permeate sites of pedagogy often result in simplified understandings of history that produce binary notions of insiders/outside, and promote state visions that exclude or silence particular individual or group identities (Létourneau, 2006). Given that scholars agree that state-sponsored history classrooms are complicit in perpetuating the master national narrative templates, how is history education in Canada responding?

In Canada, over the last five years, historical thinking (HT), as advanced through the Historical Thinking Project’s (HTP) six structural historical thinking concepts (HTC), has informed new curriculum documents in a majority of provinces and new history textbooks from all major Canadian publishers (Seixas, 2012). Although HT is crucial in building disciplinary history into the school curricula, and *specific* narrative accounts can be deconstructed using some of the HTP’s six concepts, its tenets do not explicitly address the frequently hidden master national narrative templates (or those that contest and

rebuke them) that are communicated in sites of pedagogy. Consequently, the HTC are not enough in themselves to allow for full engagement with the silenced histories and urgent identity questions—ethnic, transnational, diasporic, and Indigenous—that permeate and shape contemporary Canadian society.

As Canada stares down its 150th anniversary of Confederation and on the heels of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) process, this is a critical moment for history education in Canada. I ask, what curricular imperatives, in addition to the “Big Six,” are necessary to reconcile history’s disciplinary tools with practices of historical consciousness that will engage learners with the moral dilemmas associated with Canada’s colonial legacy, silenced histories, and multiple shifting identities in the present?

This article offers a starting point for the conversation. It first looks at varying definitions of sites of pedagogy (SoP) and debates around historical consciousness as a pedagogical project (see Donald, 2009, 2011, 2012; Ellsworth, 2005; Friedrich, 2014; Marker, 2011; McGregor, 2015; Nora, 1996; Rüsen, 2004; Seixas, 2004, 2012). Then, building on and consolidating the work of Canadian academics, public intellectuals, and cultural producers, it distills a framework of master national narrative templates and those that rebuke and contest these, communicated in Canadian sites of pedagogy (Ashley, 2011; Clark, 2007; Clark & Sears, 2016; Dean, 2009; Dion, 2007; Donald, 2009; Francis, 1997; King, 2014; Neatby & Hodgins, 2012; Saul, 2014; Seixas & Clark, 2004; Stanley, 2006). In doing so, it suggests explicit curricular engagements in history education that expose and deconstruct the country’s national narratives are necessary.¹

Sites of Pedagogy

Lieux de Mémoire

Historians, both public and scholarly, and history educators have often relied on Pierre Nora’s concept of *lieux de mémoire* to discuss learning outside of formal education

1 I would like to thank my doctoral supervisor Penney Clark. This manuscript has benefitted significantly from her scrupulous critical feedback. I am also grateful to Dean Oliver, Craig Harding, Michael Marker, and Chris Hagerman for their recommendations on earlier drafts of this work.

(Lorenz, 2004; Neatby & Hodgins, 2012; Seixas, 2004, 2014). Nora defined these *lieux* as “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” (1996, p. xvii). His *lieux* signified the multiple ways that the past might be remembered and spatially constituted through two types of historical realms: (1) concrete locations (e.g., emblems and/or symbols, buildings, localities, books, and people), and (2) non-material sites, conceptual spaces, or experiences (e.g., commemorations, celebrations, national holidays, and rituals). Vital to Nora’s concept of *lieux de mémoire* is Halbwachs’ (1980) observation that memory is institutionalized by nation-states, which use spatial reference points to create sites where collective memory can aggregate. This acknowledges that historians whose work informs the *lieux de mémoire* are “both products and producers of the collective identities of the culture in which they are part” (Lorenz, 2004, p. 28). According to Nora, a site of memory’s tangible nature facilitates the recovery of memory long after its direct link to the past has been lost.

Anomalous Places of Learning

In *Places of Learning*, Ellsworth (2005) draws on insights from interdisciplinary encounters in the fields of philosophy, cultural studies, science, architecture, and media studies to distinguish what she terms anomalous places of learning—architectural spaces, public artwork, particular museum experiences, mediated cityscapes, theatrical performances, among others—from traditional learning centres with specific curricular goals and objectives (i.e., schools). She references six speculative test pieces—three of which are the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Civil Rights Memorial, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s permanent exhibition—to argue that the pedagogical force of these anomalous places lies not only in their content or representational ability but also through their “appeal to non-cognitive, non-representational processes, and events of minds/brains/bodies...by configuring time and space in ways that modulate intensity, rhythm, passage through space, duration through time, aesthetic experience, and spatial expansion and compression” (pp. 137–138). What Ellsworth is suggesting, then, is that these sites relay narratives not only through their pre-constructed representational features, but also through the unique non-cognitive, non-representational, aesthetic, or spatial experience of each of their visitors. Thus, architectural spaces, news media, particular museum

experiences, public art, mediated cityscapes, and theatrical performances have the power to elicit “affective somatic responses” in learners by “inviting the sensation of a mind/brain/body simultaneously in both suspension and animation in the interval of change from the person one has been to the person that one has yet to become” (p. 22). Through these anomalous places of learning, Ellsworth therefore explores pedagogy as knowledge in the making, rather than knowledge as a thing made.

