Editor's Introduction: Roger I. Simon

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> This is a response to several people. I'd like to start with raising questions about two things: the sufficiency of identity and recognition as the basis of talking about historical consciousness or memory, and two, the sufficiency of narrative as Jörn talks about it in his paper as an organizing concept for understanding the form of collective memory… I think that how one takes up these particular issues of what is the underlying purpose of memory and what are its potential forms of modes of representation and transmission have a lot to do with questions of how we talk about hope, how we talk about the notion of history's function in how it brings us together or not as human beings. So that's sort of an opening gambit I suppose (Simon, in den Heyer, 2004, p. 204).
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> But I think today, in the work of collective memory or historical consciousness, there is an issue of secular historical work, of doing history in a post-teleological and pre-hopeful way! (Rüsen, in den Heyer, 2004, p. 211)

Jörn Rüsen spoke this final sentence to close a 15-minute verbal exchange initiated by Roger Simon's "opening gambit" during the first session of the August 2001, inaugural conference of the newly founded Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness (University of British Columbia), directed by Dr. Peter Seixas.

The invited working conference consisted of 22 international and established scholars engaged in the study of historical consciousness as expressed in collective memory, politics, literature, education, and public policy.[1] At the time, I was completing my first year of doctoral studies with Professor Seixas. As the first sponsored student of the centre, I supported the event by setting up the microphones and recording machines to capture the rich dialogue that we hoped would occur throughout the formal exchanges. I was not seated at the main table but against the wall behind this impressive scholarly circle (space was tight).

Roger's gambit transcribed above was the first offered in response to Dr. Chris Lorenz's opening presentation detailing the topography of historical consciousness and its study from multiple scholarly lenses. To borrow from Robert Frost's insight about happiness, this 15-minute exchange primarily between Roger and Jörn made up in depth what it lacked in length. A wall-fly, I witnessed two

[1] In his introductory chapter, Seixas (2004) offers a helpful review of the many definitions of historical consciousness that exist. Rüsen (1989) likely still offers however the pithiest definition: historical consciousness is that "operation of human intellection rendering present actuality intelligible while fashioning its future perspective (p. 39).

minds engage in pointed collegial refutation working to arrive at the heart of a shared concern (I vividly remember repeatedly thinking as the exchange continued, 'oh my, what can be said against that amazing point!?'). I witnessed again the pedagogical event that was Roger's life, his learned capacity to quickly get to the critical choices at hand.

This exchange enabled me to view a discernable divide regarding how to approach history and memory that animate questions I still think about today: How might historical consciousness be defined for purposes of comparative studies? Does historical consciousness denote a form of human comprehension or a prescription for what ails it? Who is the subject of the study of historical consciousness, they in the past or we here today?

Animated by the Jewish call for Zakhor, the injunction to remember well, for Roger any discussion of historical consciousness involved both a moral obligation to remember community, and, an imperative to engage remembrance practices as an ethical type of performance filled with poetic disjuncture from which communities to come might emerge. As a social practice, remembrance links past to present and to a hoped for "futurity" through an invocation and lived enactment of our mutuality. From Roger I learned that identities, identifications, and commonplace templates of story telling contain within their very expression fragment, fracture, and palimpsest. Roger initiated this pedagogical event by questioning whether those in attendance would give sufficient attention to these descriptors in our use of narrative, identity, and recognition as the basis to think and to study historical consciousness.

Throughout his career at the University of Toronto, Roger explored with others practices of remembrance premised on the incompleteness of the traces of lives lived and our ability to sufficiently respond. Through 'historiographic poetics', historical thinkers arrange traces (e.g., photos, extracts from diaries, an old shoe) in juxtaposition to delay the inclination to narrate and, or, to indicate where our ability to narrate meaningful explanations fails. Rather than summative narrative wholes, the focus here lies with narrative holes. Incompleteness of traces, narratives, and our abilities to account for such demand new practices of reception, practices Roger hoped signaled the possibility, but never the guarantee, of better-shared futures:

> Rüsen: My question simply is, can you even think of presentation of memory not being a narrative?
> Simon: Yes
> Rüsen: Give me an example.
> Simon: The first response that we ask from people who are participating in our groups is for a non-narrative response. The argument is that the task of memory is not necessarily to develop a grasp of an understanding of the event that one can transmit through narrative. Rather, the first task of memory is to confront the traces of lives lived in times and places other than one's own and to try to come to grips with the sufficiency or insufficiency of one's self in relationship to the adequacy of responding to those traces. The juxtapatory method is deliberately non-narrative because it attempts to hold, in a very structure of the juxtaposition itself, the breakdowns, the

> contradictions, and the insufficiencies of narrative form.[…] What we've done … basically is to create a protocol for trying to […]engage the past that is different from the basic narrative reflex […] a juxtaposition that embodies their response to the kinds of questions, contradictions, astonishments, and the insufficiencies to hold the past that they've been asked to engage in relationship to the archival material […]This begins to open up onto what I would call the education of their sensibilities in terms of thinking about in what ways our lives are structured so that it's insufficient to hold the past, and what particular transformations might be necessary in our thinking.

