

Our monthly e-Bulletin provides quick updates on activities of THEN/HiER and its partners.

What's new with THEN/HiER?

* **Stéphane Lévesque** participated in a roundtable discussion titled *The Future of the Past: Transmitting History to Future Generations*, part of the annual Pierre Savard Conference at the University of Ottawa. A link to the recently posted Active History podcast of the event, which took place on April 25, 2014, is now available on the THEN/HiER website. The roundtable also features Jennifer Anderson (Canadian Museum of History), Jo-Ann McCutcheon (University of Ottawa) and Jean-Pierre Morin (Aboriginal and Northern Development Canada).

* **Lindsay Gibson**, THEN/HiER member, has been appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta. His doctoral dissertation, completed in June 2014 at the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at UBC (Peter Seixas, supervisor), focuses on history teachers' beliefs about ethical judgments and the factors that influence these beliefs, the different ways that ethical judgments are present in history classes, and how teachers and students approach and handle ethical judgments in their history classes. Congratulations, Lindsay!

* **Maria Grever**, THEN/HiER member, and co-applicant Stijn Reijnders, have received a major grant from the Research Excellence Initiative (REI) at Erasmus University Rotterdam for *War! Popular Culture and European Heritage of Major Armed Conflicts*. This project provides a unique opportunity to combine the research expertise of the Center for Historical Culture (CHC) and the Erasmus Research Center for Media, Culture and Communication (ERMeCC) with the agenda of the Erasmus Studio (ES), the institute for e-research at Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) and the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Read more in the Center for Historical Culture Newsletter.



* **John Gilinsky**, THEN/HiER member, has initiated a new Canadian history blog, *Canadian War Poetry WWI Era 1900-1950*. The blog reproduces texts of poetry written about the war during this time period that appeared in books, postcards and journals, and includes images of the originals.

New Series on Controversies Webpage

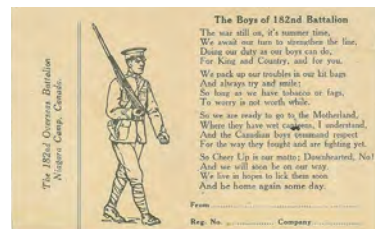
THEN/HiER has posted links to a new Active History blog series on its *Controversies* webpage. The series discusses the diverse opinions of the legacy of Sir John A. Macdonald, whose 200th birthday was January 11, 2015.

Funding Programs

The deadline to apply for THEN/HiER's Visiting Doctoral Student program is fast approaching! This program provides an opportunity for doctoral students enrolled in a Canadian university to visit a Faculty of Education or History Department in another university for a two-week period. The deadline is March 2, 2015.

Feature Blog

THEN/HiER's English-language blog featured a *Reading that Changed my View of History* series in January. If you're interested in an important new book on how to incorporate primary sources into history education, check out Cynthia Wallace-Casey's blog, *Reading that Changed my View of History Education: Nokes' Learning to Read and Reason*. It features historical literacy, inquiry-based learning, pedagogical content knowledge and a link to a great website for resources.



What's new with our partners?

* **The Institute for World History (IWH)** at St. Thomas University recently joined THEN/HiER as its newest partner. The IWH, which was publicly launched in October 2014, disseminates world history teaching resources through its website, e-Newsletter, presentations and workshops with New Brunswick educators, and outreach to academic historians in eastern Canada and New England. It is partnering with the New England



Regional World History Association for the 2016 NERWHA symposium, which will have a strong focus on teaching. We look forward to working closely with the IWH to promote best practices in history teaching in northeastern North America!

* **The Canadian Museums Association (CMA)** is pleased to announce that its Executive Director and CEO, John G. McAvity, has been appointed to the Order of Canada, one of the country's highest civilian honours, for his work towards preserving Canada's cultural heritage. Mr. McAvity stated: "I accept this honour on behalf of all museums and heritage institutions in Canada. To be recognized for something I love to do is such a wonderful honour. I love museums and have been working to make them relevant to local communities and the nation." Read more.



John McAvity

* **Canada's History** is hosting a series of free webinars on the theme *Historic Venues*. Upcoming events include "The Great Lakes Storm of 1913 Remembrance Committee," "Debating the Historical Significance of Canadian Policy," and "Where do History and Community Meet?" Click here for a complete list of webinars and to register.

Graduate Student Committees



Heather McGregor

The Anglophone Graduate Student Committee has rung in 2015 by welcoming a new member from the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness at UBC, Chris Pedersen. Chris' M.A. research interests include the philosophy of history, theorizing historical distance, historical consciousness, historical thinking and theorizing pedagogy. Welcome, Chris, and we look forward to your contributions! This month I attended the opening of *ǫsna?əm: the city before the city* at the Museum of Vancouver, which was a beautiful, groundbreaking, and community-supported event. The exhibit will be a focus of this year's Historical Thinking Summer Institute and I can already imagine how it will provide rich examples for conversation about representing the past in collaboration with First Nations. Our blog *Teaching the Past* has some great reading recommendations for books that might change your view of history – check it out and stay tuned for more links and resources from our community! Contact Heather McGregor.