Indigenous Landscape Features

Dwayne Donald (2009, 2011, 2012) discusses how certain Indigenous landscape features are significant places of learning about Canadian culture and identity. Donald aims to decolonize education by (a) highlighting that all places in Canada were once Indigenous lands and remain so today, (b) moving traditional Euro-Western place-based notions of geography and history to land-based ones (Calderon, 2014),² (c) shifting dominant Euro-Western thinking about definitions of historical evidence, and (d) considering artifacts as situated within a sociocultural and historical sense. By doing so, artifacts are situated as “living vestiges fecund with contested interpretations of culture and identity rather than in an archaeological sense referring to findings fit for museums that attempt to capture and define meanings of culture and identity” (Donald, 2009, p. 11). He uses the example of particular rocks, which through the lens of Indigenous epistemologies and knowledges are viewed as ancient life forms, whose energy and wisdom are connected to the places where they are located. Donald recounts the story of a particular rock called *papamihaw asiniy*, whose location was once a sacred site of pilgrimage and offering to the Blackfoot and Cree. Considered a threat by Christianizing missions, it was removed and relocated several times throughout the early 19th century and now resides in the Royal Alberta Museum. Donald (2009) argues that “the removal of the rock allowed the place to be reimaged and allowed the Prairies to be redefined in ways more conducive to Euro-Canadian notions of land use and ownership” (p. 17). This particular example

2 Calderon (2014) explores how schooling communicates a settler colonial land ethic through place-based education that lacks significant engagement of such colonial legacies in education. She suggests that land education might move place-based education forward by “centering indigeneity” (p. 24), and addressing “the ways in which place is foundational to settler colonialism” (p. 33).

demonstrates how Indigenous landscape features can act as sites of pedagogy that serve to decolonize by exposing the modernist structures of colonization.

Thus, understanding of the term “sites of pedagogy” (SoP) as used in this article encompasses a combination of Nora’s (1998) *lieux de mémoire*, Ellsworth’s (2005) anomalous places of learning, and Donald’s (2009) Indigenous landscape features.

SoP—classrooms, textbooks, monuments, memorials, national historic sites, news media, architectural spaces, arbitrated cityscapes, Indigenous landscape features, and public performances—are linked to historical consciousness (HC) by the ways in which they communicate a relationship between the past, present, and future through narrative. Thus, before exposing and deconstructing the national narratives communicated in Canadian SOP, this article will first discuss historical consciousness as an educational project.

Historical Consciousness and Pedagogical Projects

The theoretical stance of historical consciousness (HC) distinguishes between knowing history and understanding how it is utilized for various purposes (Gadamer, 1975/2013; Koselleck, 2004). Gadamer (1975/2013) described how the dialectic between the inquirer and the object or subject under study is historically situated, and emphasized “the full awareness of the historicity of everything present and the relativity of all opinions” (p. 89). He believes that when individuals look at the past, they cannot avoid doing so through the kaleidoscope of their influences, conditioning, and historical moment—they are perpetually restricted by the lens of their current place and time. Therefore, HC is not static, involves a high degree of reflexivity, and may not be valid in another time and place. In his work *Democratic Education as a Curricular Problem: Historical Consciousness and the Moralizing Limits of the Present*, Daniel Friedrich (2014) writes that Gadamer and Koselleck present HC “not as an option or a mere possibility to be fulfilled by schooling or pedagogy, but a defining, inherent quality of the modern world” (emphasis in original, p. 41). How, then, can we understand HC as a pedagogical device?

Much of the focus on HC within history education draws from the work of Jörn Rüsen (2004), who scrutinizes how individuals understand certain aspects of the past as history and how they comprehend history as positioned within a temporal relationship between the past, present, and future. According to Rüsen, “Historical consciousness should

be conceptualized as an operation of human intellection rendering the present actuality intelligible while fashioning its future perspectives” (p. 67). R usen argued that historical learning involves “narrative competence,” that is, “the ability to narrate a story by means of which practical life is given an orientational locus in time” (p. 80). He writes that narrative competence in HC involves three abilities:

- (1) the ability to experience, which is related to past actuality;
- (2) the ability to interpret, related to the temporal whole which combines (a) experience of the past with (b) understanding of the present and (c) expectations regarding the future;
- and (3) the ability to orient, related to the practical need to find a path through the straits and eddies of temporal change. (pp. 80–81)

R usen (2004) writes that HC “bestows upon actuality a temporal direction, an orientation that can guide action intentionally by the agency of historical memory” (p. 68). R usen has suggested that “[t]he sense creating procedures of historical consciousness are necessary for moral values and for moral reasoning as well if the plausibility of moral values is at stake” (p. 68). He therefore views HC as making “an essential contribution to moral-ethical consciousness” (p. 68). Moreover, he has argued that this value-laden interpretation of history can typically be mapped into four types of historical consciousness through which learners move: (1) the traditional sense (an unquestioned reception of a historical interpretation), (2) the exemplary sense (an ability to show single case rules and principles), (3) the critical sense (the demonstration of moral reasoning), and (4) the generic sense (a capacity to place interpretation of an event into historical context). This article will return to a discussion of R usen’s theory in its conclusion. For now, it considers how HC has been conceptualized as a pedagogical project in Canada.

HC as Discipline-Oriented Historical Thinking

Seixas (2004), whose scholarship around historical consciousness has primarily been based on a rationale for educational reform in history education in Canada, has defined HC as “individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors that shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understanding to those of the present and the future” (p. 10). Seixas (2006) has also advocated for history education using questions of HC to stress how history is constructed and derived

from the academic field, and has conceptualized (2009) a framework for the field of history education based on six HTC—significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspective-taking, and the ethical dimension (Seixas & Morton, 2013).

Indigenous Historical Consciousness

Indigenous scholar Michael Marker (2011) has described Indigenous historical consciousness as reflecting the core concerns of Canadian Indigenous communities and scholars, inclusive of the following features: (a) cyclical or circular understandings of time and reality; (b) recognition that the land is a source of wisdom and knowledge inextricably bound to histories and memories; (c) the representation of relationships (including with non-humans and, in particular, animals and animal forms) as part of a complex ecological and spiritual web in which humans are not always dominant; and (d) the primacy of land-based histories and knowledge over global ones (Archibald, 2008; Dion, 2009; Donald, 2011; Marker, 2011).

