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Abstract: This chapter analyzes differences between memory and history stemming from a theoretical distinction between romantic and idealized goals and enlightened and critical understanding goals of history education. National narratives and national identity are two key elements in the construction of both collective memories and history education. This chapter analyzes and provides examples of theoretical and empirical work involving six different dimensions of school history narratives: a homogeneous historical subject, identification processes, heroic and idealized key historical figures, a monocausal and teleological account of historical events, moral value judgments, and an essentialist conceptualization of nation and national identity. Finally, a concise analysis of school historical re-enactments as a cultural scenario, which greatly contributes to the interiorization of the previously mentioned narratives, is presented.

Keywords: history education, history and memory, national narratives, identity, essentialism, moral judgments

Chapter 12

History, Collective Memories, or National Memories?

How the Representation of the Past Is Framed by Master Narratives

Mario Carretero and Floor van Alphen

In this chapter, we argue that the nation, as both a conceptual and a narrative unit, greatly formats collective memories and history learning. By conceptual unit, we mean an abstract entity that integrates different social and political elements (e.g., population and territory) and generates a particular view of the past, not necessarily related to historical processes as such. By narrative unit, we mean the nation as the center and subject of historical narration. In both the collective production of accounts of the past and their individual consumption, national historical master narratives are pervasive. We consider master narratives as general patterns of imagining the nation, as seen, for example, in the myths of the origin of nations or narratives of national struggle or progress. According to Heller (2006), they serve as a general unit of analysis not only in psychology but also in the social sciences in general. National master narratives act as both official and general interpretations of the past but also legitimize the present and set an agenda for the future.

To clarify our argument, we first reflect on the relation between memory and history. These fundamentally different ways of representing the past become entangled in national history. After a contemporary example of how collective memory is framed by national experiences, we turn to the role of history education in this process. We discuss our empirical work that indicates the predominance of national master narratives over

representation. Finally, it is suggested that disentangling history from memory, to critically interrogate the national narratives, might help expand collective memory beyond national memory.

Memory and History as Representations of the Past

The relation between memory and history is complex. Ricoeur (2004) argues that memory is “the womb of history” (p. 87)—that is, history as a discipline heavily relies on testimonies. Although the archives are a collective resource allowing the systematic investigation we call history, the testimonies that make up the archives rely on individual memories. Nevertheless, history is more than a kind of memory; it is “organized memory” (Le Goff, 1992). A notion such as “historical consciousness” (Rüsen, 2004) integrates history and memory as sources for identity and is very useful for thinking about how we commonly understand the past. However, we adhere to what might be called a “hyperdialectic” (Polkinghorne, 2005), an ongoing dialectic without synthesis, in which individual memory, collective memory, and history are different parts of a process of representing the past.

Memory, individually speaking, is the capacity to remember (Rosa, 2006) or “existential work” (Le Goff, 1992). In terms of autobiographical memory, it is important for our personal identities. Individual memory has been primarily studied as a cognitive function in a wide range of subcategories, from autobiographical and semantic to procedural memory (Tulving & Craik, 2000). Therefore, it is related mainly to individual perception and experience. Remembering also happens at a collective level, as a scaffold

to collective identities and for many other (political) purposes. However, beyond metaphorical confusion, the collective does not experience or perceive the same way as does an individual. Nor does collective memory always refer to a collective experience. Often, events are collectively remembered that the individual member of the collective or the present collective itself has never witnessed. Wertsch (2002) illustrates the difference between individual and collective memory based on studies of state-dependent retrieval, showing that memory is more accurate when the individual state of mind at the time of retrieval is similar to the state of mind at the time of encoding. In this sense, talking about a collective state of mind and collective encoding is nonsensical, particularly because the collective is not a clearly defined organism situated in time and space. Collective memory is not a cognitive capacity but, rather, a practice that exists in objects collected in museums, monuments erected, and collective narratives told. This means that it transcends time and space. Here, cultural tools play a clear role, and they may also help to make a case for how both collective and individual memory are connected (Wertsch, 2002; see also Wertsch, Chapter 11, this volume).

