

# *Coming of Age*

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**Life/Time/History** March 12, 2016 | Peter Wall Institute, UBC

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**CSHC** Centre for the Study of  
Historical Consciousness



## Welcome | *Tempus fugit...*

My department invited me to design an event that would help to celebrate my career, in anticipation of retirement in June 2016. The result is this symposium consisting of senior, international scholars who have been particularly influential in my career and a roughly equal number of younger scholars who worked with me as graduate students.

The symposium title I proposed to the invitees, “Coming of Age: Life/Time/History,” ties together a varied set of intersecting ideas. It alludes to an intersection between life course and history, an intersection that can be interpreted in many ways. “Coming of age” commonly refers to adolescence, where much of history education scholarship and practice is targeted. But it also means “age” as in “old age,” appropriate for an event tied to a retirement. The title also challenges participants to examine people’s lives, including their own, in relation to the histories they confront and construct, in the context of the historical moment in which they find themselves.

Four sessions take up these challenges from different angles:

- Participants in Session 1 consider how we make sense of our lives, and how we can teach students to make sense of their lives, in the largest historical frameworks.
- “History” and “nation” are two concepts that have developed side by side. Presentations in Session 2 examine a variety of national contexts and their implications for history and history education.
- Session 3 looks at three media for history and heritage—monuments, museums and computer screens—and grapples with the issues raised by each.
- Finally, the papers in Session 4 take up the big values of freedom, equality and identity and their places in history education.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P. S. F.' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

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# Agenda

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8:30	Coffee and continental breakfast
9:00	Welcome and Introduction, Peter Seixas
9:30	<b>Session 1   The Big Pictures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Constructing Historical Reference Frameworks</i>, Lindsay Gibson</li><li>• <i>The Three Axial Ages: Moral, Material, Mental</i>, John Torpey</li><li>• <i>Time Chased Me Down, and I Stopped Looking Away from the Melting</i>, Heather McGregor</li></ul>
10:30	Break
10:45	<b>Session 2   History Education and its National Contexts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Historical Re-enactments as Tensions Among Life, Time and History</i>, Mario Carretero</li><li>• <i>Resisting the Regime (in Australia)</i>, Tony Taylor</li><li>• <i>From Newfoundland to the Undiscovered Country: Reflections on Peter Seixas' Canada</i>, David Lowenthal</li><li>• <i>A Narrative Reflection on the Development of a "Language"</i>, Stéphane Lévesque</li></ul>
12:00	Lunch
1:00	<b>Session 3   The Media and the Messages: Monuments, Museums and Macs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Enhancing Historical Thinking with Difficult Heritage</i>, Maria Grever</li><li>• <i>All Together Now: Private and Public Collections Remixed at the Museum of Vancouver</i>, Viviane Gosselin</li><li>• <i>Reading More and Learning Less: Why Historical Reading Fails on the Screen</i>, Sam Wineburg</li></ul>
2:00	<b>Session 4   Freedom, Equality, Identity: What's History Got To Do With It?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Quelle histoire d'avenir offrir aux jeunes d'aujourd'hui?</i> Jocelyn Letourneau</li><li>• <i>History Education Research in an Era of Increasing Inequality</i>, Terrie Epstein</li><li>• <i>Why Theorizing Identity Matters in History Education Research</i>, Carla Peck</li></ul>
3:00	Reflections, Peter Seixas
3:15	Adjournment

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## The Big Pictures

### Constructing Historical Reference Frameworks | Lindsay Gibson

Jordanova (2006) argues that time is at the heart of the systematic study of history, which makes it unique from other social sciences. My talk focuses on a pilot study to assess whether the construction of visual source timelines can help students construct “historical reference frameworks.” The development of historical reference frameworks are crucial for helping students make sense of the chaos of the past, locate known and unknown events and phenomena in time, understand how events are related to each other, recognize the characteristics of different time periods, and gauge the distance of past events from the present.