Debates over Historical Consciousness and Pedagogical Projects

Recently, there has been debate in history education over the place of Indigenous historical consciousness in the history curriculum. Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and communities have critiqued the discipline of history for its inability to represent Indigenous understandings of the past and interests in the future, and troubled the rapport between disciplinary history and Indigenous knowledge systems (Brownlie, 2009; Deloria, 1999; Donald, 2009; Kovach, 2009; Marker, 2011; Smith, 2006).

In “Indigenous Historical Consciousness: An Oxymoron or a Dialogue?” Seixas (2012) has broached how historians might treat Indigenous historical epistemologies (including oral histories) as both texts and hermeneutic/methodology by focusing on the contradictions and difficulties that arise between the latter and the current HTC model. However, he offers little critical deliberation on historical knowledge production as it relates to epistemologies. For instance, there is no acknowledgement that HT, as imbedded in Euro-Western epistemic thinking, is (at minimum) potentially colonizing with respect to what forms of knowledges are, or are not, possible. Applying a critical (skeptical) lens not only to sources, but also to larger narratives no matter what their form or provenance,

is key to a comprehensive history education program. However, there are certainly ways to broaden this conversation. For example—and this is one avenue not suggested by Seixas—recognizing that it is necessary to add curricular imperatives in history education in Canada that extend beyond the “Big Six.”

Dwayne Donald’s (2009) concept of Indigenous *métissage* (IM) expands this dialogue. As a relatively recent curricular engagement that integrates Indigenous historical consciousness, IM is premised on the idea that Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians do not inhabit separate realities (Saul, 2014) and involves “interpret[ing] the significance of artifacts by showing how Aboriginal and Canadian perspectives of the artifact and place are rooted in colonial histories and logics that are both simultaneously and paradoxically antagonistic and conjoined” (Donald, 2009, p. 11). It aims “to counteract the systemic ways in which Indigenous knowledge systems, values and historical perspectives have been written out of the ‘official’ version of the building of the Canadian nation” (p. 9) by reframing the mixed understandings of history, memory, and experience between Indigenous and non-Indigenous. For Donald (2009), one of the main goals of IM rests upon what he calls “an ethic of historical consciousness,” which he describes as “an ethical imperative to recognize the significance of the relationships we have with others, how our histories and experiences are layered and position us in relation to each other, and how our futures as people similarly are tied together” (p. 7).

Criticism of Historical Consciousness as a Pedagogical Project

Friedrich (2014) has argued that historical consciousness, as mobilized for the pedagogical field, takes on “radical different” form than Gadamer’s (1975/2013) conceptualization of the term. Throughout Chapter 2 of his book, Friedrich dissects the ways in which the translation of historical consciousness from theoretical to pedagogical models have changed the term’s meaning from a space of possibility in which every practice is historically produced and therefore “relative to its spatial-temporal coordinates, which established the modern ethos as the continuous historical and critical investigation of the self” (p. 47), to a set of skills that “closes down possibility” and negates “the political power of dissensus” (p. 49). He notes that certain pedagogues tend to emphasize the idea that historical consciousness is something to be “formed” in students, and use the word “consciousness” as a positive value construct, in opposition to ignorance.

Friedrich (2014) warns:

By understanding historical consciousness as a skill to be taught, as a term that represents the importance of being aware of everything that can be learned from the past, and of applying those lessons to the present, the teaching of historical consciousness becomes an intentional intervention, a component of best practices of teaching history. (p. 43)

Thus, when historical consciousness is said to be embodied through particular pedagogical models, and especially when the parameters of such a model are characterized as fixed and immutable, this is a contravention to the original fluid meaning of the term.

As Friedrich (2014) further articulates:

By making historical consciousness a skill to be taught, pedagogical discourses produce a shift from a quality inherently present in modern thought into a potentiality, a tool that can be learned by anyone, but that is actually present only in educated minds. Historical consciousness, thus, is moved from the sphere of *everyone* into the sphere of *some*. If one considers that the possibility of including oneself into the historical narrative being taught in schools operates as a fundamental mechanism in the production of the citizen, the re-inscription of historical consciousness as a pedagogical process carries with it the idea of citizenship as an identity to achieve, instead of citizenship as, for example, a basic right. (emphasis in original, p. 47)

Heather McGregor (2015) has articulated a similar concern that specifically addresses Canadian history education. She maintains that Seixas's historical thinking concepts "are increasingly—unquestioningly—reified amongst teachers as the singular avenue towards historical thinking and conflated with historical consciousness" and that this might constrain "the ability to see the discipline itself as a tradition, subject to history" (p. 297). Using an expanded view of knowing with historical consciousness, drawn from Gadamer (1975/2013), McGregor (2015) has argued that the following engagements are missing from the Canadian model of historical thinking:

...the historian's positionality, changing identity/ies and their own historicity; the historicity of the discipline; other contextual conditions (i.e. the role of place) for

making and remaking our stories; and, the practices of suspending opinion, showing humility, and asking self-reflexive questions in the encounter with epistemological (and other forms of) difference. (p. 297)

Even before Friedrich (2014) and McGregor (2015), Gadamer and Fantel (1975) suggested that the hermeneutic methodology enhances the development of historical consciousness by guarding against formulaic models, and that interpretive understandings must be situated carefully within their context of creation and construction of knowledge, and also within the context of time and place—the particular historian’s milieu.

