Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Toward Embracing Multiple Perspectives in World History Curricula: Interrogating Representations of Intercultural Exchanges Between Ancient Civilizations in Quebec Textbooks

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Abstract: Guided by critical discourse analysis, this study analyzes how ancient civilizations are constructed in high school history textbooks used in Quebec, Canada. The findings suggest that the narrative generally ignores 2-way intercultural exchanges. The narrative is also Eurocentric, silencing sub–Saharan Africa's contributions and nonmaterial influences of non-Western civilizations, such as ancient Near Eastern influences on the Judeo–Christian monotheistic tradition. Such depictions normalize a dominance paradigm that sanctions the supremacy of particular civilizations, religions, or groups. Students need to develop a reflective historical consciousness that is conducive to intergroup dynamics based on respect for diversity. Thus, in studying ancient civilizations, they should be encouraged to interrogate their own worldviews, explore the interdependence of human civilizations, and engage with omitted counternarratives, alternative chronologies, and periodization.

Keywords: ancient civilizations, counternarratives, historical consciousness, intercultural exchange, Quebec, world history textbooks

To rally support against the then imminent destruction of the ancient Near Eastern Palmyra temples in Syria by the self-styled 'Islamic State' terrorists, prominent British politician Boris Johnson (2015) made a rare reference to the temple as a product of "great Greco–Romano–Semitic" cross-cultural exchanges (para. 6). Such occasional appellations are commendable reminders that conjure images of the connectedness and interdependence of human civilization. However, they are dwarfed by how ancient histories are more often mobilized by politicians

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and other interested parties to construct their communities' supremacy or establish their precedence, thus asserting their entitlement to land or other valued resources. We witness this manipulation of ancient history in numerous contemporary violent conflicts, such as the Arab–Israeli conflict or Hindu–Muslim tensions. From ancient myths and legends to religions that can trace their origins back several millennia, such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Hinduism, ancient history continues to shape worldviews and actions. As a result, we may want to ask ourselves: How are we preparing our students to critically and productively engage with the complex ways in which ancient history has been constructed and the competing narratives that they will inevitably encounter across multiple social sites?[1]

The place of ancient civilizations in textbooks remains a highly understudied area. Textual analyses of history textbooks and of national standards have largely focused on the place of minorities and marginalized groups within these materials (e.g., Foster, 1999; Hilburn & Fitchett, 2012; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Woyshner & Schocker, 2015). Within world history textbook analyses, there has also been a sustained scholarly interest in analyzing modern historical events, such as World War II (e.g., Foster & Nicholls, 2005; Gross, 2014; Klymenko, 2014; Lachmann & Mitchell, 2014; Schär & Sperisen, 2010). In contrast, scholars have rarely analyzed the place of ancient civilizations in textbooks. For the purposes of this article, the term "ancient history" is used to refer to documented history dating back to approximately 3000 BCE, such as the histories of ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt, until the end of the Middle Ages.[2]

Intrigued by the relevance of ancient histories and the lack of discussion of their place in history textbooks, I became curious about how ancient histories are presented in Canadian history textbooks, especially in the context of Quebec.[3] As is the case in other contexts, in Quebec, textbooks continue to play a central role in history classrooms. A national survey of Canadians' historical consciousness has revealed that, along with museums and families, textbooks maintain their place as highly trusted sources of historical knowledge (Conrad et al., 2013).[4] Lévesque's (2014) study also showed how Quebec's preservice teachers consider textbooks among their most trusted teaching resources.

The fact that textbooks' centrality and authority often position students as passive learners has prompted scholars to call for encouraging students to learn to conduct historical research and to use primary sources. In reality, however, textbooks remain "the bedrock of history teaching" (Bain, 2006, p. 2081). Given the importance of history textbooks and their contents, I wanted to explore how they could potentially contribute to fostering a reflective historical consciousness that helps students develop a stronger appreciation of cultural and religious diversity in their increasingly multicultural societies.

In this study, I examine constructions of ancient non-Western and Western civilizations in the two history textbooks used at the high school level in Quebec. More specifically, I interrogate intercultural exchanges and how they might be

presented in ways that sanction the supremacy of particular groups or their contributions to human civilization. The following research questions guided my analysis:

RQ1:. How do the textbooks present intercultural exchanges between ancient non-Western civilizations (e.g., Mesopotamia, Egypt, Phoenicia, India, and China) and ancient Western civilizations (e.g., Greek and Roman)?

RQ2:. How do the textbooks present non-Western civilizations' material and nonmaterial contributions?

THE WORLD HISTORY CURRICULUM IN WESTERN NATIONS

Manning (1996) contended that many world historians still reduce cultural influences to discussions of "diffusion" and "dominance." This conception, where a dominant culture maintains its "same character in the new place," (p. 773) normalizes how civilizations erase their predecessors rather than build on their achievements. With the dominance of such unidirectional conceptualizations, two-way exchanges and mutual influences are often silenced or relegated to the periphery of the narrative. As Manning (2006) observed, these simplistic and commonly used "diffusionist" approaches to the past tend to be dominated by discussions of "one-way influences" (p. 193).

Given their significance in shaping people's understandings of the interdependence of human civilizations, some historians have called for a more central place for cross-cultural interactions within world history narratives. For instance, Bentley (1996) proposed a radical approach to periodization that is largely premised on those interactions. His proposal aimed to transcend "ethnocentric periodizations that structure the world's past according to the experiences of some particular privileged people" (p. 750). Paradoxically, even in Bentley's alternative conceptualization of periodization, he made little connection across the categories he had proposed, such as "ancient civilizations" and "classical civilizations." Despite their potential to expose students to alternative approaches to world history and to spark discussions around cross-cultural interactions, textbooks generally ignore such alternative periodization and chronologies (Marino, 2011b).

Current world history curricula are generally not conducive to these intercultural exchanges and interactions (Marino, 2011a, 2011b; Marino & Bolgatz, 2010; Nordgren & Johansson, 2015). They continue to reflect dominant historiography schools that value "deep, area-specific knowledge," which often collide with alternative visions that world historians might put forward (Marino, 2011b, p. 7). With their materials mostly organized according to distinct eras and regions, textbooks put the full burden on teachers and students to attempt to make "connections across boundaries" (Manning, 2006, p. 175) .

Scholars have also warned that such lack of attention to intercultural exchanges and interactions inaccurately paints modern cultural and religious diversity as a recent phenomenon. Nordgren and Johansson (2015) problematized how the

current dominance of a linear progress narrative, which moves from ancient agricultural settlements to modern nation-states, hinders "intercultural learning" by disconnecting the phenomenon of social diversity from its ancient origins and roots (p. 20). Such representation of history, they argued, would impede students' development of a historical understanding of "contemporary diversity and multiple identities" (p. 20). Similarly, DesRoches (2016) concluded that Quebec's History and Citizenship Education (HCE) curricula promote a reclusive model bent on preserving the superiority of the French language and culture to the detriment of numerous minorities living in the province. Hence, she argued that to help promote intercultural thinking, it is crucial for these curricula to advance a "language of interdependence" that replaces how inclusivity is currently constructed as a new phenomenon (pp. 254–255).

A small but growing body of literature has analyzed world history curricula and standards, especially in the United States (e.g., Marino, 2011a, 2011b; Marino & Bolgatz, 2010). However, they have mainly analyzed history since 1500 CE, leaving ancient history largely unexplored. In their review of U.S. national standards for world history, Marino and Bolgatz (2010) found that the standards had a strong "Eurocentric orientation" downplaying "global connections," "cross-cultural interactions," or "the commonality of human experience" (p. 366). Such findings were confirmed by Marino's (2011a) world history textbook analysis, in which he reviewed the chapter sequence, chronology, and structure, but not the content per se. Illustrating how Eurocentric orientation had excluded non-Western narratives, he observed that Africa only emerged through its interactions with Europe in the context of the "slave trade" and the "Era of Imperialism" (Marino, 2011a, p. 436). Several counternarratives have emerged to challenge that Eurocentric approach to world history, which has thus far dominated historiography and history curricula. In the next section, I briefly present two of those historical perspectives.