### The Three Axial Ages: Moral, Material, Mental | John Torpey

In contrast to the recent focus on the “Axial Age” of the first millennium BCE, I propose that there have been three “Axial Ages” that really matter in human history. The first, “moral” Axial Age developed the idea of transcendence and hence moralized religions. The second, “material” Axial Age began with the Industrial Revolution; it brought about “more, more, more,” but did so by cannibalizing its natural substrate. The current “mental” Axial Age arises from the extraordinary breakthroughs in information and communications technologies currently transforming everyday life. These quintessentially mental tools are recasting human societies, inaugurating a realm of growing creativity and freedom from drudgery. Yet, they must be harnessed to the project of greater energy efficiency if humankind is to rescue itself from the environmental disaster caused by the methods of production associated with the second Axial Age.

### Time Chased Me Down, and I Stopped Looking Away from the Melting | Heather E. McGregor

Standing on the deck of the *Ocean Endeavour*, sailing at 78° North, I began to reckon with time and life slipping away. Paradoxes all around: the water provides a seemingly endless glassy expanse on which we glide, and the hard details of innumerable icebergs around which we must navigate. The sun of long summer days is warm and welcoming, in a place historically notorious for harsh conditions. A fossil fuel-intensive cruise across the Arctic, makes climate crisis feel real for someone raised North of 60°. The exquisiteness of this extremely remote region elicits grief in me for the entire globe. Anger arises at the stories we have loved to tell ourselves about what to expect from the future. There I stood, as a relatively young, healthy, and accomplished person, humbled by reconciliation with more than one of life’s disappointments. And I decided to stop looking away.

## History Education and its National Contexts

### Historical Re-enactments as Tensions Among Life, Time and History | Mario Carretero

This paper will present a theoretical reflection on patriotic rituals as historical re-enactments, as they are part of history education in different American nations and other parts of the world. Some empirical case studies will be also analyzed. The paper is based on these kinds of question: Do patriotic rituals make sense nowadays? Are they functional for 21st century societies? Do they contribute to history education? What is their role in the tension between romantic and enlightened objectives of history education? Would “coming of age” (in history education) be closer to a romantic or to an enlightened view?

### Resisting the Regime (in Australia) | Tony Taylor

The author will discuss his experiences as an academic who was closely involved in the political practicalities of history curriculum implementation in Australia during three successive periods of federal government, a neoconservative Liberal/National coalition in 1996-2007, an Australian Labor Party government in 2007-2012 and a Liberal/National coalition again in 2013-2015. This paper will focus mainly on the latter period with special reference to the importance of the Magna Carta, the English Civil War and the ‘Judeo-Christian tradition’ to the Australian neo-conservative mindset. The author will also outline and discuss how resistance to the insertion of this kind of ideologically-framed and a historical worldview in the new Australian national curriculum resulted in a defeat for its proponents.

### From Newfoundland to the Undiscovered Country: Reflections on Peter Seixas’ Canada | David Lowenthal

Canada is an unlikely congeries of curmudgeonly diversities: Anglo-French, Atlantic, Central, Prairie, West Coast, and Far North, First Nations, *habitants*, colonials, and later immigrant peoples. How to unify such different memories, such distinctive heritages, such demonstrably divergent histories? Does the scalar division of historical consciousness among local, provincial, regional and national realms help to integrate this heterogeneity? Or are Canadians content to be a uniquely orderly multiplicity in a planet of fractious fragmented tribal particularisms? Is the genius of Canada the *genius loci* that

“Calls in the country, catches opening glades,  
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades.”

Continued ►

## History Education and its National Contexts

### A Narrative Reflection on the Development of a “Language” | Stéphane Lévesque

In his preface to *Thinking Historically*, Peter used an interesting passage from the late Niels Bohr. For Bohr, he argued, achievements in the sciences were not seen as a movement toward *truth* but rather a development of a scholarly shared language. My work, Peter contended, contributed to the “much-needed development of a language for history education.” Interestingly, the very structure and codes of this language were acquired at UBC under the intellectual supervision of Peter. But as a native French Canadian studying in BC, Peter provided me with immensely more than a scholarly language. He uncovered an exceptional system of communication that transcends our traditional French-English dichotomy – our “two solitudes” – which has been the foundation of my own scholarly life.