Informed by the work of Donald (2009, 2011, 2012), Friedrich (2014), Gadamer (1975/2013), and Marker (2011), historical consciousness is conceptualized as a defining, inherent quality of the modern citizen/agent who takes a critical perspective of history arising from an attempt to understand the temporal relationship between the past, present, and future, with the recognition that these understandings are fluid and may not be valid in another time and place.

Further, historical consciousness is *linked* to sites of pedagogy—museums, classrooms, textbooks, monuments, memorials, national historic sites, architectural spaces, arbitrated cityscapes, Indigenous landscape features, and public performances—by the ways in which these places of learning communicate a relationship between the past, present, and future through narrative.

Given this conceptualization of HC, I ask what curricular imperatives that might encompass Indigenous epistemologies, Canada’s multiple shifting identities (past and present), and the fluidity of our current time and place in history are needed in history education in Canada? This article suggests that a way forward involves explicitly addressing narrativity and Indigenous métissage (Donald, 2009; Lévesque, 2016a, 2016b; Rüsen, 2004), through a curricular imperative called the Narrative Dimension (see Figure 7 below). Part of this Narrative Dimension would include exposing students to, and critically deconstructing, a country’s master national narrative templates and those that rebuke and contest them. But where to start? What are Canada’s master national narrative templates and those that reproach them?

A Framework of Canadian National Narratives

The recent work produced by Canadian scholars, cultural producers, and artists has troubled and challenged the narratives communicated in sites of pedagogy. This is achieved by demystifying how symbols and narrative tropes are adopted as wide-scale reflections of the past (Ashley, 2011; Clark, 2007; Clark & Sears, 2016; Dean, 2009; Dion, 2007; Donald, 2009; Francis, 1997; King, 2014; Neatby & Hodgins, 2012; Saul, 2014; Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Seixas & Clark, 2004; Stanley, 2006, 2012, 2014; Yu, 2007/2008). From this work, I have conceived a Framework of Canadian National Narratives³ that identifies two master national narrative templates—Master National Narrative Template 1.0 (NN 1.0) and Master National Narrative Template 2.0 (NN 2.0)—and a third dimension, titled Counter National Narrative 3.0 (NN 3.0), which is not a master national narrative template. Rather, NN 3.0 conveys competing, omitted, or silenced aspects of Canadian history through national narratives that trouble the storylines of NN 1.0 and NN 2.0, thereby providing a more nuanced perspective on Canadian identity. In other instances, NN 3.0 throws into question taken-for-granted notions around the concepts of nationhood and national identity, through narratives grounded in land, place, or global forces. Although partially shaped by historiography, and despite the chronological emergence of each, NN 1.0, NN 2.0, and NN 3.0 are not rigidly quarantined from one another. Instead, they are overlapping, malleable, and continually evolving as we move forward in the current historical moment (see Figure 2). For clarity, however, I will first describe each one separately below.

3 The articulation of Québécois and French Canadian/Acadian national narratives, as communicated through expressions of the political, linguistic, and cultural distinctiveness of the Quebec nation, was beyond the purview of this framework. Létourneau (2004, 2006, 2014), Lévesque and Létourneau (in press), and Lévesque, Létourneau, and Gani (2013) address this in their work, as do, in part, Conrad and colleagues (2013).

A FRAMEWORK OF CANADIAN NATIONAL NARRATIVES

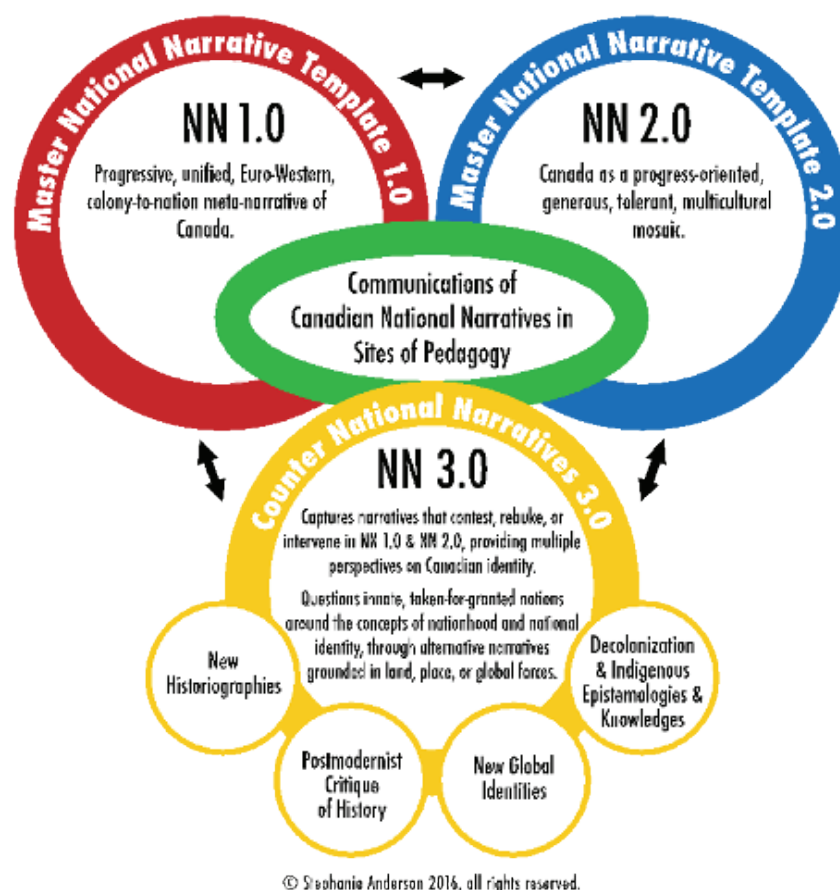


Figure 2. Framework of Canadian National Narratives, Stephanie Anderson (2016).