Counternarratives to Dominant World History Narratives

An Afrocentric counternarrative: The West's indebtedness to ancient non-Western civilizations. The Afrocentric camp could be loosely defined by its quest to reconstruct ancient history to give Africa the deserved credit for its contributions to human civilization. Its affiliated scholars and activists generally accuse the West of intentionally downplaying ancient Egypt's and other Afro–Asiatic civilizations' contributions to Western civilizations (e.g., Bernal, 1987, 1991, 2006; James & Asante, 1992; Rickford, 2016). In his seminal book, *Black Athena*, Bernal (1987) called attention to ancient Greek writings that acknowledge Afro–Asiatic civilizations' influences on Greek civilization. Further, he problematized the general silencing of these influences in mainstream Western historical narratives and advocated their inclusion. Analyzing archaeological evidence and ancient documents, in three volumes, Bernal

(1987, 1991, 2006) explored manifestations of these cross-cultural exchanges and influences in linguistics, philosophies, and beliefs. Bernal's and other Afrocentric scholars' writings have prompted a wide range of opposing responses within Western scholarly circles and the wider public sphere. The extensive critiques from Lefkowitz and Rogers (1996), and Berlinerblau and Rogers (1999) prompted Bernal and Moore (2001) to respond by producing a volume dedicated to refuting their critiques.

To illustrate, Lefkowitz (2008)—recognized for her anti-Afrocentric views—has agreed that there was great ancient Greek admiration for the ancient Egyptian civilization based on cross-cultural exchanges. However, she argued that these linkages between the two civilizations are overstated. For instance, she attempted to demonstrate how different the notion of death was in the two civilizations and explored ancient Egyptian and Greek languages to reveal that the linguistic influences were minimal. These arguments start to give a sense of the rich debates surrounding the significance, magnitude, and direction of cross-cultural exchanges among ancient civilizations, especially ancient Greece and ancient Afro–Asiatic (or non-Western) civilizations.

Near Eastern historians' counternarrative: Judeo–Christian monotheism's indebtedness to ancient belief systems. This counternarrative largely emanates from ancient Near East historians who aim to draw attention to the strong influence of ancient Near Eastern wisdom and religions on the Judeo–Christian monotheistic tradition. For instance, Egyptologist Jan Assmann (1998) has explored how the Biblical Exodus narrative might have shaped the West's view of ancient Egyptian religion and subsequently its contributions to the Judeo–Christian monotheistic belief system.[5] He argued that while it borrowed significantly from ancient Egyptian wisdom, the monotheistic tradition does not acknowledge such influences. To the contrary, the Judeo–Christian–Islamic monotheistic tradition actually vilifies ancient Egyptian belief systems, primarily based on the violence against the ancient Israelites that the Exodus story narrates.

Ancient Egypt became the antithesis to monotheism, serving Moses's need to forge a unique identity for the followers of the new monotheistic religion. Assmann (1998) termed this the "Mosaic distinction," which has artificially separated ancient Egyptian—and ancient Near Eastern belief systems at large—from Judeo–Christian monotheism. To emphasize its novelty and originality, monotheistic efforts that preceded Moses had to be underplayed or altogether silenced. Assmann has problematized how ancient Egyptian King Akhenaten's name and his monotheistic efforts are rarely included in the West's narratives of monotheism, thereby positioning Moses as the sole and pioneer proponent of the worship of one God. Biblical scholars, such as Matthews and Benjamin (1991), have also illustrated strong similarities and parallels between numerous Judeo–Christian texts and ancient

Near Eastern religious texts, not only in the historical events narrated, but also the genres and narrative plots employed.

To summarize, Afrocentric counternarratives have called for an acknowledgement of the contributions of Afro–Asiatic civilizations to the West (e.g., Bernal, 1987), while counternarratives produced by ancient Near East scholars have specifically called for acknowledging the spiritual and religious—or nonmaterial—influences of non-Western civilizations on the Judeo–Christian monotheistic tradition (e.g., Assmann, 1998). These examples of counternarratives are part of what appears to be a growing number of world historians who challenge the dominant world history perspective. Inspired by these counternarratives' invitation to revisit and deconstruct dominant world history narratives, I turn to historical consciousness, which offers an approach to unpack how understandings of the past help shape individual worldviews and intergroup dynamics.

HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Historical consciousness is founded on a postmodernist orientation to history, favoring a multiplicity of perspectives and narratives that compel us to analyze how understandings of the past shape an individual's identity, sense of agency, and interactions with society at large (Duquette, 2015; Nordgren & Johansson, 2015; Rüsen, 1989/2004, 2005; Seixas, 2004; Zanazanian, 2012). It is concerned with how our understanding of the past can help inform and orient our actions and attitudes, including how this understanding shapes majority-minority intergroup dynamics in multicultural societies (e.g., Zanazanian, 2008, 2012, 2015).

German historian Jörn Rüsen (1989/2004, 2005), whose work has become central in theorizing historical consciousness, has proposed an ontogenetic development of historical consciousness, suggesting that there are four types: the traditional, exemplary, critical, and genetic. Although organized in a logical sequence in which each stage is the precondition for the next, he has suggested that the stages are not mutually exclusive and that they often effectively coexist.

In Rüsen's (2005) model, the *traditional* type is characterized by a sense of continuation of "an obligatory life form in temporal change" based on traditions, thus rendering an uncritical understanding of the past. The *exemplary* type entails looking at specific past cases and examples to distill "messages" or "lessons" relevant to the present and future. The *critical* type, meanwhile, rejects and denies validity of such patterns, consistently proposing a "counter-narrative." Lastly, the *genetic* type recognizes change as a defining feature of history, thus embodying an approach to history where diverse perspectives and narratives become "integrated into an embracing perspective of temporal change" (p. 33). Hence, while *critical* thought points out "critique-

based standpoints and delimitations," *genetic* thought accepts "a pluralism of standpoints" (p. 36). Simply put, the critical type is characterized by "questioning and transgressing the viability of dominant historical narratives," while the genetic type moves beyond that understanding to acknowledge the "complexity, temporality, and variability of both knowing and acting in the world" (Zanazanian, 2012, p. 219).

Duquette (2015) has suggested that the first two types—the traditional and exemplary—represent a *non-reflective* historical consciousness, while the last two—critical and genetic—are indicative of a more evolved, *reflective* historical consciousness. Attaining the latter entails developing an awareness of "the complexity of the past" and an awareness of how our worldviews influence our approaches to it (p. 61). In other words, engaging students with the workings of history as a discipline while offering opportunities to explore their own positionalities helps them develop a reflective historical consciousness. These reflective historical consciousness tendencies would nurture worldviews that demonstrate "tolerance (acceptance) of others' perspectives" as well as their realities and experiences, translating into more openness and less rigidly delimited group boundaries (Zanazanian, 2015, p. 118). Thus, arguably, a reflective historical consciousness would contribute to open and respectful interactions and intergroup dynamics. In reality, however, history curricula remain heavily dominated by non-reflective—traditional and exemplary—approaches to history (Rüsen, 2005, p. 36).