According to Ricoeur (2004), the individual capacity to remember is connected to practices of collective remembering through a complex process of selecting and sharing testimonies. For Halbwachs (1992), this relation is inverse: Individual thought is capable of recollection because it is embedded in social frameworks for memory and participates in collective memory. As cultural psychologists, we can affirm that memory becomes interiorized through cultural means. In contrast, Ricoeur might argue that these collective means come from individual testimonies. Indeed, one could wonder whether witnessing

is culturally mediated or a matter of perceptive mechanisms or both. Nevertheless, Ricoeur's statement that "history will offer schemata for mediating between the opposite poles of individual memory and collective memory" (p. 131) coincides with the position of cultural psychology (Wertsch, 1998, 2002). We agree that individual and collective memories are in a continuous and complex interaction. This is also indicated by Brockmeier (2010) in his exhaustive review of cognitive research on memory. He strongly criticizes the idea of "archive" as the key metaphor of memory, based on various trends of the present field. We think that both memory and collective memory are mediated mainly by narrative, in which the relation between past, present, and future plays an important role (Carretero & Solcoff, 2012). However, we should not let a "narrative imperialism" (Bamberg, 2011) make us believe that either kind of memory is reducible to the other. Nor is history just narrative or reducible to collective memory.

Remembering, individually or collectively, is at the same time forgetting (Ricoeur, 2004; Rosa, 2006). To constitute an individual or group as being the same through time, thus establishing its identity, is to tell a narrative (Ricoeur, 1992). A classic narrative has one protagonist. It describes certain selected events relevant for the protagonist while leaving others out. Forgetting, however, is something that the disciplinary investigation of the past tries to avoid (Rosa, 2006). Of course, historians make mistakes and can be manipulated or themselves be manipulative, but in their work both scientific and moral standards apply as truth values (Le Goff, 1992). Ideally, history does not forget and systematically investigates what memory leaves out, accidentally or on purpose. This can be done by not just looking at one testimony but also comparing

many of them. Weighing sources against each other, and letting present questions interact with different remnants from the past, is part of the “historian’s craft” (Bloch, 1953). Bloch and colleagues at the Annales School of history were key figures in what can be called “new history” (Burke, 2001). Instead of simply declaring the end of all great stories and throwing the history baby out with the modern bathwater, new history allows the introduction of different perspectives and the continuation of critical historical investigation. As Burke suggests, the ideal narrative for new history would be the multiple perspective account that we find in contemporary literature (e.g., Lawrence Durrell’s *The Alexandria Quartet* (1962) or Milorad Pavić’s *Dictionary of the Khazars* (1988) and film (e.g., Kurosawa’s *Rashomon* (1950) or Fernando Meirelles’ *Cidade de Deus* (2002)). In this way, forgetful memory, or strategic history manipulation, can be confronted with different accounts. Collective memory can be a source of such an account, for example, when narratives of political militancy in Latin America counter the official version of national history propagated by the dominant oligarchy or military dictatorships (Jelin, 2003; van Alphen & Asensio, 2012). As could also be seen in the fall of the Soviet Union, “popular archives” can correct “official archives” (Le Goff, 1992). In short, memory offers accounts and testimonies; history systematically compares and investigates them. As discussed in this chapter, Marxist ideas and experiences have been collectively remembered as liberating by certain Latin American groups, whereas these ideas have been represented as oppressing by Russian and Eastern European groups.

Note that national history is also a kind of collective memory when it propagates a particular national group’s—or its political elite’s—story or point of view. If we

examine the discipline of history before new and multiple ways of doing history were introduced, we see that it was basically aimed at constructing national identities (Berger, 2012). In early history writing memory, identity and history were very much nationally entangled. History was national history, a very peculiar kind of collective memory, as the nation was basically invented (Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Other collective identities already existed, but national identity was new in the 19th century. National history was written to construct and legitimize this new identity, often rewriting significant parts of the past in national terms. Moreover, this history was developed in order to be taught, such that it could be used to make people into national citizens. With the rise of new history in the 20th century, and also all the different perspectives offered by collective memory, one might think that this is no longer the case. Yet, national identity has become so banal and naturalized (Billig, 1995) that it has invisible power over how people in societies remember. For example, how many times does the daily use of “we,” “us,” or “here” refer to the nation? In the construction of historical accounts, these tiny elements often indicate a restriction to national history or identity. In this chapter, we argue that history, memory, and identity are still very much framed in national terms. The national perspectives overpowering collective memory might even partly explain why history and memory are still being confounded, instead of acknowledging that there are in fact different kinds of histories and memories. Whereas contemporary historiography gives very critical accounts of nation (Alvarez Junco, 2011; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Rios Saloma, 2005), the common representation of the past is dominated by master narratives. This is a kind of narrative that celebrates the nation,

its origins and its achievements, and generally functions to interpret the past in terms of a (national) group and its present goals. Examining the educational process where historical accounts and collective and individual memories meet is particularly illuminating for our argument. In the following, we first reflect on how collective memory is framed with a contemporary example and then explore the role of education in constructing frames for understanding the past.

What Frames Different Collective Memories of the Same Past?