Master National Narrative Template 1.0 (NN 1.0)

Master National Narrative Template 1.0 emerged in the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, when historians were primarily communicating romantic notions about national identity (Lopez & Carretero, 2012). Like other master national narrative templates, NN 1.0 “may be instantiated using a range of concrete characters, events, dates and circumstances, but its basic plot remains relatively constant” (Wertsch, 2004, p. 57). NN 1.0 conveys the progressive, unified, Euro-Western, colony-to-nation storyline

of Canada, borrowing from a historiographical approach where national identities were considered to be innate features and permanent attributes of human nature enshrouded in an aura of naturalness and immutability (Smith, 1991). NN 1.0 therefore adheres to a meta-narrative of Canadian history that communicates the struggle and progressive triumph of early European settlers in taming the Canadian wilderness, while highlighting Canada's seamless transition from British colony to ally in the imperial enterprise as an independent nation (see Creighton, 1959; Lower, 1977). In the time period when NN 1.0 emerged, national histories were used to distinguish who belonged to the nation and who did not (Smith, 1991; Stanley, 2014). Within this perspective, NN 1.0's key protagonists typically include mostly Euro-Western male politicians, settlers, and industrialists. And, when communicated in sites of pedagogy, NN 1.0 often omits, marginalizes, and racializes persons or groups considered to be at odds with, or outside the purview of, its main cultural project by positioning them as abject others. These typically include Indigenous, ethno-cultural minorities, and the Québécois and French Canadians.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

NN 1.0 frequently silences, marginalizes, and racializes Canadian First Nations by communicating progress as “mov[ing] forward in time from the moment of European arrival, mak[ing] the present dominance of Europeans seem inevitable and natural” (Stanley, 2006, p. 34). NN 1.0's notions of progress are demonstrated in SoP that represent First Nations as “primitive,” especially in comparison to “more highly evolved” Euro-Western peoples (Phillips, 2012). A salient example of this feature of NN 1.0 is relayed through Donald's (2009) analysis of Fort Edmonton Park. Donald unravels how the fort, and other Canadian sites of pedagogy like it, act as colonial artifacts in their marginalization and racialization of Canadian Indigeneity, signifying “a particular four-cornered version of imperial geography that has been transplanted on lands perceived as empty and unused” (p. 3).

NN 1.0 also marginalizes Canadian First Nations by portraying them as exotic, noble savages, or children in need of white, European dominance. Examples of this can be found throughout the work of early Canadian painters, such as Paul Kane and Cornelius Krieghoff, or in early 20th-century films such as *Nanook of the North* (1922), which, although full of grievous ethnographic errors, was central to perpetuating the idea of the

imaginary Eskimo—portraying the Inuit as primitive seal-eaters who rubbed noses (Fienup-Riordan, 1995).

A more recent example of NN 1.0’s racialization is found in the television series *Canada: A People’s History* (CPH). As Lyle Dick (2012) has explained, not only did CPH advance a colony-to-nation narrative, it served to promote national unity through its choice of the epic genre that plainly identifies heroes and villains—the latter being, most often, Quebec sovereigntists or Canadian First Nations. As Dick (2012) relays, one segment, entitled “A Single Act of Severity,” uses a piece of 1870 propaganda from the *Canadian Illustrated News*, showing the execution of Thomas Scott, which reinforced the notion that the Métis who participated in the North-West Resistance were “cold-blooded killers” (p. 202).

Ethno-Cultural Minorities

NN 1.0 also typically omits or marginalizes Canada’s ethno-cultural minorities. Silenced stories include, for example, African slaves in Canada, African Loyalists, the Chinese Canadian contribution to the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), and the discriminatory immigration policies and legislation (i.e., head tax and the Continuous Journey Act) that were enacted to ensure that Canada remained “white” by keeping Asians, Indians, Jews, and Africans out (Stanley, 2006, 2014).

Québécois, French Canadians, or Acadians (French Canada)

NN 1.0 also typically silences certain Québécois/French Canadian interpretations of Canada’s history, or communicates their presence through patronizing stereotypes. For example, the British victory at the Battle of Quebec in 1759 is presented as a triumph, silencing French Canadian historical interpretation of *La Conquête*, or *la grande humiliation* (Berger, 1986). Other expressions of NN 1.0 portray the Québécois and French Canadians in unifying and stereotypical ways—often as entirely Catholic merry *voyageurs* or *habitants* (Francis, 1997). And, with specific regard to aspects of Quebec’s sovereignty movement, French Canada is also typically communicated as radical, dangerous, and threatening; perpetuating the movement and its supporters as abject others; an always present enemy within (Létourneau, 2004).

Master National Narrative Template 2.0 (NN 2.0)

NN 2.0 is a master national narrative template that emerged in the mid-20th century amidst modernist epistemologies of nationality within the field of history, whereby national identities came to be known as social constructions and invented traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Within this context, amidst the new social movements of the 1960s, previously excluded groups (women, the working class, homosexuals, Indigenous peoples, and ethnic and cultural minorities) received representation and recognition in academia, politics, school curricula, intellectual circles, and cultural institutions (Ng, 2005; Thobani, 2007). Meanwhile, historiography turned from nationalist, biographical approaches, to Careless's (1969) "limited identities" notion, which presented a more diversified understanding of Canada's past. Thus emerged NN 2.0: Canada as a progress-oriented, generous, tolerant, multicultural mosaic. Like NN 1.0, its colony-to-nation storyline references many of the same historical markers and marches forward in a meta-narrative of success. However, 2.0 does not omit, silence, or racialize the stories of Canadian First Nations and ethno-cultural minorities, rather it includes them through a storyline of appropriation, reconciliation, and redemption. NN 2.0 therefore offers a compelling storyline of social cohesion that includes tying present-day Canada to a longer course of events linked to a trajectory of human rights. Like all master national narrative templates, NN 2.0 is also communicated through a wide range of dates, events, characters, and circumstances, but its basic plot is almost always the same (Wertsch, 2004).