With the New Year comes a new project: we would like to find out what former THEN/HiER graduate student committee members are up to since they have completed their studies and gone on to professional pursuits. This series, titled "What Have They Become?" began in January on the blog *Enseigner l'histoire* with a post by Vincent Boutonnet who is now a professor at the Université du Québec en Outaouais. He explains how his experience with THEN/HiER influenced his career path. Raphaël Gani has also posted an excellent blog based on a critique of surveys on "collective ignorance" which shows that people in Quebec probably know more about their history than the media would have us believe. I wrote a piece along the same lines where I suggest that we reflect upon assumptions that we encounter so often in the world of education. Unfortunately Frédéric Yelle, who has been a very active member, is leaving the Francophone Graduate Student Committee to focus more on his studies and secondary teaching, but he will continue to contribute blog posts from time to time. He also has a website and personal blog that you might be interested in, *Le Didacticien*. Our warmest thanks go out to Frédéric and we wish him the best of luck in his new pursuits. Happy New Year to all! Contact Marie-Hélène Brunet.



Marie-Hélène Brunet

Research Snapshots

This section of our monthly e-Bulletin highlights our members' research projects.

Felicitas Macgilchrist, Research Fellow
Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research
Braunschweig, Germany



Memory Practices: On What Counts as Worth Remembering in History Education

A central goal of history education is, according to one of the federal curricula in Germany, to “enable students to participate in their community’s cultural memory.” But what does it mean to participate in your community’s cultural memory? And what role do textbooks and other educational media play in this process? This explicit foregrounding of cultural memory led me and other colleagues at the Georg Eckert Institute to think about history education in terms of what we’ve been calling “memory practices.”

What I particularly like about the concept of memory practices is that it emphasises that history is something we actively do. It isn’t something that is lying around waiting to be found; it is something we have to actively construct together with other people, books, digital media and material things.

I also like that the concept picks up on the politics of education: teaching and learning about history is always going to involve selection and reduction. So, the question which interests me is how people make those selections, and what they include and exclude. Thinking about history education in terms of memory practices means, for me, taking up Herbert Spencer’s classic curriculum question (What knowledge is of most worth?) and using it to turn a critical gaze on what – or whose – knowledge about the past is offered to students as most worthwhile to engage with and remember. Perhaps I should note that I mean “remember” here in the creative sense of making the past present (“Do you remember when we went to ...?”), rather than in the sense of memorising facts.

One large-scale project I am privileged to lead in this field is the research group “Memory Practices: Enacting and Contesting the Curriculum in Contemporary Classrooms.” In the first phase, I did ethnographic fieldwork with publishing houses in Germany, following teams of authors and editors as they produced textbooks. I was especially interested in conflicts over what counts as worth remembering. Authors writing about the revolution of 1918-1919 were concerned, for instance, that they were writing the history of the victors. These findings are discussed in an article I co-authored with Ellen van Praet, “Writing the History of the Victors? Discourse, Social Change and (Radical) Democracy” (*Journal of Language and Politics* 12, no. 4 (2013): 626-51). Other authors contested dominant accounts of Africa as a primitive continent by describing how globalised and developed some African city states were in the Middle Ages, as I present in the chapter, “Media Discourse and De/Coloniality.” (In *Contemporary Studies in Critical Discourse Analysis*, edited by Christopher Hart and Piotr Cap, 387-407. London: Bloomsbury.)



Cover of German textbook *Zeitreise 3* (2008) © Marek Kruszewski

In the second phase, I and colleagues Johanna Ahlrichs, Patrick Mielke and Roman Richtera are currently investigating what teachers and students actually do with textbooks, worksheets and other media (internet, films, etc.) in classrooms. We are conducting interviews, ethnographic fieldwork in schools and a quantitative survey to explore the following questions: How do teachers select which media to use in class? How do students engage with these media and with their associated cultural memories? Finally, how do educational policy-makers and curriculum designers understand cultural memory?

What we are finding is that, to paraphrase media scholar Bernard C. Cohen, media may not be successful much of the time in telling students what to think, but they are stunningly successful at telling them what to think *about*. One central narrative which students are offered is the progress narrative, where different cultures/regions are located on a linear scale progressing toward a better life, with the global North pretty near the top.

What I find fascinating about the students in our study is that they can make very ironic comments on what they are supposed to find most worth remembering. When asked what he thought he should keep in mind about the German Empire, one student responded with a big grin: “That Germany has always been the best country ever!” Interestingly enough, when we analyse the educational media to which he has been exposed, although none of them say so explicitly, this is precisely their implicit message. This student is a good critical discourse analyst. He also seems to know how to act as a good student and do what is expected of him in class: which is to be slightly critical of historical narratives but not too radically critical of how these narratives shape today’s hegemonic discourse (in this example, technological and social progress).

At the moment we are working through our data and observations, and also developing a follow-up project which takes a global look at memory practices in history education.

*** MORE TO COME NEXT MONTH!**