Figure 12.1 shows a picture of students meeting in their school of education in Guerrero, Mexico, on November 23, 2014.ⁱ They are discussing protest actions in response to the disappearance of 43 fellow students on September 26, 2014.ⁱⁱ These most likely violently abducted students were protesting against discrimination and other forms of political violence that defenders of human rights endorse. The incredible incident has produced the most important political scandal in Mexico in recent years. As can be seen from the figure, images of Marx, Engels, and Lenin are part of the permanent political symbols at this school. The well-known phrase of Marx's thesis on Feuerbach is included in the image. It is an image very similar to those found in many places throughout Latin America. Plausibly, the presence of these images indicates that for this particular political movement, and probably many others in Latin America, Marxist and revolutionary characters are very influential in their interpretation of the past. For a majority of the Latin American youth, Marxist symbols and characters are no doubt representative or models in resisting political oppression, economic exploitation, and violation of human rights. In this vein, it is important to consider that the Marxist *weltanschauung* has

traditionally maintained history as a social scientific support of its grand narrative of progress and emancipation, ultimately carried out by the Russian Revolution. It is very likely that this grand narrative is being represented on the Mexican mural in Figure 12.1. It is present in almost the same way in the famous Diego Rivera 1925 murals on the walls of the ancient Mexican Secretary of Education in Mexico City.



Figure 1. Mexican students of Education in a meeting about civil rights. The mural is quoting Marx: “Until now philosophers have only interpreted the world. What is necessary is to transform it.”

However, if we compare the image in Figure 12.1 with the numerous images showing the destruction of Marxist monuments throughout the former Soviet Union immediately after the collapse of communism (Figure 12.2), questions immediately arise. For example, how is it possible that Mexican students consider Lenin and Marx as cultural and political models of liberation and at the same time in other areas of the world these characters represent oppression? (For an analysis of the changes in history education in the former German Democratic Republic after the fall of the Berlin Wall,

see Ahonen, 1997; and for a discussion about how former Soviet citizens did not consider the Russian Revolution a grand narrative at all, see Wertsch & Rozin, 2000.)



Figure 2. Destruction of a Lenin statue in the Ukraine.

Both representations are based more on collective memories than on historiographical research. As previously stated, collective memories involve selective forgetting. This can also occur in a historiographical endeavor, but the latter at least aims at systematically avoiding forgetfulness. For example, recent contributions such as that by Snyder (2012) have shown how Soviet regimes were characterized by an enormous repression of political adversaries and citizens in general, had an alliance with the Nazi regime, and produced more than 11 million victims. This is clearly “forgotten” by the Mexican students. At the same time, however, it can be argued that the massive destruction of Marxist monuments “forgets” the systematic repression of Marxist political leaders and citizens in general by military regimes in Latin America, often supported by the US government (for a discussion of the collective memory of political violence during the 1970s in South America, see Jelin, 2003). In short, it is clear that collective memories are basically contextual and to some extent reactive. In other words,

they appear in the context of a particular inherited social and political past. In this vein, Mexican students vindicate the revolutionary role of Marxist figures because these represent their attempt to gain emancipation and civil rights. They probably do not consider Marxist figures as symbols of oppression because this has not been the case in their local and national experience. On their part, citizens from former communist countries see in monuments inspired by Marxism the oppression they experienced for decades in their specific societies. Historiographical research tries to maintain a broader view on social and political problems, and it takes into account more than one perspective on the past. Collective memories, however, are contextual and local, and the most relevant social, cultural, and political context for citizens is their own current national society.

Interestingly, these two divergent scenarios—Latin American countries and former communist societies—have something in common: the trend to base their history education and curriculum mostly on nationalist contents. In both cases, a nationalist view of the past is taken to be perfectly compatible with a particular position regarding the Marxist–Leninist grand narrative. This nationalist trend in history education has been analyzed in much detail (Ahonen, 1997; Carretero, 2011). For example, when the Mexican government tried to change school history content through an educational reform in 1992 and 2000, both students and teachers demonstrated and teachers went on strike (Carretero, 2011, Chapter 2). These historical contents were mainly related to national figures, such as the Child Heroes who fought against the North American army. These children are popular heroes in Mexico, even though their actual role in the military

conflict has not been well documented until now. The Mexican government tried to implement a new history curriculum, in which these and similar figures were no longer present. The attempt to change the history curriculum, and to make it less nationalist, was perceived by a part of the citizenry as an assault on their collective memory. In another context, both Estonia and the former Democratic Republic transformed their history curricula radically after the collapse of communism in order to base it on nationalist narratives and concepts (Ahonen, 1997). This trend has become even stronger, taking into account the very nationalist and patriotic orientation adopted by Russia in recent years under President Vladimir Putin (Levintova, 2010). In comparing these examples of how collective memories are framed by certain contexts, the contribution of contemporary disciplinary history to constructing multiperspective accounts of the past can be clearly seen. On the other hand, particularly during the fall of the Soviet Union (Brossat, Combe, Potel, & Szurek, 1992), the contribution of collective memory to history writing is very clear. As Le Goff (1992) formulates, “*Popular archives* can correct *official archives*, even though the latter can hide and therefore reveal some truths that have been kept a secret” (p. 16; our translation from the Spanish version). Thus, collective memory and historiography combined can counteract the attempts of political, ideological, or economic powers to use, subdue, or manipulate history in their own interest (Le Goff, 1992).