Appropriation

NN 2.0 frequently appropriates Canada's ethno-cultural minorities by characterizing them as unstable until they have been subsumed into the nation-building narrative as hyphenated Canadians (e.g., Indo-Canadians). In many instances, it appropriates their perseverance, resilience, and tenacity in the face of past racism and weaves this into narrative of current-day social equality for all.

Stanley (2012), for example, has written about this in his analysis of Historic Canada's *Heritage Minute*, "Nitro," which features the poor treatment of Chinese labourers on the railway and is contrasted with a scene identified as "Vancouver 50 years later," where a former worker is portrayed as happy and prosperous. Stanley argues that the

“Nitro” narrative helps constitute modern-day Canada as a tolerant, multicultural mosaic where the future success of the worker as a male Chinese Canadian “redeems the racist treatment he experienced in the past” (p. 220).

On other occasions, NN 2.0 collapses minority cultures into representations of an official “multicultural” national identity.

Scholars argue that this type of celebration of cultural difference (and its narrative of the nation as raceless, generous, and innocent) has implications for the reproduction of racial privileging (Mackey, 2012; Yu, 2002). Schick and St. Denis (2005) contended that multicultural spectacles “obscure the fact that differential access to power is produced through racial formations and not through the lack of familiarity with the cultural practices of other peoples” (p. 307). Museologist Sharon Macdonald (2003) warns that sites of pedagogy referencing hyphenated identities (e.g., Chinese-Canadian) often assume a pre-existing superior culture (e.g., Canadian). And, as Henry Yu (2007/2008) further notes, because this type of national inclusion is often accompanied by rhetorical claims of equal citizenship and the sharing of a common history, it comes at “the loss of other kinds of stories, and the eclipsing of other kinds of politics (p. xliii).

NN 2.0 also appropriates Canada’s First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people through their cultural artifacts and in association with their relationship to the land. For example, “in popular imagery, Canada is communicated as generous and tolerant by ‘giving away’ land to white Settlers” (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 302). Phillips (2012) sees this as a new variation of the authoritative Canadian nationalist narrative, necessary to conceal and forget that the land was once taken by coercive means from First Nations (p. 330).

Striking examples of appropriation of Indigenous peoples are found in certain Canadian art forms and were evidenced throughout the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games. The official symbol of the Games was the Inuit Inuksuk, and the official mascots of the Games were based on Indigenous animal forms that were featured prominently on everything from the Vancouver 2010 medals to retail items.

Reconciliation and Redemption

Another dimension of NN 2.0 includes recognizing some of the historical wrongdoings of the Canadian state through a narrative that highlights national reconciliation and redemption. This is exemplified in SoP that (a) recognize past policies, actions, and legislation

that racialized, harmed, or violated Canada's Indigenous and ethno-cultural minority groups, but (b) emphasize the federal government's eventual apology and compensation to these communities (e.g., the incarceration and removal of the rights of Japanese Canadian communities during the Second World War; the Komagata Maru incident) (Radforth, 2012). By emphasizing reconciliation and redemption, NN 2.0 forges a new social memory of progress that ignores how many current-day inequities and problems often stem from past legacies of wrongdoing. (e.g., Residential Schools) (Donald, 2009; Saul, 2014; Yu, 2002).

Counter National Narratives 3.0 (NN 3.0)

NN 3.0 is not a master national narrative template. Rather, it often captures competing, omitted, or silenced national narratives through parallel or alternative forms of Canadian identity that contest, rebuke, or intervene in the storylines of Master National Narrative Templates 1.0 and 2.0, thereby providing a more nuanced perspective on Canadian identity. In other instances, NN 3.0 throws into question taken-for-granted notions around the concepts of nationhood and national identity through narratives grounded in land, place, or global forces. NN 3.0 is rooted in historiography that "views identities as complex, multifaceted phenomena that are constantly changing and never permanent or exclusive" (Lopez & Carretero, 2012, p. 146). What follows are examples of NN 3.0 and their influences.

New Historiographies

Distinct from NN 2.0, which uses historiography to weave less-palatable aspects of Canada's past into a narrative of progressive redemption, expressions of NN 3.0 sometimes use historiography to throw into question innate, taken-for--granted notions around the concepts of national identity and nationhood (Anderson, 1996; Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; and Smith, 2006). For example, Anderson (1996) concludes that national identity, as a figurative extension of the imagined nation, is fictional, stating that "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6).

Alternatively, NN 3.0 as influenced by new historiographies often uses historical evidence and oral histories (Llewellyn, Freund, & Reilly, 2015) to contradict or disrupt the progressive storylines of NN 1.0 and NN 2.0, frequently demonstrating how national pasts are linked to current-day inequities for women, ethno-cultural minorities, and Indigenous peoples (see Carstairs & Janovicek, 2013; Stanley, 2014; Yu, 2007/2008). For example, Yu (2007/2008) has described how mythological Canadian historical narratives situate “Chinese labourers as late arrivers who displaced white workers, rather than the other way around” (p. iii), pointing out that Asian language sources reveal different perspectives. Similarly, Stanley’s (2014) historical inquiry, “John A. Macdonald and the Invention of White Supremacy in Canada,” forces us to rethink the legacy of Canada’s first prime minister, arguing that Macdonald’s enactment of legislation that excluded the Chinese “was part of his larger project: the creation of a society of people from Europe on the territories of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis people of Canada” (p. 31).