## The Media and the Messages: Monuments, Museums and Maccs

### Enhancing Historical Thinking with Difficult Heritage | Maria Grever

In 1994, Andreas Huyssen pointed to the public dimensions of the monument and its dialogical potentiality. The current rehabilitation of material culture offers interesting opportunities to involve tangible heritage as a primary source in history education. The starting point of this trend is not so much the touchable thing as a “permanent reality in stone,” but rather the dynamic, intertextual representation. On the basis of Peter Seixas' historical thinking concepts, students can study the biography of an object or monument and discuss diverse perspectives of historical actors. This is all the more important because several countries face a so-called “war of monuments:” conflicts about difficult heritage of colonial leaders, racists, perpetrators or failed war “heroes.” In South Africa (Tshwane) some people even suggest the creation of a memorial park for undesirable statues. This paper focuses on how a critical use of difficult heritage in education might enhance historical thinking.

### All Together Now: Private and Public Collections Remixed at the Museum of Vancouver | Viviane Gosselin

For museums today, “growing up” involves creating opportunities for individuals and groups from outside the museum to share their experience and wisdom with the public. Collaboration of this kind helps us to rethink and reinvigorate the role of the museum in contemporary culture. *All Together Now: Vancouver Enthusiasts and their Collections* is an upcoming exhibition and public program initiative that invites private collectors to present their collections and feature their communities at the Museum of Vancouver (MOV). The paper will examine the way in which this project explores the act of collecting, the collector's vision and the cultural role private collections play in building identity, public memory and social connections.

### Reading More and Learning Less: Why Historical Reading Fails on the Screen | Sam Wineburg

How do we determine truth in an age when anyone with modicum of skill can practice historiography without a license? How must reading change when the Internet is filled with sites that cloak their real identity and where the only growth point in journalism is “blended content”—a euphemism for advertisements that masquerade as news? Drawing on data from historians, fact checkers, college and high school students, I dissect the myth of “digital natives” and discuss why historians—thoughtful, intelligent and generally nice people—often look less than capable when trying to decipher truth in digital form.



## Freedom, Equality, Identity: What's History Got To Do With It?

Quelle histoire d'avenir offrir aux jeunes d'aujourd'hui? | Jocelyn Létourneau

The historian's challenge is to cut significant facts from the brute material of the past. It is also to organize these facts in a comprehensive form. How to shape the past in a way that matches what has been (the principle of rigor) and give the possibility for those who live in the present to move into the future (the principle of pertinence)? How can particular representations of the past allow today's youth to understand the historical experience of a community without jeopardizing their ability to build a future with the greatest possible freedom of action? In short, what history for the future to propose to children? I will speak to this challenge using the example of Quebec.

History Education Research in an Era of Increasing Inequality | Terrie Epstein

Despite the dramatic growth in research in history education over the past 25 years, Peter Seixas' scholarship has been and continues to be tremendously influential since the publication of his 1993 article, *Historical Understanding among Adolescents in a Multicultural Setting*. In this talk, I will "think aloud" about the significance of Peter's work, discussing some of the many ways in which his research has moved the field forward, as well as posing a few questions that may still be unresolved, especially given the widening of inequality in contemporary societies.

Why Theorizing Identity Matters in History Education Research | Carla L. Peck

While questions about students' identities have emerged as central to history education research in North American and beyond, scholars in our field have not sufficiently explored the concept of "identity" itself. It is not enough to compare the historical thinking of diverse groups of students for differences that we attribute, at least in part, to identity; we must also broaden our understandings of what "identity" means and how it "works" in order to understand its role in shaping students' historical understandings. In this presentation, I will focus my attention on theoretical understandings of "ethnic identity" and will discuss how we might bring these ideas into our research.

# Biographies

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## Mario Carretero | Autonomia University of Madrid

Mario Carretero is Professor at Autonomia University of Madrid, where he was Dean of the Faculty of Psychology, and Researcher of FLACSO (Argentina). He held a postdoc at York University (Toronto). He has been an invited scholar at the Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (Harvard) and at the Humanities Center (Stanford). He received the Guggenheim Fellowship to write his book *Constructing Patriotism* (2011). His main research interests concern master narratives, history education, and national identity. His *Handbook on Historical Culture and History Education*, co-edited with S. Berger and M. Grever, is forthcoming, 2016.