The Role of History Education in Framing the Past

Previously in this chapter, collective memories and historiography were compared as producers of representations of the past. However, formal and informal history education

experiences, at the crossroads of collective memory and historiography, are essential to take into account in the construction of these representations. By formal history education, we refer mainly to school history contents and activities. By informal history education, we mean representations of the past that appear in patriotic rituals, museums, and heritage. As analyzed elsewhere (Carretero, 2011, Chapter 1), school history does not just consist of disciplinary historical knowledge. It is highly influenced by collective memories, attitudes, and other ideological aspects, as is historical research, although ideally it compares perspectives instead of choosing one and forgetting another. Therefore, historiography, collective memory, and history education have a complex relation in which mutual interactions are frequent. Specifically considering history education as a source of representation, and more generally considering cultural tools, a distinction has been made between production and consumption (Wertsch, 1998, 2002). The former refers to the produced cultural tools or elements of history education, such as textbooks and media. The latter concerns the representation and use of cultural tools by students and citizens, or history learning. As discussed later, a specific interaction between these two processes takes place.

Regarding the production of representations about the past, different researchers have considered the existence of competing objectives of history education (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Wineburg, 2001). Carretero (2011) has redefined these objectives as “romantic” and “enlightened” because their features and functions stem from their intellectual roots in Romanticism and the Enlightenment, respectively. In that sense, history has been taught in all national school systems so as to make students “love their

country” (Nussbaum & Cohen, 2002) and to make them “understand their past” (Seixas, 2004). In a romantic vein, history education is a fundamental strategy used to achieve (1) a positive assessment of the past, present, and future of one’s own social group, both local and national, and (2) an identification with the country’s political history. In an enlightened vein, history education has aimed at fostering critical citizens’ capability of informed and effective participation in the historical changes happening nationally and globally. This can involve a critical attitude toward their own local or national community, or even larger political units. Recently, this has been translated in several countries into the following disciplinary and cognitive objectives: (1) to understand the past in a complex manner, which usually implies mastering the discipline’s conceptual categories (Carretero & Lee, 2014); (2) to distinguish different historical periods through the appropriate adequate comprehension of historical time (Barton, 2008); (3) to understand historical multicausality and to relate the past with the present and the future (Barton & Levstik, 2004); and (4) to approach the methodology used by historians, such as comparing sources (Monte-Sano, 2010).

The romantic and enlightened goals of history education have coexisted from the very beginning of school history teaching and have developed over time. The romantic goals were most influential from the 19th century until approximately the 1960s and 1970s. A testimony from Alvarez-Junco (2011), an academic historian, about how school history was taught in the mid-20th century is telling:

As for myself, I still remember the moment when I first heard about the heroic end of the Numantines [the inhabitants of Numancia, a town in

what currently is northern Spain, who resisted a Roman siege], at the hands of the evil foreigners who had besieged them. . . . I imagined the scene of a great bonfire in the middle of the town square, into which two warriors were throwing the jewels, the furniture, and the bodies of the children and women that had been put to the sword. They finally killed each other, so that the triumphant enemy would capture neither slaves nor booty. This is how we Spaniards are, the teacher explained: We prefer to die rather than be slaves. We all felt horror, but also pride, and unconsciously resolved to do the same someday should the occasion arise. . . . It might be thought that a precocious interest in history is revealed by these stories, but that is not the case. Neither the former nor the latter were history; both were “school narratives.” (p. xvii)

As can be seen, the teaching of history was not so much inspired by academic research. However, it was very powerful and effective, probably because it was directed at the construction of collective identities and emotional attachment to these identities. It is not surprising that Ferro (1984/2002), another academic historian, declared at the beginning of his classic book that our images of other people, or of ourselves for that matter, reflect the history we are taught as children. The history marks us for life. Its representation . . . of the past of societies, embraced all of our passing or permanent opinions, so that the traces of our first questioning, our emotions, remain indelible. (p. vii)