Roger's work offers a productive counter-punctuation to Anglo-German derived interpretations of historical thinking presently guiding Ministry reforms in history and social studies education in several Canadian provinces. In this approach second-order concepts (e.g., significance, change, narrative) should guide the pedagogical development of students' judgments about some past event or situation. Neither the political, subjective, nor, indeed, the politics of subjectivity regarding how our sensibilities have been trained in ways that suit particular power interests are part of that orientation. Rather, to train students to weigh evidence about a past event, like a lawyer, animates this pedagogical imperative. For Roger, the historical subject was not the past per say but a set of present and future possibilities that might be revealed through an encounter with the limitations of our institutionally shaped frames of reception. What might we become if invited to write marginalia into those scripts through which we've learned to act appropriately in places of remembrance (e.g., schools, museums, public memorials)?[2] What futures become possible when we invite an unexpected dissonance or, more simply, attend to the inherent insufficiency within both the appropriated script and, or, ourselves? (Farley, 2009; Simon, 2005). Without subjectivity as the primary historical text and subject, schooled eyes more likely glaze than wrinkle with in-sight.

This August event became woven with what I had earlier learned from Roger as a MA student at OISE/U of T in the mid 1990s. In an over subscribed graduate class, Roger negotiated, challenged, and prodded a full spectrum of concerns and interests meant to contextualize Columbus centennial memorial practices within 'identity politics' while also dealing with people like me, privileged enough to be initially shocked at the very existence, let alone complex intersections, of diverse voices fighting to be heard and taken seriously. Later, with great patience, Roger offered needed advice on my thesis poorly reinventing, as I shudder to recall, the Hegelian dialectic.

At UBC I remember my first meeting with Dr. John Willinsky hoping, as a close reader of his work, that he would agree to join my doctoral committee. When I tried to articulate a comprehensible topic I hoped he might be interested in, John asked about the people I had worked with at OISE. As I listed those who influenced me, he started gathering papers and preparing to leave for his next appointment and must have noticed some look on my face. His final line of that meeting was

[2] I find 'appropriate' an interesting word when pronounced again to signify a State's reserved right to appropriate.

something akin to "Look Kent its alright. You worked with Roger and that is good enough for me. Put me on your committee." In imagined connective threads, Roger offers me an alternatively powerful formulation of what constitutes the historical and our concomitant obligations to those who arrive in traces from the past, and, a touchstone within an educational situation that continues to talk more about subjects than subjectivities (den Heyer, 2011; den Heyer & Abbott, 2011; Farley, 2009).

I want to note one characteristic about Roger about which I increasingly marvel. He somehow managed not to grow fangs:

> The image I have of academia is one of a place filled with tremendously bright, insecure people. They do have bad glasses. And atrocious people skills. They are distracted, yet vicious when aroused. [In the university,] the nerds have filled teeth, like cannibals (Donohue, 2005, p. 144).

As many of his students and colleagues themselves recount, Roger could bite with a trenchant observation that might cut to underlying assumptions behind a statement or body of work. Yet, academic engagement for Roger was always about the work and the need to make it better so as to better serve. For me Roger personified an ideal that the academic life of study made a person better than who they might have been before they entered. Because we never belong only to ourselves, people like Roger make communities both holier and healthy. This special issue exemplifies t/his influence.

I wish to thank Drs. Lisa Farley and Aparna Mishra Tarc for guiding this special issue as guest editors and for their two important article contributions. Lindsay Herriot and David Scott spent many hours on copy and production. Their dedication to scholarship generally and to *Canadian Social Studies* specifically continues to make this community a vital space. Likewise, I want to acknowledge the patience of contributors as this issue evolved and their dedication to this work continued. I leave to Roger a final thought:

> What I am interested in is questions of spaces of remembering that have the possibility for opening up… ways of engaging representations of the past, significations of the past, open[ing] up the possibilities for thinking about how we are to live our lives as human beings and what prospects for hope …might exist in the present (Simon, in den Heyer, 2004, p. 206).

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