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## Terrie Epstein | Hunter College & City University of New York

Terrie Epstein is Professor of Education at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Her books include the single authored *Narrating National History: Race Identity and Pedagogy in Classrooms and Communities*, the co-edited *Teaching U. S. History: Dialogs among Social Studies Teachers and Historians* (both by Routledge, 2009) and multi-authored *Education, Globalization and the Nation* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). She and Carla Peck are currently working on an edited book based on an AERA sponsored conference entitled, *Teaching and Learning Difficult Histories: Global Concepts and Contexts*.

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## Lindsay Gibson | University of Alberta

Lindsay Gibson is Assistant Professor of Social Studies Education in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta. Dr. Gibson's research focuses on historical thinking, history education and assessment of historical thinking. Prior to completing his PhD, he was a teacher in Kelowna, British Columbia for twelve years where he taught secondary school social studies and history, and worked on the district Instructional Leadership Team. Dr. Gibson has worked on a variety of provincial and federal history education projects with THEN/HiER, the Historical Thinking Project and The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC2).

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## Viviane Gosselin | Museum of Vancouver

Viviane Gosselin is a museum curator and researcher. She is passionate about urbanity, material culture, and the changing role of museums. In her work as senior curator with the Museum of Vancouver, Canada's largest civic museum, she seeks to expand the museum's role as city resource, cultural hub, laboratory and catalyst for learning, social interactions and civic engagement. Viviane serves on the boards of ICOM-Canada (the national body of the International Council of Museums) and the History Education Network/Histoire et éducation en réseau (THEN/HiER). She is co-editor of *Museums and the Past: Constructing Historical Consciousness* (UBC Press).

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## Maria Grever | University Rotterdam (the Netherlands)

Maria Grever is Professor of Theory and Methodology of History, and director of the Center for Historical Culture, Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands). She was program leader of several research projects, such as *Paradoxes of De-Canonization* (2004-06) with Siep Stuurman and *Heritage Education, Plurality of Narratives and Shared Historical Knowledge* (2009-14) with Carla van Boxtel, both funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. Currently she leads the research program *War! Popular Culture and European Heritage of Major Armed Conflicts* (2015-19). She published co-edited books, (co-authored) monographs – e.g. *Transforming the Public Sphere* (2004), *Beyond the Canon* (2007) and *Verlangen naar tastbaar verleden* (2014) - and many book chapters and articles in journals, e.g. *Paedagogica Historica*, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis*, *Gender & History*.

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## Biographies

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### Jocelyn Létourneau | Université Laval, Quebec

Jocelyn Létourneau is Professor in the Département des sciences historiques, Université Laval, Quebec, where he was Canada Research Chair in Quebec's Contemporary History from 2001 to 2015. A fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J. in 1997-98, and of the Royal Society of Canada since 2005, Dr. Létourneau was attributed, in 2006, the Trudeau Foundation Research Prize. A regular visiting professor in foreign universities, he was the principal investigator in a SHRCC funded Community-University Research Alliance (Canadians and Their Pasts). In 2010, he was a Fulbright scholar at both UC Berkeley and Stanford University. In Fall 2015, he is Visiting Research Associate at UCL-Institute of Education. Dr. Létourneau is the author or editor of many books. His latest publications include *Canadians and their Pasts* (University of Toronto Press, 2013), as co-author, and *Je me souviens? Le passé du Québec dans la conscience de sa jeunesse* (Fides, 2014).

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### Stéphane Lévesque | University of Ottawa

Stéphane Lévesque is Vice Dean Research Professional Development and Founding Director of the Virtual History Lab (VH Lab) at the University of Ottawa. He was visiting professor of digital history at Umea University (Sweden) in 2011. His research focuses on students' historical thinking, identity, and consciousness, and technology in education. His book, *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the 21st Century*, has been recognized as a 'scholarly canon' and referenced extensively in teacher education and curriculum development around the world. In 2006, he was nominated by the Council of Ontario Universities for the Award for Excellence in Teaching with Technology. In 2014, he was selected by the University of Ottawa to represent the University campaign "Defy the Conventional" for his innovation in education.