Even nowadays, history education in a number of countries is exclusively romantic and nationalist. Therefore, national histories “were born to be taught.” They are

contained in a variety of records, such as museums (Knell et al., 2011) and monuments and patriotic celebrations important in many countries (Carretero, 2011, Chapter 4; Westheimer, 2007). Following the 1960s and 1970s, the disciplinary goals of history education became increasingly influential (Carretero & Bermúdez, 2012). Social sciences (economics, sociology, and anthropology) in general started to influence curricula in different countries. Included in history curricula were disciplinary objectives considered perfectly compatible with the romantic objectives. However, several studies (Carretero & Kriger, 2011; López, Carretero, & Rodríguez Moneo, 2015) have indicated the tension this might generate in students' representations. This is particularly clear in colonial and postcolonial history teaching. Spanish school textbooks have traditionally omitted essential features of the American colonization, such as the subjugation of indigenous people or slavery as a generalized social and economic practice (Ferro, 1984/2002; Todorov, 1997). Therefore, it could be said that aiming at "loving" the Spanish country has had serious consequences for understanding its colonial past. In contrast, these colonial issues are highlighted in Mexican or Brazilian textbooks (Carretero, Jacott, & López-Manjón, 2002). Similar findings are reported when former colonizers and the colonized are compared in France/Algeria, Great Britain/India, China/Japan (Ferro, 1984/2002) and Japan/Korea (The Academy of Korean Studies, 2005).

These tensions are not just a matter of controversial issues in recent history. Remote history is at the bottom. That is, the historical issues at the roots of national identity construction are a fundamental part of the problem. For this reason, it can be said that even nowadays, historical master narratives are playing an important role in the

imagination of the nation. They serve the romantic goals of history education particularly well. Also, their influence is becoming more widespread and more intense with the emergence of new nationalism in Europe and other areas of the world. As Alridge (2006) and Straub (2005) have indicated, these “master narratives” of nation pervade underneath a variety of specific contents and through time. Whereas specific narratives may change frequently, these underlying master narratives rarely change, and they manifest once and again in subsequent revisions of history contents. Also outside of school—in monuments, rituals, museums, films, and other media—a narrative of nation is perpetuated.

So far, we have attended to the production or teaching of national history or, rather, national memories. However, do the conflicting views found in academic and public debates, and in school textbooks, influence how students and citizens ultimately understand the past? How do features of the social production of historical narratives translate into the processes of individual consumption of historical narratives? To these issues we now turn.

Master Narratives and the Representation of the Past

Although there is an emphasis on national history in history education and its investigation, this does not necessarily determine how people represent history. The narrative of the nation is a dominant account of history, in and out of school, but people can also turn to historiography or alternative accounts of collective memory. In the theory of mediated action, there is an irreducible tension between the cultural tool, in this case the master narrative, and the agent who appropriates this narrative—the students and citizens who “consume” accounts of history (Wertsch, 1998, 2002). On the part of the

appropriating agent, there can be opposition to, or rejection of, accounts of history. We find a very clear example of this in the historians who reject the master narrative as a myth (Megill, 2007). Also, collective memory, as in the experiences of a particular group of people, can resist and contribute alternative versions to “official” history. For example, Sandinista militants from peasant families in Nicaragua tell a very different story about the revolution in 1979 than the version propagated by the media and institutional powers (van Alphen & Asensio, 2012). Both on the basis of historical research and on the basis of alternative collective memories, people can resist and reject the national master narrative. Precisely these processes of resistance are important to study because they indicate the dynamic aspects of collective memories. In other words, they show how representations of the past change and generate new and different ways of remembering in both human beings and societies.

Nevertheless, research demonstrates that more often than not, students’ representation of history, and of what is deemed important in history, is framed by the nation (Barton, 2008). Furthermore, Wertsch (2002; see also Chapter 11, this volume) suggests that schematic narrative templates—general narrative patterns that are found across specific narratives of historical events forming interpretation schemas in people’s minds—are active when representing national history. Recent work, inspired by cultural psychology and history learning studies, indicates that the narratives that students construct about their own nation greatly resemble the national master narrative rather than a historiographical account of the national past. This has been found among university students in Spain (López et al., 2015) and high school students in Argentina

(Carretero & van Alphen, 2014). To study the representation of national history and the appropriation of master narratives in more detail, Carretero (2011, Chapter 4; see also Carretero & Bermúdez, 2012) has suggested a model of master narrative production and consumption that can be applied to different countries. This model distinguishes six different narrative characteristics or dimensions. In this vein, the investigation of students' representations has turned to analyzing whether these characteristics appear, constituting master narratives in students' minds. The master narrative dimensions are as follows:

1. *A homogeneous historical and social subject*—that is, the narrative has one single subject that is homogeneous both in opposition to the historical other and over time. There is no variety or diversity of historical actors, and the subject has an idealized and timeless character. The establishment of this national protagonist, the main voice of the narrative, involves a process of inclusion/exclusion. For example, the voice of indigenous people living in the same territory is excluded from the national narrative.
2. *Identification processes*, in terms of a “we” versus “them” structure. The narrators identify with the national historical subject, or their use of the pronouns “we” and “they” reflect a present national identity projected on the past or their identification is both historical (between then and now) and social (with other nationals). Past and present subjects are merged into one national identity, as are different social actors.