The Postmodernist Critique of History

Through the lens of postmodernism, national narratives as interpretations of the past are viewed as mediated and unreliable (Parkes, 2011; Seixas, 2000). The postmodernist critique of history therefore throws into question narrative constructions, notions of progress, and the impartiality of historians (Lévesque, 2014). Expressions of NN 3.0 influenced by the postmodernist critique of history are evidenced in SoP that disrupt meta-narratives of national progress and improvement.

A subtle example of this aspect of NN 3.0 in art form can be found in the photorealist paintings of celebrated Canadian artist Mike Bayne, winner of the coveted Kingston Prize for Canadian portraiture. Bayne’s body of work, which depicts familiar Canadian landscape scenes such as strip malls, convenience stores, motels, and warehouses, often reflects uncertainty over Canada’s future and differs sharply from the iconic unoccupied national landscapes of the Group of Seven (see Figures 3, 4, and 5).



Figure 3. Hockey Sale, painting by M. Bayne (2010). Reproduced by permission of the artist.



Figure 4. D-rectdial, painting by M. Bayne (2015). Reproduced by permission of the artist.



Figure 5. *Patio & Garden*, painting by M. Bayne (2015). Reproduced by permission of the artist.

New Global Identities

New global societies are, more than ever, being characterized by the disjointed flow of people, technology, information, ideas, ideologies, and money (Appadurai, 1996; Cahoone, 1996). In Canada, globalization is evidenced through migration (immigration, refugees), migratory networks (international workforces), and other factors such as economic and cultural integration. As a result, parallel or alternative national identities are rapidly emerging. Manifestations of NN 3.0 that capture this emergence typically raise questions of the “nation” by pointing to “other” diasporic, hybrid, or trans-cultural identities and citizens within the country’s borders. An example can be found in the *Migrant Farm Workers exhibit*, at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Highlighting the frequently invisible plight of seasonal agricultural workers, it draws attention to an often-invisible segment of Canadian society, rebuking NN 2.0’s storyline of progress and multicultural tolerance (Perla, 2015).

Decolonization and Indigenous Epistemologies and Knowledges

Certain manifestations of NN 3.0 are also influenced by decolonization or reflect particular Indigenous epistemologies and knowledges. This might include communications of the Canadian or American state-borders as assertions based on the evolutionary view of Indigenous displacement. What decolonizing historiographies suggest is a narrative cycle that begins with the Indigenous primacy of the landscape (Marker, 2015). It may also be evidenced in SOP that assert the self-determination and treaty rights of each Indigenous community in Canada. Manifestations of NN 3.0 as influenced by decolonization and Indigenous epistemologies and knowledges are often found in SoP that are transformed into “targets for Indigenous contestation” when “projected and activated on a symbolic level through textual, visual, performative and other forms of expressive culture” (Phillips, 2011, p. 341). This is demonstrated in Thomas Houle’s artistic photographs of the Champlain monument, referenced in the introduction to this article. Other examples can be found in the work of Canadian Indigenous artists Rebecca Belmore, Sonny Assu, Jeffrey Thomas, Brian Jungen, Kent Monkman, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, and Jaime Black.

For example, Kent Monkman, uses media, painting, sculpture, and installation to explore the impact of Christianity and colonialism on First Nations people in risqué and unexpected ways (Liss, 2005). His paintings often create specific interventions in iconic landscape compositions by drawing attention to Euro-centric colonial manoeuvrings that depict the settler wilderness as “undiscovered,” unpopulated, and ripe for the taking (Coombes, 2006) (see Figure 6). Thus, Monkman’s work often embodies NN 3.0, not only by disrupting and chipping away at the Eurocentric art world, but also by pointing to the shameful historical treatment of Canadian First Nations by British and French colonizers (Milroy, 2014).



Figure 6. *Expelling the Vices*, painting by K. Monkman (2014). Reproduced by permission of the artist.

The intent of the framework introduced above is not to suggest a new catechism of the Canadian national narrative. Newly minted storylines of the past, although perhaps more persuasive, continue to be framed by the lens of the current historical moment and are problematic once fixed. Moreover, a framework of this sort could not possibly cover everything. For example, smaller scale narrative templates that address localities and are valuable for groups in the maintenance of identity and cultural survival are only partially addressed (Carr, 1986). Rather, it reflects the national narratives that are frequently constructed and communicated in sites of pedagogy, and points to the narrative organization of historical consciousness. How then can all of this be applied to history education?

In Closing

By proposing an expanded definition of SoP, and taking into consideration debates around historical consciousness as a pedagogical project, this article suggests that while the Historical Thinking Project offers a crucial framework for building critical disciplinary history into the school curricula, and *specific* narrative accounts (Wertsch, 2004) can be discussed using some of the historical thinking concepts, its tenets do not explicitly

address the frequently hidden master national narrative templates, or those that contest and rebuke them, that are communicated in sites of pedagogy. Consequently, the historical thinking concepts are not enough in themselves to allow for full engagement with the whole silenced histories and urgent identity questions—ethnic, transnational, diasporic, and Indigenous—that permeate and shape sites of pedagogy in Canada.