Historical Consciousness and Intercultural Historical Learning

In an effort to operationalize the historical consciousness framework, especially in multicultural settings, Nordgren and Johansson (2015) have proposed an intercultural historical learning framework that brings together narrative and intercultural competences. This model builds on narrative abilities (i.e., to experience, to interpret, and to orient)—proposed by key historical consciousness theorists, including Rüsen—and how those abilities might intersect with intercultural competence dimensions. Within that framework, Nordgren and Johansson (2015) have encouraged those analyzing history curricula to focus on whether the content potentially contributes to "knowledge about social and cultural processes" (p. 10) and "the ability to perceive representations from different cultures" (p. 11), and whether it assists readers to "decentre and relativize" their own culture (p. 12).

Thus, aligned with Duquette's conception of a reflective historical consciousness, the intercultural historical learning framework aims for students to "become more historically sensitive and better equipped to understand the depth and variety of the past" (Nordgren & Johansson, 2015, p. 4). McDonald (2011) further elucidated the concept of "intercultural thinking," suggesting that it is premised on a belief that cultures are "always already intercultural," signaling a departure from more traditional approaches, such as

multiculturalism, that view cultures as "distinct and separated" (p. 372). Although, thus far, scholars have not specifically focused on exploring how students' interaction with historical narratives presented in textbooks might contribute to shaping their historical consciousness, several studies have explored how students interact with historical narratives encountered in a number of other closely related social sites. These studies help provide insights into how textbooks—one of the most trusted sources of historical knowledge—might influence students' historical consciousness.

Research on Students' Historical Consciousness

A growing body of research illuminates the complex relationship between history education and students' historical consciousness. Studies on Canadian students have suggested that some embody a critical historical consciousness, while only a few seem able to engage with multiperspectival approaches to history, which would signify a genetic historical consciousness. For instance, Zanazanian (2015) has found that English-speaking students in Quebec mostly exhibited "critical" tendencies, meaning that they competently employed strategies that challenged and opposed the dominant French Quebec historical narrative.

In exploring students' interaction with controversial artistic representations of European settlement in British Columbia, Seixas and Clark (2004) found that most students were unable to take a historical perspective by analyzing the events and actors within their appropriate historical contexts. Thus, most students exhibited "exemplary" or "critical" type tendencies. Research has also suggested that students' historical consciousness is influenced by narrative templates that they acquire through family and other social sites. Based on the largest study on students' historical consciousness in Quebec, Létourneau (2007, Létourneau & Moisan, 2004) argued that these templates are shaped early during a child's formative years and thus remain intact unless families or teachers deliberately intervene to unsettle them. Based on the dominant narrative template related to the province's history, Quebec students develop a pattern of meaning-making which scholars have called the "survivance" template, simplifying past realities into a dichotomous story of "us versus them" (e.g., Lévesque, Létourneau, & Gani, 2012).

Barca, Castro, and Amaral's (2010) study in Portugal is one of the few studies that have used a historical consciousness framework to explore students' understandings of connections between ancient history and the present, particularly in terms of people's historical movements. The authors concluded that most students displayed presentist and fragmented understandings of such connections. Thus, the authors advocated a curricular content that establishes relationships between ancient history and the present so students would make better sense of important concepts such as "peoples' movement, diversity, interaction, and humanity through time" (p. 286).

Despite this growing body of literature, our understanding of the specific role that textbooks might play in shaping students' historical consciousness is still limited. What we do know is that textbooks still play a crucial role in history classrooms across North America (Bain, 2006; Levstik, 2008; Marino, 2011a; Marker & Mehlinger, 1992; Thornton, 1991). Within the few studies exploring students' interaction with history curricula, there is a particular paucity of studies focusing on world history curricula (Bain & Shreiner, 2005). However, given the centrality of textbooks in history classrooms and the influence of related social sites on students' historical consciousness, we can infer that history textbooks would have a potentially important role in shaping students' historical consciousness. Responding to this general gap in our understanding of the place of ancient histories in history textbooks, and guided by a historical consciousness framework, in this study, I explore how Quebec textbooks portray intercultural exchanges among ancient civilizations.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Quebec is home to approximately one fourth of Canada's population, making it the country's second most populous province after Ontario. Its population is also increasingly more culturally and religiously diverse, with the number of Muslims increasing by at least 3%, Hindus by at least 0.3%, and Sikhs by at least 0.1% between 2001 and 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011a). The city of Montreal alone has the second largest concentration of Black Canadians. Mostly of African or Afro–Caribbean descent, they constitute Quebec's largest visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2011b).

Being the only Canadian province where French is the predominant language and the historic site of the ultimate defeat of the French colonial forces by the British in the 1750s make Quebec unique in some ways. Its history education, nonetheless, shares several commonalities with other Western contexts. Along with other Canadian provinces, Quebec's history education has evolved from a "factual recall" approach that was dominant until the 1960s (Osborne, 2008, p. 5). Similar to the U.S. adoption of historical thinking as a guiding approach for its National Standards for History, Quebec's history curriculum has incorporated historical thinking since the late 1990s (Duquette, 2014).[6]

In accordance with key historical thinking concepts, Quebec's ministry of education (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, hereafter referred to as MELS) emphasizes the program's commitment to help students examine social phenomena from a "historical perspective" and to explore "continuity and change" (MELS, 2015b, p. 302).[7] Through appropriating these historical thinking tools, the Quebec Education Program (QEP) aims to prepare students to productively operate in a diverse and democratic society through deepening

their "consciousness of citizenship" and developing an appreciation of plural-
ism and "cultural diversity" (MELS, 2015b, p. 298).

METHODOLOGY

In this study, my textual analysis mainly draws upon critical discourse
analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 2003). Critical discourse analysis aims to explore
how discourse "constructs, becomes constructed by, represents, and becomes
represented by the social world" (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui,
& Joseph, 2005, p. 366). Multiple critical, theoretical, and ideological orienta-
tions converge to inform discourse analysis approaches, including "poststruc-
turalist discourse theory, feminist theory, functional linguistics, and neo-
Marxian sociology" (Luke, 1995, p. 39). At its core, critical discourse analysis
is committed to uncover how language might naturalize power asymmetries
and injustices. This commitment inspires discourse analysis methods to
attempt to expose "often obscured structures of power, political control, and
dominance" and "strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion"
(Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009, p. 8). Simply put, critical
discourse analysis methods offer tools that help denaturalize and render visible
the ideology or vision of the world that a particular text is transmitting.

Textbooks Analyzed

I analyzed the two History and Citizenship Education (HCE) textbooks
used by Secondary Cycle One students: Laville's (2008) *From Yesterday To
Tomorrow* (hereafter referred to as "HCE1") and Lord and Léger's (2008b)
History In Action (hereafter referred to as "HCE2"). These are the two text-
books approved and mandated by MELS for all Quebec schools to choose
from in teaching the mandatory world history course (MELS, 2015a, p. 7).
Quebec's Secondary Cycle One is equivalent to Grades 7 and 8 elsewhere in
Canada and the United States. While the second part of the HCE Secondary
Cycle One curriculum focuses on Quebec's history, the first part is primarily
dedicated to the history of the world's ancient civilizations. I found it equally
instructive to also conduct a close read of the two Teaching Guides accom-
panying the textbooks. I refer to the HCE1 Teaching Guide (Laville,
Therriault, & Sauvageau, 2008) as "HCE1TG" and the HCE2 Teacher's
Guide (Lord & Léger, 2008a) as "HCE2TG."
Wherever relevant, I also consulted the HCE1 Teaching Resources Guide
Part I (Laville & Therriault, 2008a) and Part II (Laville & Therriault, 2008b),
which I refer to as HCE1TRGI and HCE1TRGII, respectively. These guides
provided important supplementary insights into the textbook authors'
approaches. Their stated objectives and proposed responses to some textbook

exercises elucidate their approaches to world history as well as key messages
they find significant for teachers to convey and for students to appropriate.

Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

In analyzing the textbooks, I started with a basic quantitative analysis. I
then conducted a qualitative analysis guided by key questions drawing on
Fairclough's (2003) approach to critical discourse analysis. Specifically, I
attempted to interrogate how the textbooks construct classification and cate-
gorization through manipulations of "equivalence and difference" (Fairclough,
2003, p. 88). To investigate such constructions, Fairclough suggested we
investigate how "entities of various sorts … people, objects, organizations"
are differentiated, while in other cases, differences are underplayed or "col-
lapsed by 'texturing' relations of equivalence" (p. 88). Thus, I sought to
examine how the textbook authors constructed similarities and differences
between ancient civilizations as well as the significance of their contributions.

Finally, I was concerned with interrogating how "other texts and a set of
voices" were integrated into the text, or what Fairclough (2003) would refer to
as 'intertextuality' (p. 47), with a focus on which texts might have been
"significantly excluded" (p. 192). In further operationalizing the exploration
of inclusions and exclusions, I drew on Nordgren and Johansson's (2015)
proposed questions, especially asking how the content potentially contributes
to an "ability to perceive representations from different cultures," which could
potentially offer openings for readers to "decentre and relativize" the dominant
narrative (pp. 11–12).

Quantitative analysis. In order to gauge the prominence given to the
various ancient civilizations, I conducted a count of all pages and parts of
pages dedicated to a particular civilization. This process entailed a count of the
number of pages that might be fully dedicated to a civilization as well as
adding up all references to that civilization—sometimes scattered across parts
of different pages. For instance, if a civilization happened to be referred to in
the quarter of three or four different pages, those references were counted as
one page. The same approximation applied to situations where a civilization
was referred to in half a page of two or three different pages. Given this
study's primary focus on student textbooks and students' historical conscious-
ness, I applied the quantitative analysis to student textbooks, not the teacher
guides. However, I found it informative to present the teaching time expected
by civilization as stipulated by one of the Teacher Guides (Laville, Therriault,
& Sauvageau, 2008, pp. 17–18).[8]

Qualitative analysis and coding. I examined all relevant passages and
references made to ancient civilizations in the two textbooks multiple times.
Through an open coding process, I then coded all relevant references under the
two main thematic codes, "material contributions" and "nonmaterial

contributions." Further, guided by this study's key interest to explore how the textbooks present intercultural exchanges between ancient non-Western civilizations and Western civilizations, I created sub-codes to distinguish the direction of those contributions, specifying which civilization is the originator (or influencer) and which is the recipient (or borrower). Given space limitations, my analyses focused chiefly on written texts. However, it would have been ideal to also analyze the accompanying images, which could have offered important supplementary insights (e.g., Woyshner & Schocker, 2015).

Under material contributions, I coded references made to any influences or exchanges related to agricultural produce, raw materials, and finished goods as well as scientific discoveries and innovations. Under nonmaterial contributions, I coded references made to the advancement of ideas, cultural, philosophical, and other non-tangible aspects and practices, such as the notion of writing, myths, or belief systems. These two codes were loosely based on the distinction that Manning (2006) made, where material exchanges would include "people" and any other "material objects," and nonmaterial exchanges would refer to everything related to "ideas, or practices" (p. 179). To illustrate, in Table 1, I present some examples of the coding conducted.

FINDINGS

QEP HCE Textbook Objectives and Visions

The teacher guides emphasize the importance of spreading the value of tolerance and respect for diversity as well as exploring similarities and differences among civilizations. However, this emphasis is coupled with a subtle underplaying of discussions of interdependence of human civilizations. In terms of helping students value diversity and religious tolerance, for instance, HCE2TG explains that its textbook is designed to help students develop "positive attitudes with respect to differences" through highlighting "the diversity of social identities in society" (Lord & Léger, 2008a, p. 170). The same Guide expects that students contemplate the negative consequences of stereotyping and "religious intolerance in medieval societies" and realize that a prerequisite for social harmony is the "recognition and acceptance of different identities" (p. 167). Similar to HCE2, the "Human Heritage" subsections of HCE1 aim to help students be "open to the world" through examining "the cultural influence and heritage of societies in time" (Laville, 2008, p. 1). In short, the guides strongly advocate tolerance for diversity. However, they exert little effort to emphasize the importance of discussing intercultural interactions, exchanges, and interdependence. Instead, they seem to emphasize a "compare and contrast" approach.

Several of the unit objectives outlined in HCE2TG revolve around helping students identify "similarities and differences in the development of

Table 1. Illustrative Examples of Coding Conducted

Direction of influence	Type of influence	
	Material contributions	Nonmaterial contributions
Non-Western to Western	The wheel and "zodiac signs" are Mesopotamian contributions, still in use today (Laville, 2008, p. 50). Egyptian knowledge of calendars inspired Greeks and Romans. The current Western calendar is largely based on those efforts (Laville, 2008, p. 63). The Silk Road has facilitated export of Chinese products, such as silk and spices, to ancient Greece and Rome (Laville, 2008, p. 169). Mesopotamian and Egyptian scholars might have inspired Thales of Miletus of ancient Greece in "astronomy, mathematics and … geometry" (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 112).	Ancient Phoenicia developed a writing system which was later adopted by the Greeks, and based on which the Romans created the Latin alphabet (Laville, 2008, p. 41; Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 59). During the Middle Ages, Arabs helped to preserve "Greco-Roman intellectual achievements" through translations that helped the West reconnect with its heritage (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 195). HCE1 (Laville, 2008) cites a text from the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh, which describes a "vision of life after death" asking students to reflect on what images the text conjures (p. 46). In elaborating on this exercise, teachers are encouraged to explore similarities with "Christian images of hell and darkness" (Laville & Therriault, 2008a, p. 82). The flood narrative that appears in the Mesopotamian Epic is noted to have later appeared in "Greek mythology" (Laville, 2008, p. 51). Romans have "adopted deities worshipped in the conquered Roman provinces, such as the Egyptian goddess Isis" (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 151). HCE1TRGII encourages teachers to discuss the role that Arab philosophers, such as Averroes, played in helping the West rediscover "the philosophy of Aristotle" and "other fundamental scientific knowledge" (Laville & Therriault, 2008a, p. 332).

Non-Western to non-Western	Ancient Egyptians have borrowed Mesopotamia's "mathematical concepts, the use of wheeled chariots and bronze casting" (Laville, 2008, p. 62).	The Epic of Gilgamesh's flood narrative is said to have also appeared in "sacred texts of India" (Laville, 2008, p. 51).
	Mesopotamians exported agricultural produce and imported construction materials from Arabia, Afghanistan, India, Egypt, and the Mediterranean region (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 54).	Buddhism spread from India to China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia (Laville, 2008, p. 165).
	Despite its general isolation from other ancient civilizations, the Chinese civilization adopted aspects of other non-Western civilizations, such as the wheel from Mesopotamia, iron-forging techniques from the Middle East, and horses from central Asia (Laville, 2008, p. 75).	Buddhism spread, becoming a leading religion in China, "where it adopted aspects of Confucianism and Taoism" (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 153).
	Through the Silk Road, the Chinese exported silk & spices to regions, such as the Middle East (Laville, 2008, p. 169).	The common knowledge of the Arabic language among Muslim communities facilitated "numerous cultural exchanges" among them (Laville, 2008, p. 218).
	During the Middle Ages, Arabs borrowed from "other Asian civilizations" to advance their knowledge of "mathematics, medicine, geography and astronomy" (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 195).	
Western to Western	Next to a large photo of the Pantheon in Rome, HCE2 points to how the façade looks like that of a Greek temple (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 152).	The Romans have fully adopted "the Greek Pantheon," transforming the supreme god "Zeus" to "Jupiter" & his wife "Hera" to "Juno" (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 151).
	HCE1 (Laville, 2008) presents "Romanesque Churches" as illustrations of the strong Roman influence on Western Christianity's architecture (p. 224).	The discovery of ancient Greek philosophy writings "transformed" Christian philosophy in the Middle Ages (Laville, 2008, p. 208).
		During the Middle Ages, the West reverted to ancient Greek beliefs, such as Ptolemy's notion that "the sun orbited the earth," which resonated with the Church's beliefs at the time (Laville, 2008, p. 210).
		HCE2TG reminds teachers to help students establish ancient Greece's influence on the Eastern Church, which is evident in how the Orthodox religion "adapted to the culture and political organization of the Eastern Empire" (Lord & Léger, 2008a, p. 204).