3. *Heroic and transcendent key historical figures*: These individuals appear in the narrative to represent national virtue and set the national example. They are valued positively and considered outside their social and historical context, as quasi-mythical characters.
4. *A monocausal or teleological account of the historical events*, in terms of one main goal, such as the search for freedom or defending the national interest.
5. *Moral value judgments*—positive about the national subject and historical events and negative about the historical/national other. This national moral value is self-justifying or tautological: What is national is good, and the good is national. In this sense, the sacrifices made, from dying for one's country to eradicating other groups and traitors, are for the greater good.
6. *An essentialist conceptualization of nation and national identity*: Both are naturalized and timeless entities. In this sense, territory is also essentialized as, or predestined to be, national.

How do these characteristics concretely manifest in students' representations? A study by Carretero and van Alphen (2014) provides some examples. It investigated how Argentine urban middle-class high school students represented the historical event that occurred in 1810, which nowadays marks the anniversary of the Argentine nation on May 25. This event is therefore not just a part of Argentine national history but also represents the very beginning—a so-called *myth of origin* (Jovchelovitch, 2012; Smith, 1991)—and constitutes an important theme in the Argentine national narrative: independence. It can

be compared to the Boston Tea Party in the United States and other histories of independence on the American continent (Ortemberg, 2013). Keeping the master narrative characteristics in mind, we examine two different student accounts:

The Argentine people were tired of being governed by Spain. At that time there was a viceroy and the people went to overthrow him. They went to tell him that we were a free people.

Mario, 14 years old

In the town hall, on May 25th, part of the Buenos Aires society held a reunion, to discuss about the government that had been in charge that was no longer legitimate, because Ferdinand VII (king of Spain) had been taken as a prisoner by Napoleon in Spain . . . and upon imprisoning him the Viceroyalty of River Plate, a Spanish colony of which our territory was part, because you cannot speak of Argentina at that time . . . the viceroy Cisneros, who was at that time the authority, was left without legitimacy. Some members of society, of the social upper class, decided that a meeting needed to be held urgently to dismiss that (Cisneros's) government and to form another based on the actual situation at that time.

Analía, 16 years old

Both Mario and Analía were asked to tell the interviewer about the same historical event. However, their accounts contrast dramatically with one another. Apart from transcendent heroes and explicit moral values, all master narrative characteristics can be found in

Mario's version. There is a homogeneous historical subject, the Argentine people, opposed to another, Spain. That Argentines are supposed to have existed indicates the essentialized conceptualization of the nation and its nationals. The event was motivated by a desire to be free, or at the very least of being tired of foreign rule. Here we also see something of a value judgment. Through the use of "we," a social identification process seems to be at work that at the same time is a historical identification process.

The four narrative characteristics are very much intertwined. The historical subject is homogeneous both in opposition to Spain and because of being essentially Argentine. The historical event is caused both by this opposition between the people and Spain and by essentially being different from Spaniards. The national identity sits in the people's need to be free and is affirmed by this freedom. This narrative coherence is not just a spontaneous feat of individual narrative thought nor is there a lack of learning. Mario has actually interiorized a collective memory: the master narrative of the origin of the Argentine nation. His account was learned, as was Analía's, because he cannot arrive at such an account on the basis of his individual experience: Something mediates his access to the distant past.

This is different for Analía. In her account, Argentina does not exist in 1810. The people are not unified by a national identity in opposition to another, as Spanish colonists constituted Buenos Aires society and differences existed in their sociopolitical status. Only some participated in a town council meeting that was held as a result of an international chain of events. There was a need for legitimate government, preferably representing those very protagonists calling for a town council. One could say that

Anaía's account reflects the other objective of history education: to understand the past. Her version unmistakably has a narrative structure, although it is much closer to historiographical accounts (Chiaramonte, 1991). Actually, she studied May 25, 1810, as part of her high school history curriculum a year earlier. The Argentine history textbooks used are quite precise in historical detail, even though they emphasize national history like many other curricula and textbooks throughout the world.