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### David Lowenthal | University College London

David Lowenthal is emeritus professor of geography and honorary research fellow at University College London. Among his books are *West Indian Societies* (1972), *Geographies of the Mind* (1975), *Our Past Before Us: Why Do We Save It?* (1981), *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (1985), *Landscape Meanings and Values* (1986), *The Politics of the Past* (1989), *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (1996), *George Perkins Marsh, Prophet of Conservation* (2000), *The Nature of Cultural Heritage and the Culture of Natural Heritage* (2005), *Passage du temps sur le paysage* (2008), and *The Past Is a Foreign Country – Revisited* (2015).

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### Heather E. McGregor | University of Ottawa

Heather E. McGregor was born in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, and raised in Iqaluit, Nunavut. As an adult she has negotiated with, and tried to retain and grow, her Northern identity while living in numerous southern Canadian locations to pursue post-secondary education and graduate research on the Arctic. Since completing her doctorate at UBC in 2015, Heather began a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Ottawa. Moving closer to "home" – still 2000 km to the south – Heather's research on Arctic education, decolonizing and historical consciousness has come to grapple with another angle of angst in her experience of life/time/history: that is, facing climate crisis.

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**Carla L. Peck** | University of Alberta

Carla L. Peck is Associate Professor of Social Studies Education in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta and Associate Director (Curriculum) of the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Her research interests include students' understandings of democratic concepts, diversity, identity, citizenship and the relationship between students' ethnic identities and their understandings of history. Carla has held several SSHRC research grants related to this work. She was awarded the Canadian Education Association's Pat Clifford Award for Early Career Research in Education (2010), the 2011 Publication Award from The History Education Network, and in 2013 was awarded the Faculty of Education Undergraduate Teaching Award and the University of Alberta Rutherford Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. Carla's most recent publication is *Education, Globalization and the Nation* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).

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**Tony Taylor** | University of Technology, Sydney

Tony Taylor is Adjunct Professor at the Centre for Public History, University of Technology Sydney. Previously he worked at Monash University before retiring in 2014. At Monash he was director of the 1999-2001 federal investigation into history in Australian schools, director of the federal National Centre for History Education 2001-2007 and history education consultant 2008-2012 to the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. He has written and researched about the politics of education, the politics of history education, history education pedagogy, history and historiography. He is currently writing a book on the politics of education in modern Australian society.

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**John Torpey** | City University of New York

John Torpey is Presidential Professor of Sociology and History at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, and Director of its Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies. He is the author or editor of a number of books, perhaps the most relevant of which to this occasion is *Making Whole What Has Been Smashed: On Reparations Politics* (Harvard UP, 2006; Japanese translation, 2013). With John Boy, he also recently authored "Inventing the Axial Age: The Origins and Uses of a Historical Concept," *Theory & Society* (May 2013) 42:3, pp. 241-259.

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**Sam Wineburg** | Stanford University

Sam Wineburg is Margaret Jacks Professor of Education and, by courtesy, of History at Stanford University. He holds a doctorate in Psychological Studies in Education from Stanford and an honorary doctorate from Umeå University in Sweden. His interdisciplinary scholarship has appeared in *Cognitive Science*, *Journal of American History*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. His research has been featured on C-SPAN, NPR, German Public Radio, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *USA TODAY*, and the *New Yorker*. He champions open source, free educational materials; the *Reading like a Historian* curriculum and *beyondthebubble* assessments have been downloaded over three million times and are used in all 50 states and every country save for North Korea and Palau. He has been married (for the last 34 years at least) to Susan Monas and is the father of Shoshana, Michael, and Raffi.

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Memory is constantly on our lips  
because it no longer exists

Pierre Nora



Postcard of Granville Street, 1950 | Museum of Vancouver Collection



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