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Direction of influence	Type of influence	
	Material contributions	Nonmaterial contributions
Western to non-Western	The Silk Road has facilitated China's import of "wool, glass and precious metals … raisins, figs, cucumbers and nuts" most of which would originate from the West (Laville, 2008, p. 169).	The "Greek civilization, along with its language, religion, architecture, and social and political organization" spread and dominated through its conquests (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 90). HCE2TG attributes the successful expansion of Greek civilization to ancient Greece's unique "cultural characteristics" (Lord & Léger, 2008a, p. 92). The territories conquered by Rome have "benefited greatly from Roman civilization," thus voluntarily adopting its culture, laws, language, beliefs, & even names (Laville, 2008, pp. 152–153). The conquered territories had much to gain from Romanization and thus voluntarily embraced ancient Rome's culture and language (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 133).

ancient civilizations" (Lord & Léger, 2008a, p. 73). In contrast, there is little emphasis on the concept of interaction or interdependence of human civilizations. For instance, the only mention of "interdependence" appears in the unit on Romanization, which aims for students to appreciate the "interdependence of empires" (Lord & Léger, 2008a, p. 126). Similarly, the notion of "mutual influences" emerges only in the context of the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Biblical Book of Genesis, where HCE1TRGI encourages teachers to explore "the transmission of a cultural element from one civilization to another" (Laville & Therriault, 2008a, p. 70, p. 106). It is also worth noting that nowhere do the teacher guides expose teachers or students to the historians' or textbook authors' own process in developing the historical narratives presented, nor do they encourage teachers or students to reflect on their own understandings of history as a discipline, or ancient civilizations in particular.

Thus, the teacher guides' highly positive visions that seem to aim to promote tolerance and mutual respect collide with the operational level that embraces a "comparing and contrasting" paradigm, largely overlooking intercultural exchanges and interdependence among human civilizations. With this general approach that the teacher guides seem to adopt as a background, it was important to gain a sense of the level of focus each of the civilizations is expected to receive in terms of teaching time. As Table 2 illustrates, the Greek and Roman civilizations are expected to receive a much larger level of attention compared to non-Western civilizations.

Quantitative Analysis

The textbooks' adherence to QEP guidelines is apparent in how similar their unit structures, illustrative images, and even unit titles are. However, it is

Table 2. Time Allocated Per Topic (Proposed by HCE1TG [Laville, Therriault, & Sauvageau, 2008])

Topic	Time expected to be allocated (in minutes)	In proportion to total time (%)
Roman civilization	690	25
Greek civilization	640	23
Christianization of the West	570	21
Mesopotamia	390	14
Nile Valley, Indus Valley, Indian Gupta, and Chinese Han	240	9
Muslim civilization	120	4
Baghdad, Constantinople, and Timbuktu (cities of the Middle Ages)	120	4
Total	**2,770**	**100%**

also clear that the textbook authors took some liberty in including some sub-sections and excluding others. To illustrate, HCE2 dedicates a larger space to Mesopotamia, minimally discussing ancient Egypt and other non-Western ancient civilizations. HCE1 presents the two ancient Western civilizations of Greece and Rome in at least double the space allocated to Mesopotamia and at least four times the space dedicated to ancient Egypt or any of the other non-Western civilizations. The space that the HCE2 textbook dedicates to Mesopotamian and Greek civilizations is the same, offering a larger focus on the Roman civilization. Thus, the constructed significance of the ancient Western civilizations of Greece and Rome becomes clear in Table 2 as well as Table 3, which respectively demonstrate the disproportionately large proposed number of teaching hours and number of pages and accompanying images dedicated to discussing these civilizations vis-à-vis non-Western ancient civilizations.

Themes Emerging from the Qualitative Analysis

Based on the coding presented in Table 1, three key themes emerge: The first relates to the general depiction of interactions between ancient civilizations, and the last two are more specifically related to constructions of Western and non-Western civilizations.

Ancient civilizations evolving independently of each other. The overarching narrative seems to largely depict human civilizations as evolving independently of each other, to the extent that the material and nonmaterial intercultural exchanges coded above at times appeared like add-ons or anomalies. For instance, in the case of the Chinese civilization, without any reference to how such a case might have been an exception among ancient civilizations, HCE1 explains how China's "geographic isolation" resulted in a "very innovative" civilization, possessing "the same underlying features as all civilizations" (Laville, 2008, p. 70). In the same context, HCE2 presents those innovations as largely emerging in parallel, with no interaction among them. For instance, after discussing Mesopotamia's advanced use of copper and metals, HCE2 explains that by the second millennium BCE, "Chinese artisans had also independently unlocked the secret of bronze" (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 62). The subtle message seems to be that even in total isolation from external influences or intercultural exchanges, civilizations are capable of advancing in ways and paces as impressive as civilizations that experience intercultural interactions and exchanges.

The textbook content and exercises also clearly reflect the teacher guides' strong emphasis on "comparing and contrasting" ancient civilizations to deduce similarities and differences. As a key guiding lens, numerous examples invite students to compare and contrast things, such as "the cities of Athens and Sparta and the Persian Empire" (Laville, 2008, p. 126), or "the Arab palaces with the Western castles of the Middle Ages" (Lord & Léger, 2008b,

Table 3. Total Number of Pages and Images by Ancient Civilization in Quebec's HCE Textbooks

Ancient civilization	HCE1 (Laville, 2008)				HCE2 (Lord & Léger, 2008b)			
	Number of pages	In proportion to total number of pages (%)	Number of images[a]	In proportion to total number of images (%)	Number of pages	In proportion to total number of pages (%)	Number of images	In proportion to total number of images (%)
Mesopotamian	22	11	34	11	40	20	31	21
Egyptian	10	5	24	7.5	2	1	4	3
Greek	45	22.5	55	17	40	20	30	21
Persian (battles against Greeks)	6	3	14	0.4	3	1.5	3	2
Roman	53	26.5	69	21	61	30	32	22
South Asian (e.g., Indus Valley, Gupta)	10	5	31	9	2	1	1	1
Chinese (e.g., Han)	10	5	26	8	2	1	3	2
Sub–Saharan African (Timbuktu, Mali)	6	3	10	3	1	0.5	1	1
Christianization of the West	28	14	45	14	48	23	33	23
Muslim	10	5	17	5	5	2	6	4
Total	**200**	**100%**	**325**	**100%**	**204**	**100%**	**144**	**100%**

[a]Images included illustrative hand drawings; software–designed images, such as city plans or maps; and photos taken of actual monuments and artifacts, such as ancient sites, statues, or manuscripts.

p. 172). Such emphasis seems to inherently shift the focus away from discussions of intercultural exchanges or interdependence.