The general results of the study, however, do not suggest that the representation of the national past differs between 8th and 11th graders as a function of history education. Whereas a development toward history understanding in the 11th grade was found, some 8th graders did not manifest a master narrative representation but more than half of 11th graders did so. Their representations were mediated by the master narrative or by more historical accounts in different degrees. Therefore, there is no single way of individually constructing the collective narrative. However, the master narrative predominated overall, suggesting that some aspects of collective memory are difficult to change (Carretero & van Alphen, 2014). For example,

It is a step we took to fight against the Spaniards so that they respect our rights, because that place was in itself our territory. All those years of subordination to the Spanish Crown, with the viceroy and the king of Spain . . . we didn't need a government telling us what to do, if we want to be independent, we want to govern, we the Argentines.

Clara, 16 years old

In this fragment, it can be seen how the establishment of an essentially national historical subject automatically, as a function of narrative coherence, involves and connects the other master narrative characteristics. There is identification with the national subject, its actions and supposed intentions. The territory essentially belongs to that subject and legitimizes a fight. The historical event, the fight, is inherently good because it was for independence, rights, and political autonomy of the national historical subject. Some heroism is involved, even though no specific heroes are mentioned. Later in the interview, Clara does give credit to the Argentine national hero of independence, responding to the question, “Was it Argentina that became independent?”: “Yes, because of San Martín.”

The overall results suggest that the students’ narrative representation is more or less coherent. When, in the case of Analía, the historical subject is specified as urban political upper class, then the historical events are more contextualized. There is a narrative of nation, but the latter is understood in a long and complex historical process instead of a preexisting collective essence. Tensions arise when the students hold on to the master narrative, on the one hand, and enter into more historical detail, on the other hand. For example,

Actually, we can say that in the beginning the population was a mix of Spaniards and aboriginals and I believe that the majority of the population was Spanish. When the country developed and they saw that they could have . . . they had the possibility to have their own country and a president or whatever. I believe they saw a possibility to become

independent and create . . . a revolutionary movement . . . but putting it like this you realize that the major part of the population was Spanish and because of that, they maybe wanted to become independent from Spain themselves.

Luisa, 16 years old

Here we see that as soon as a somewhat more contextualized historical subject appears, the events (“revolution” and “independence”) that logically followed from the opposition with Spain are not so logical anymore. The historical protagonists are themselves Spanish colonists and not nationally opposed to Spain. Luisa has some difficulty with connecting the dots as the master narrative representation is disturbed by another possible historical subject. This tension might very well be a consequence of the two objectives in history learning mentioned previously. Other research in Argentina (Carretero & Kriger, 2011) suggests that for the students, there are tensions between master narrative and historical representations of nation—the same way that there are tensions between the two objectives of history education when it concerns the nation. Given the predominance of the master narrative, and its presence in the students’ representations even after learning about the history of May 25, we could say that the objective of constructing national identities is more successfully accomplished. Aiming at history understanding, an educator would want students’ representations to change, but they remain much restrained by the master narrative. In its wake, historical details are forgotten, such as the fact that women, slaves, indigenous groups, and creoles without political status in 1810 were not allowed into the town council. Can we therefore really talk about “the people”

becoming “free”? Thirteen-year-old Manu is very skeptical: The idea of feeling Argentine to me seems something theoretical. The country is formed, not natural, in any moment it can change names: We’re “Argentines” and all of a sudden we can be “troglydites” (laughs). . . . I think it is kind of an egoist idea, in order for certain people to have power over society, and the rest of us we go along with those people so that they have the power and have more money, more dough. I think that for this reason the system of countries and of society in general is designed.

Interestingly, it was recently found that Spanish students, when telling about the origin of a nation that is not their own, do not construct a master narrative the same way they do about the Spanish nation (López, Carretero, & Rodríguez-Moneo, 2014). Particularly, they do not demonstrate the moral judgments and territorial claims that arise when the own nation is concerned. They do manifest the first narrative characteristic: A national historical subject is established. In the case of this recent investigation, the historical subject was Greek. Although the historical subject was not Spanish like these students, it was considered to be essentially and homogeneously Greek. This also suggests that the core dimension of the master narrative is its national historical subject, whether students identify with this subject or not.

Master Narratives in (Re-en)Action

We argue that both kinds of representations—master narrative or more historical accounts—are learned and developed. Thus, in part, national identity is interiorized through master narratives, corresponding to the finding that these narratives were implemented in history education at the beginning of the 20th century to construct

national identities in the populace (Bertoni, 2001). This interiorization does not happen in a purely cognitive way. In practices of remembering in Argentina, the so-called patriotic rituals that were also implemented at the beginning of the 20th century (Bertoni, 2001), the nation or the national historical protagonist is embodied. Patriotic rituals play an important role in many countries. In Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, at least four historical and patriotic commemorations take place in school every year. They are dramatizations of and discussions about the events, battles, and national heroes related to the processes of independence of each country. In the United States, these kinds of activities are performed at many historical and monumental sites (McCalman & Pickering, 2010), apart from those performed in schools.