The article recommends that curricular imperatives in history education critically expose students to a country's master national narrative templates, and those narratives that contest and rebuke them through frameworks such as the Canadian one detailed in this article (see Figure 2). Such frameworks, which would be unique to each nation of the world, would offer history education, public history, and museology a means to (a) trouble dominant narrative visions and the exclusive communication of certain national narratives over others; (b) problematize state visions that exclude or silence particular individual or group identities; and (c) raise important questions about the political motivations and the stakes involved in constructions of national narrative in sites of pedagogy.

For public communicators of a nation's past, be they teachers, curators, textbook writers, designers of monuments, exhibitions, public celebrations, and so on, having a clear understanding of a country's master national narrative templates and those that contest and rebuke them is essential. Too often, and perhaps unwittingly, the narratives told and untold in sites of pedagogy are based solely on the moral agenda of their public communicators or the positionality of the historian—how *they* see history and what *they* deem to be significant.

This article further suggests such national narrative frameworks would form part of a new curricular imperative titled the Narrative Dimension (see Figure 7) This Narrative Dimension would not only include exposing and facilitating critical engagement with a country's master national narrative templates and those that trouble them; it also would comprise engagement with personal and shared histories and identities, and critical reflection on historical knowledge production as it relates to various epistemologies (Indigenous, Euro-Western, feminist, etc.). In Canada, the first of these latter two would be informed by some of the original work already being done in Quebec and Ontario (see, e.g., Létourneau, 2004, 2006, 2014; Lévesque & Létourneau, in press; Lévesque, Létourneau, & Gani, 2013).

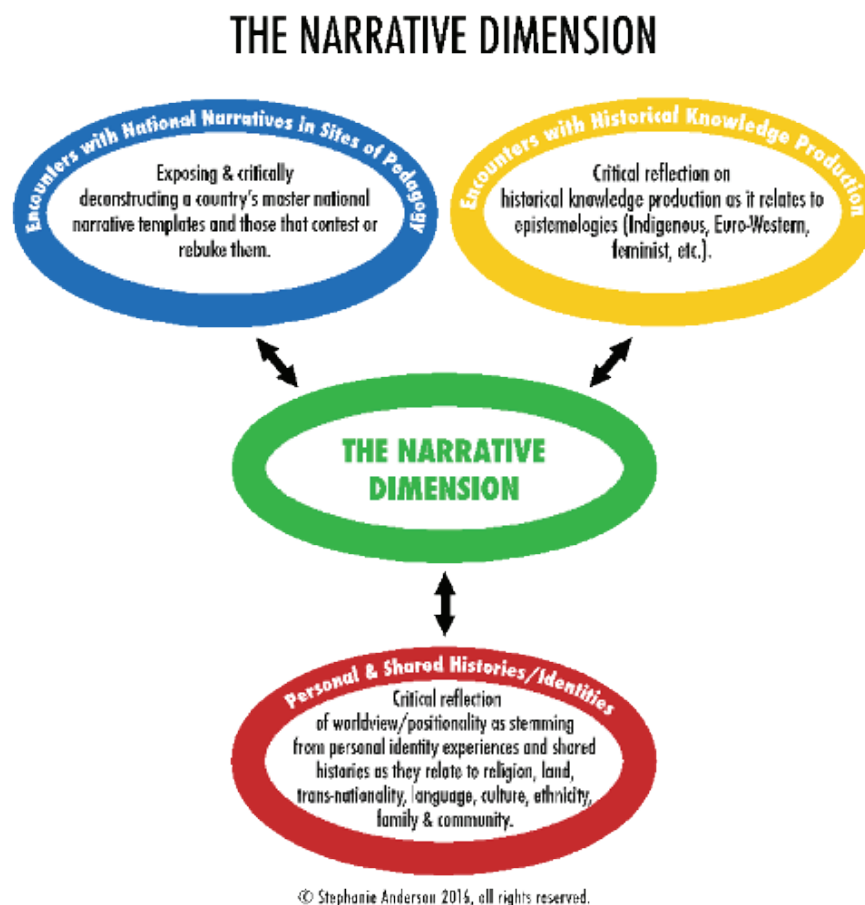


Figure 7. The Narrative Dimension, Stephanie Anderson (2016).

The Narrative Dimension would therefore put into action Rösen’s (2004) “temporal orientation” of historical consciousness by facilitating understanding of how moral values are moulded into a “body of time” (p. 67), providing an arena whereby students and citizens might enquire into where national narratives come from, why they are perpetuated, and how they are linked to behaviour in the present and to courses of action envisioned for the future of the nation.

Perhaps most powerful, however, the Narrative Dimension offers young people a framework to critically engage with the real-time storylines of history and identity that they encounter online or through interventions in public spaces that appear overnight. Before historians have time to generate competing narratives and historiographies (see

Figures 6 and 7). As the director of research at the Canadian Museum of History stated at the Canadian Historical Association's 2015 address, history today is "immediate and as-sailable; important and invasive; multimedia and deeply personal, its authority embraced and contested at one and the same time by widespread accessibility and instantaneous competition, across an ever-shifting spectrum with ever-changing metrics" (Oliver, 2015,



pp. 8–9).

Figure 8. Red graffiti on the statue of Edward Cornwallis, founder of Halifax, Friday, May 13, 2016. (An example of NN 3.0.) Credit: Paul Poirier/CBC Licensing.

Thus, nationally, as Canada is poised to celebrate its 150th anniversary of Confederation, and globally, as debates rage around citizenship and the shifting transnational identities within state borders (for example, the migrant crises, Trumpism, and the UK's impending departure from the European Union), both national narrative frameworks, and the larger Narrative Dimension offer a way forward for history education to address critical storytelling, multiple identities, and historical inquiry within the context of our ever-changing time and place in history.

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