As is apparent from the coding, the few interactions discussed are heavily dominated by discussions of one-way influences characterized by domination and diffusion, thus subtly creating a binary classification of ancient civilizations as either influencers or borrowers. For instance, HCE1 presents Mesopotamians as net influencers who "spread the characteristics of their civilization to distant lands through trade" (Laville, 2008, pp. 48–49). However, little is mentioned about what Mesopotamia might have borrowed or benefited from other civilizations. In contrast, HCE1 presents ancient Egypt as a net borrower, which did not "spread its culture very widely," while benefitting from new knowledge that its merchants and foreigners brought back (Laville, 2008, p. 62). Whereas the texts construct some civilizations as borrowers and others as influencers, the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations are shown to have had far greater and more enduring influences—the epitome of influencer civilizations indeed.

Ancient Greek and Roman one-way influences. The textbooks emphasize the omnipresent influence of those two civilizations, not only through Athens's unique democratic model that continues to inspire contemporary democracies, but also through Greek and Roman influences on modern Western civilization's philosophy and thought at large. While the textbooks discuss Greek and Roman one-way influences, such as the spread of the Greek language and culture, or the total "Romanization" of conquered territories, in contrast, there is little discussion of possible non-Western influences on ancient Greece and Rome.

Although there are several references to Greek influences on conquered territories, perhaps the concept of one-way influence is most explicitly emphasized in the discussion of Romanization. To elaborate, in contrast to the textbooks' detailed discussion of Roman transformational influences, there is a total omission of the potential influence of the conquered people on the Romans. In one general reference, HCE2 explains "colonized peoples also had an impact on Roman civilization" (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 143). No further details are provided. Additionally, as opposed to this construction of powerful Greek and Roman influences and contributions, no references are made to similar influences of non-Western empires on territories that they had conquered. For instance, the texts make no reference to any influences the ancient Persian Empire might have had on the vast territories it conquered. HCE1 simply states that the Persians were tolerant toward their conquered territories, allowing people to manage their affairs and to practice their own religions and customs.

Relatedly, in the instances where ancient Western and non-Western civilizations are compared and contrasted, the former are painted as superior. For instance, compared to the novel Athenian democratic model of governance,

both textbooks present the Persian Empire as one governed by fear. HCE1 explains that in ancient Persia, "inspectors were in charge of supervising the satraps to prevent them from gaining too much independence" (Laville, 2008, p. 117). HCE2 further elaborates that the Persian emperor appointed officials to spy on each other and report back. Further reinforcing the global superiority of Athenian democracy, HCE2 presents a world map with Athens's concurrent civilizations—the African Kingdom of Kush, the Asian Zhou Empire, and the Latin American Zapotec and Chavin Civilizations—highlighting how they were all governed by undemocratic monarchies (Lord & Léger, 2008b, pp. 80–81).

Unlike discussions of ancient non-Western civilizations, the textbooks clearly want students to appreciate ancient Greece and Rome's ongoing influence on today's world. For instance, in presenting three full pages of photographs of Roman ruins in modern cities, HCE1 asks students to contemplate Rome's influence, encouraging them to search for modern buildings that were inspired by Roman architecture (Laville, 2008, pp. 176–178). The textbook also establishes ancient Greece's sustained influence by presenting photos of several modern buildings inspired by ancient Greek architecture, such as the facades of the New York Stock Exchange and the British Museum in London (Laville, 2008, pp. 124–125). Similarly, HCE2 explains, "architects throughout history have been inspired by the design and architecture of Greek temples" (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 97). HCE2TG makes a more overt effort, encouraging teachers to relay how ancient Greece's legacy "is the foundation of modern democratic society" (Lord & Léger, 2008a, p. 90). In contrast, no similar elaborate references are made to any non-Western civilization's continued influences.

Non-Western civilizations' contributions material or negligible. As is clear from the coding, non-Western contributions are depicted as largely material. There seems to be a neglect of nonmaterial contributions of the ancient non-Western world, especially when it relates to influences of ancient belief systems and religions on the Judeo–Christian monotheistic tradition. One exception emerges in HCE1, which presents excerpts of the flood narratives that appear in the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh and the Biblical Book of Genesis, encouraging students to analyze the similarities between the two ancient texts and noting that the Bible was written several centuries later (Laville, 2008, p. 79). The textbook also highlights how some of Gilgamesh's themes have inspired monotheistic beliefs, such as the notion that humans are created from mud or clay that later appears in the Bible and the Quran (Laville, 2008, p. 51). With the exception of this flood narrative discussion and another broad reference to ancient Mesopotamia's influence on other civilizations' "writing, law, inventions and religious beliefs" (Laville, 2008, p. 51), the textbooks make no connection between ancient non-Western religions and the Judeo–Christian monotheistic tradition.

While the textbooks present examples from different South and East Asian civilizations, and extensive discussions of West Asian/Near Eastern civilizations, the only ancient African civilization that receives any level of detail is ancient Egypt. Detailed references to sub–Saharan African civilizations are largely omitted. As is evident from Table 3, HCE1 covers sub–Saharan Africa in only 6 pages, while HCE2 dedicates only one page.

Within that limited coverage, Africa is mainly portrayed as a source of raw materials or slaves. For instance, HCE1 explains how Arab and European merchants traded "fabrics and manufactured goods" in return for African gold, ivory, and slaves (Laville, 2008, p. 272). Timbuktu—in today's Mali—is the only example of a sub–Saharan African civilization presented, but with no mention of influences or contributions to other civilizations. In that context, HCE1 refers to how trade gave rise to several other "great African kingdoms" (Laville, 2008, p. 270). However, it provides no further elaboration. Similarly, except for a brief mention of Timbuktu as a trade hub for gold, ivory, salt, and slaves (Lord & Leger, 2008b, p. 219), HCE2 is especially silent on any sub–Saharan African contributions.

Compared to all other civilizations, the images accompanying mentions of sub–Saharan Africa reinforce an image of a primitive and exotic land. HCE1's brief section on Timbuktu includes a picture titled "Fulani people today," depicting young African men dancing with painted faces and feathered head-dresses (Laville, 2008, p. 271). The other illustration from modern Africa is of the "Bushmen of the Kalahari" photographed with a backdrop of Southern African desert, as an example of one of the world's few remaining nomadic peoples (Laville, 2008, p. 9).

DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals that the narrative generally underplays interdependence of human civilizations and two-way intercultural exchanges. Instead, it focuses on one-way influences and cultural domination, clearly propagating a "diffusionist" paradigm. The narrative is also Eurocentric—or Western ethnocentric—adhering to a demarcation between ancient non-Western civilizations and ancient Western civilizations. More specifically, discussions of non-Western influences seem to neglect non-Western nonmaterial influences and sub–Saharan African contributions altogether. In this section, I discuss these constructions, then offer implications that such constructions might have on students' historical consciousness.

A Eurocentric Narrative

In addition to the disproportionately large textbook space and teaching time dedicated to discussing ancient Western civilizations, the textbooks

essentially narrate the West's story of progress. The textbooks' outlines, which move from ancient Mesopotamia to ancient Greece and Rome, then the Christianization of the West, seem to suggest a teleological trajectory that naturalizes the inevitability of the West's triumph. Within that narrative, the constructed ancient Greek and Roman one-way cultural and political influences on their conquered territories serve as an important foundation to normalize the West's eventual dominance. Conversely, the way sub–Saharan Africa is portrayed as a primitive, virgin land with no contributions to ancient civilizations seems to help justify later European colonization of the continent, some of which was pretexted by the desire to civilize savage or uncivilized parts of the world. Such portrayal within ancient history textbooks is compounded by the fact that African and other "non-White" histories in Quebec are also largely omitted in HCE modern history textbooks. Such exclusion has prompted calls to include their contributions as well as the province's largely silenced history of slavery (e.g., Dubé, 2016).