Patriotic re-enactments, usually heroic and celebratory, unite stories in a long narrative chain that links them by virtue of the role they play in the construction of the nation. These narratives adopt a teleological form, also in relation to each other; destiny is already contained in the origins, and knowledge of the “roots” of a nation is indispensable for knowing how to act in the future. The patriotic scenarios convey an important amount of historical contents that influence student’s understanding of the history contained in the formal curriculum and textbooks (Carretero, 2011, Chapter 4). Students consume and use national historical narratives that they learn from these kinds of events, in and out of school. Given the results and fragments discussed previously, it could even be said that patriotic ritual is more influential than history textbooks because no contemporary Argentine high school history textbook states that on May 25, 1810, the Argentines became independent from Spain. Independence was declared on July 9, 1816.

Patriotic rituals in Argentina contain the central historical events of national history, expressing as well as enacting the master narrative. Being in the metaphorical shoes of national historical protagonists—“the people becoming independent”—is a very active way of remembering and identifying. Not only children but also their parents participate in these collective memories, such that the master narrative is converted into family memory (see Shore & Kauko, Chapter 4, this volume). These rituals make a timeless connection between the supposed historical protagonists and the primary schoolchildren interpreting them. Repetition is part of the strength of ritual in collective remembering (Connerton, 1989; see also Murakami, Chapter 5, this volume). Here, it strengthens the master narrative, such that it becomes increasingly more dominant in the child’s representation of history. Patriotic rituals may play the same role in the common representation of history as the archives do in the historians’ view on the past. That is, patriotic rituals likely provide a truth-value to a romantic representation of the past for the following reasons:

1. The child is involved in these rituals at an age (4–6 years) that does not yet allow critical thinking.
2. The national master narrative is repeated every year in a very similar manner.
3. No possible counternarrative or alternative account is offered.
4. Patriotic rituals in many countries are milestones of the school year, in terms of how the time is organized.
5. They are supported not only by the school but also by society in general.

In terms of the differences between collective memory and history discussed previously, one wonders whether patriotic rituals are implemented by national school systems as educational contents related to history or, rather, to collective memory. They are considered to be historical because they are about the past, but they are probably more collective memory than history. In this respect, the words of Le Goff (1992) should be considered: Memory is a conquest, it must seek and preserve that what allows it to construct itself from a perspective of truth. It must dispel false legends, black or golden, about such episodes of the past, collect the maximum amount of documents and confront contradictory memories, open up the archives and impede their destruction, know to look for the memory expelled to the taboos of history during certain periods in certain systems in literature or in art, and recognize the plurality of legitimate memories. (p. 15)

Conclusion

The implementation of the master narrative in early history education and in ongoing celebrations can help explain why an invented nation, according to contemporary historiography (Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983), or a national identity that is itself historical (Berger, 2012; Chiaramonte, 1989; Smith, 1991) can become so psychologically real. We have emphasized that it should not be taken for granted that people organize their past in a national key. Apart from explaining these national memories from a traditional social psychological viewpoint in terms of in-group–out-group processes, their proper history needs to be taken into account. That is, national identity is of course a matter of social psychology, but it is also historical. We have

aimed to build an interdisciplinary bridge between history and psychology, taking the historicity of the master narrative as a cultural tool into account. Examining national history, it can be seen that the discipline is in fact quite young and that the concept of nation and the category of national identity started influencing the way the past was written in the 19th century. Since then, the master narrative has influenced education and started to frame how the past is represented. This means that there are other possible ways of representing the past, related to other collective memories or to different written histories. In the same way that there is no single collective memory, such as a national memory in narrative form, there is no single history. To some theoreticians, history is narrative and is the same as collective memory. However, this is a somewhat shallow interpretation, given the wide spectrum of histories written from new perspectives (Burke, 2001) and the attempt to compare perspectives instead of vindicating just one of them.

In this chapter, we have tried to distance ourselves from collective memory to see how it is centered in a generally nationalist perspective. We have seen that even in history education, history is understood nationally and that what is ultimately fostered might be more national memory than anything else. Students and citizens are capable of critically reflecting on single versions of the past when other versions are introduced. Contextualizing the essentially national historical protagonist of the master narrative seems a crucial step toward diversifying collective memory. In this way, we believe, historiography has something important to contribute to collective memory: It can help introduce new perspective. To open up collective memory for alternative not nationally

formatted accounts particular historiographical techniques, such as taking a distance from history and critically interrogating the concepts and narratives we take for granted, are elementary. Paradoxically, therefore, we need to question collective memory in order to expand it beyond dominant national viewpoints.

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