Based on Bain and Shreiner's (2005) typology of world history curricula, the textbooks exemplify a "Western Civilization Plus" model, which has also dominated U.S. schools since the 1920s (p. 245). This model might sometimes include non-European civilizations' contributions but maintains a Western "underlying narrative structure" (p. 246). The Quebec textbooks' narrative structure also fits what Dunn (1999) called a "different cultures model," where world regions are treated as "discrete units" that are independent from each other (cited in Marino, 2011b, p. 4). Embedded in this Eurocentric narrative, there is a silencing of the nonmaterial contributions of non-Western civilizations.

Supremacy of the Judeo–Christian–Islamic Monotheistic Tradition

The textbooks construct the "equivalence" of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Simultaneously, the texts construct their "difference" from ancient Near Eastern religions by largely omitting potential exchanges and silencing earlier monotheistic efforts. The texts also explicitly position monotheism as an exclusive achievement of the Judeo–Christian tradition. For instance, the HCE1TRGII asserts that the "Hebrews were the first people to believe in a single God (monotheism)" (Laville & Therriault, 2008b, pp. 359–360). The same text asks teachers to help students explore "the common origins of *the* [emphasis added] three monotheistic religions: Islam, Judaism and Christianity" (p. 327). Such statements negate ancient monotheistic religions, such as Zoroastrianism, still practiced by thousands around the world today with a large concentration in North America (Rivetna, 2013). They also omit other ancient African monotheistic traditions, such as *Waaqeffannaa*, practiced by thousands of Oromo people in Eastern Africa (Ta'a, 2012), as well as newer monotheistic faiths that emerged after *the* three monotheistic religions, such as the Baha'i faith.

Several silences subtly suggest that the Judeo–Christian–Islamic mono-theistic tradition spread was largely peaceful and characterized by one-way influences, thus implying the inevitability of its triumph. Such silencing reinforces the tradition's superiority vis-à-vis other belief systems. To elabo-rate, the narrative omits references to conflict with and resistance by indigen-ous populations where Christianity spread. Silenced also are intercultural exchanges with existing indigenous belief systems that pre-dated Christianity. The same approach applies to presenting the spread of Islam. Except for a brief mention of how Muslim rulers imposed a "special tax" on non-Muslims (Lord & Léger, 2008b, p. 192), the conversion process of the peoples conquered by Arab and Muslim armies is characterized as a voluntary and peaceful process. Similarly, there is no mention of intercultural exchanges or influences from existing faiths on Islamic beliefs or practices.[9]

We might want to problematize how ancient Western influences during Christianity's expansion in Europe are reduced to Roman architectural influ-ences on Romanesque churches or to the vaguely stated Greek cultural and political influences on the Eastern Church. However, what is more striking is the general silencing of any influences of Near Eastern thought and belief systems on the formative inception phases of the Judeo–Christian monotheis-tic tradition, given that the tradition had originated in that region (Assmann, 1998, 2009; Matthews & Benjamin, 1991). As discussed, the flood narrative is the only discussion where either of the textbooks attempts to establish such connections.

Further underplaying the significance of such potential influences, earlier Near Eastern calls for a single deity are silenced. For instance, the only mention of Akhenaten's call for monotheism appears in the "supplementary materials" section of HCE1TRGI, which briefly outlines Tutankhamen's ban on "the worship of Aten (monotheism)" that his father Akhenaten had instated during his reign (Laville & Therriault, 2008a, p. 125). Also, the only place where the ancient "monotheistic" tradition of Zoroastrianism is explicitly referred to as such is in HCE1TRGI (Laville & Therriault, 2008a, p. 170). While there are brief mentions of Zoroastrianism or Akhenaten, there are still no hints to any connections with Judeo–Christian monotheism.

Ancient nonmaterial intercultural exchanges are important to acknowl-edge and discuss, especially when they relate to a fundamental tenet of modern Western civilization, such as Judeo–Christian monotheism. While emphasizing material exchanges and influences is important, it is imperative to also discuss nonmaterial exchanges and influences. Such discussions allow students to delve into important areas of inquiry, such as the history of ideas and the evolution of religions, especially those that continue to significantly shape worldviews as well as numerous contemporary conflicts and injustices. While material contributions could be dismissed by some as time-bound or obsolete, for instance, nonmaterial contributions and their sustained influences also help students confront misconceptions that the production of novel or

sophisticated ideas and concepts might be exclusive features of particular groups or civilizations.

As Fairclough (2003) would argue, the textbooks establish equivalence and similarity among ancient Western Greek and Roman civilizations. In contrast, they cast ancient non-Western civilizations as generally different or unrelated, albeit with few possible material influences. They also establish the same equivalence among the Judeo–Christian–Islamic monotheistic religions, while silencing discussions of their similarities with ancient religions or other belief systems. Through these strategies, the textbooks sanction a diffusionist domination paradigm which we see most clearly in the case of the ancient Western Greek and Roman civilizations and the monotheistic tradition's (Christianity and Islam) expansion and one-way influences. With their total omission of counternarratives and alternative chronologies, these classifications are presented as incontestable, precluding possibilities to problematize these "taken-for [sic] granted ways of dividing up parts of the world" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 213).

Implications for Students' Historical Consciousness

The constructions discussed above produce "particular 'visions' of the world" that inform how we see it and act upon it (Fairclough, 2003, p. 213). So, what do those visions potentially mean for our students' historical consciousness? With their authoritative tone that silences the contestability of history as a discipline or any of the narratives presented, and with their omission of alternative chronologies or periodization, the textbooks do not expose students to the existence of multiple perspectives. Exposure to multiple narratives might enable students to develop informed "critique-based standpoints," to then build on such critique to accept and interrogate a "pluralism of standpoints" (Rüsen, 2005, p. 36). Such exposure to multiple narratives can take different forms, including presenting students with the mainstream narrative alongside competing narratives. Importantly, students need to be offered the appropriate historical research tools to assess those different narratives. As discussed earlier, these are important steps in the evolution of students' historical consciousness.

Further, the textbooks do not encourage self-reflexivity among their readers, which is an essential step toward developing a reflective historical consciousness. Apart from the total lack of exercises that explicitly ask teachers or students to reflect on their own approaches to and understandings of ancient civilizations, the textbooks offer no insights into historians' or textbook authors' own process in developing those narratives. Including such subtle or overt references to the workings of history as a discipline would be important to offer openings for students to "decenter" or "relativize" their own worldviews (Nordgren & Johansson, 2015), which is another

fundamental component in helping students foster their reflective historical consciousness and intercultural historical learning.

Appropriating the textbook narratives that sanction rigid classifications and categories, where some groups are superior influencers and others are net borrowers or peripheral historical actors, has ramifications for intergroup dynamics as well. Students with a non-reflective historical consciousness, whether belonging to majority or minority groups, would likely not be equipped to challenge the internalization of those constructs. In the very least, majority students might be oblivious to and, hence, unable to problematize historical or contemporary injustices or social ills, such as racial or religious discrimination. Even worse, this narrative could potentially reinforce supremacist and racist tendencies. For instance, given that ancient Western civilization and Judeo–Christian–Islamic monotheism are subtly—and at times not-so-subtly—presented as superior, some students who self-identify with those cultures and religions could easily develop a sense of condescension vis-à-vis non-Westerners or adherents of other belief systems.

Conversely, internalizing such constructs might also mean that minority students develop a sense of inferiority or distrust toward history education. To elaborate, students who self-identify with non-Western origins, such as students of African or Afro–Caribbean descent, or those adhering to non-monotheistic beliefs, such as Hindu students, could feel generally excluded from the textbook narrative. In reaction, they may develop a sense of apathy, distrust, or disinterest in history education, thus reverting to alternative historical sources. Such a reaction was evident with students whose community historical narratives are excluded or misrepresented, such as African American students in the United States (Epstein, 2000) and recent immigrants and minority students in the United Kingdom (Harris & Reynolds, 2014; Hawkey & Prior, 2011; Wilkinson, 2014). Similarly, in response to the history education narratives that largely exclude their histories and realities, Aboriginal students in Canada and other contexts have also reverted to their family and community narratives instead (Conrad et al., 2013).

Opportunities Offered by Ancient History Discussions

Analyzing how ancient civilizations are presented and how such constructions potentially influence students' historical consciousness is important for several reasons. In many cases, a student's exposure to the notion of history in a school context often starts with discussions of ancient civilizations, as many Western nations follow a linear world history model. Thus, the ways this history is presented could arguably have early—and potentially lasting impressions—on students. While their exposure to those ancient civilizations possibly happens at a more basic level during their early school years, revisiting them during the high school level in more detail offers a unique opportunity. As discussed, students bring in particular pre-set templates to the classroom

that might determine their approaches to understanding history. Thus, the way ancient histories are taught could play an important role in either reinforcing or challenging those templates that students bring into the classroom. Ancient history—as the analysis above attempted to illustrate—could easily be misused to construct the supremacy of particular groups and ideas over others. Thus, with such awareness, teachers have an opportunity to use their lessons on ancient civilizations to introduce their students to the workings of history while confronting some of the exclusivist templates they might be bringing into the classroom.

Additionally, being less politically and emotionally charged than more recent historical events, ancient history potentially offers unique opportunities to help students develop an understanding of history as a discipline, the multiplicity of historical narratives and perspectives, and how those narratives might have been historically manipulated to serve particular purposes and visions of the world. Enacting world history textbooks in such ways in the classroom offers students the opportunity to move beyond a non-reflective historical consciousness to a more reflective one. Within a reflective historical consciousness, such an approach also carries the promise of helping students move beyond a critical historical consciousness—characterized largely by an ability to deconstruct historical narratives—to a more constructive genetic historical consciousness, where they are able to appreciate and assess multiple historical narratives to then possibly construct their own.

CONCLUSION

Guided by a historical consciousness theoretical framework and inspired by key world history counternarratives, I have attempted to explore how non-Western civilizations are generally constructed vis-à-vis Western civilizations and, more specifically, how nonmaterial contributions of ancient non-Western civilizations are portrayed in Quebec history textbooks. I found that the narrative is largely Eurocentric, minimizing two-way exchanges and diminishing the contributions of non-Western civilizations, especially in terms of nonmaterial aspects, such as belief systems. Some regions' contributions are more obviously occluded, such as sub–Saharan Africa.

In 2016, a U.S. Congressman, in denying the significance of non-White peoples' contributions to human civilization, defiantly challenged his live TV host and fellow panelists to find examples of any "contributions that have been made by *these other categories of people* [emphasis added]" (Victor, 2016, para. 4). Comments such as these remind us of the urgent need to develop content that helps teach ancient histories—and history at large—in ways that encourage critical thinking and self-reflexivity and introduces some of the missing non-Western perspectives and contributions.

Current textbooks, understandably, reflect the dominant societal narrative and historiographical approach to world history. Consequently, revising the textbook content might remain a more ambitious medium- or long-term goal. However, in the interim, teachers could start to work to unsettle those narratives in their classrooms. Given that the textbooks' approach to ancient history fits easily within, and reinforces, the "us versus them" narrative template that many Quebec students bring into the classroom, a teacher's task might be more challenging. Thus, social studies teacher educators need to equip pre-service and in-service teachers with the needed historical knowledge and confidence through interrogating their own worldviews and exposing them to dominant and alternative ancient history narratives, chronologies, and periodization. This effort requires that teacher educators also help their students gain the needed skills to deconstruct and analyze texts they encounter in the classroom and other social sites so that those future teachers could then impart such skills among their own students. Currently, only a few North American teacher education programs focus on instilling these skills (Bickmore, 2008; Zeichner & Flessner, 2009).

Additionally, in-service teachers, who might be willing but do not feel prepared or knowledgeable enough to introduce those counternarratives themselves, might want to solicit external resources, such as external speakers or relevant historical films and documentaries. Importantly, those invited historians could engage students with how historical research—especially on ancient histories—is conducted, since this research involves a unique set of challenges, including the need to examine "architecture, topography, and comparative sources" often deciphering long-extinct languages to construct historical narratives of distant pasts (Sears, 2014, pp. 23–24).

A history student who critically understands that her/his modern-day Western civilization is a result of intercultural exchanges and interdependence of human civilizations over millennia would likely be more prepared for and predisposed to respecting and appreciating a multicultural society in all its diversity. A textbook content that encourages students' self-reflexivity and exposes them to various competing approaches to ancient world history could be a starting point to help them develop a reflective historical consciousness. This consciousness would hopefully prepare them to productively navigate their increasingly diverse multicultural societies with the needed historical knowledge and skills, humility, openness, and respect.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

article came from teaching a social studies education methods course with Dr. Paul Zanazanian at McGill University.

NOTES

[1] I use the term 'social sites' to refer to spaces where students formally or informally encounter and interact with historical narratives, including school, family, museums, religious institutions, film, and social media. Elsewhere, scholars have offered other more elaborate terms, such as "sites of transmission and construction" (Seixas & Clark, 2004).

[2] This cutoff point of the Middle Ages allows for examining how the interactions between the Western European civilization and the non-Western Arab Muslim civilization are presented.

[3] Based on personal experience with social studies teacher education in Quebec, preservice teachers are offered little guidance on how to approach teaching ancient histories. To elaborate, Seixas, Morton, Colyer, and Fornazzari's (2013) *The Big Six: Historical Thinking Concepts*, along with Case and Clark's (2008) *The Anthology of Social Studies: Issues and Strategies for Secondary Teacher*, are among the most widely used resources in Canadian history teacher education programs (Clark, 2014). The *Big Six* is helpful in laying out the general historical thinking framework and providing illustrative examples. However, a closer review reveals that its proposed classroom activities are exclusively based on illustrative examples of teaching modern history. Thus, discussing how to apply historical thinking strategies when teaching ancient history is left totally up to the resourcefulness and discretion of the teacher educator.

[4] The same results emerge from two other national surveys carried out in the United States (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998) and Australia (Hamilton & Ashton, 2003). Among the three surveys, the Canadian survey is the latest and the largest, with a sample size of 3,419 respondents, followed by the American survey, which had 808 respondents, and the Australian survey, which had 500 respondents.

[5] While some North American social studies education scholars (e.g., Brown & Brown, 2010) have drawn on Jan Assmann's (2008, 2011) important work on communicative and cultural memory, his significant contributions as a historian and an Egyptologist have garnered less attention among them.

[6] QEP's approach to historical thinking is inspired by francophone literature, such as Christian Laville's contributions, as well as elements of the Historical Thinking Project, which was led by Peter Seixas (Duquette, 2014).

[7] The Ministry has recently changed its name from Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) to Ministère de l'Éducation et Enseignment supérieur (MEES). However, throughout this article I use the old acronym since the publications cited herein were produced under the Ministry's old name (i.e., MELS).

[8] While the HCE1TG presents expected teaching time allocations, the HCE2TG refrains from proposing teaching time allocations.

[9] For a detailed analysis of constructions of ancient polytheism and monotheism in Quebec's history and religious studies textbooks, please refer to Abdou and Chan (2017).

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