

Act Alike & Think Alike Historians: Arguments on Academic History, Collective Memory & Contemporary Studies

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Summary

For learning history we need two significant things to start, one research and other is educational role. The basic purpose of learning historical education, with the help of above said technological perspective, is to develop figures, texts, artifacts, historical accounts as secondary resource. As per this learning rule if historical accounts have significant important for student to get knowledge about history then educational institutes should make it as obvious education aim. Some researchers also suggested that students should also spend time to do meaningful historical researches (if historical narratives are available) rather than to study primary sources regularly. In this review paper, I would explain debatable approaches that will explain the usage of historical support for the students to develop their understanding in conducting valuable researches and quality education. For better indulgent, this report will help to understand the role of educational resources in developing understanding and completion of historical based research while taking experiences, academicians and collective memory history into consideration.

INTRODUCTION

Ravitch (2011) argued that the word teaching history in educational history is often recognized as diluted, political and controversial to understand the basic necessities of social community. Different scholarships and researches in history claimed it relative small and bustling field which contains multiple modes includes reform, theory developments, criticism and academic inquiry of the past. In general perspective, history education provides a preliminary view for student to understand the historical narratives and how any state came into existence (Mandell & Malone, 2008; Mandell, 2008; Calder, 2006; Osborne and Briffa, 2006). Researchers like Weller (2010) and Seixas (2006) provided another viewpoint of history education that claiming in giving enough strengths and capabilities to the students as critical consumers about historical knowledge and narratives. With respect to this epistemology, the historians should teach their students not only to memorize these historical narratives but also focused on its methodological standards and social construction proposed by the academic community (Bain, 2005; Ravitch, 2007).

While achieving desired goals in history education, computer technology and Internet are playing their utmost role in helping students to go through primary sources and historical narratives since 19th century (Noonan, 2013; Clark, 2009; Sandwell, 2005; Duschl, 2008; Cohen, 2005). From the last three decades, a plethora of researches (for reference Wineburg, 1991; Seixas, 1999; Mandell, 2008; Bain, 2005) are available that questioned the integrity of students' and teachers' ability of understanding historical education in academia. This integrity tend to declared as notion of history-graphical techniques implanted in instructional

process and pedagogical approaches that explained the impression of history education (Barton and Levstik, 2011). From 1950s, American education system starts multiple reform initiatives in managing history education with the help of eight different studies (Byford and Russell, 2007). These studies reforms are developed/rooted on the foundation of disciplinary integrity whereas political and social hysteretic Cold War acted like stimulate for American reforms (Voelker and Armstrong, 2013; Loewen, 2008).

PILLARS OF HISTORY EDUCATION

Learning history transformed naïve thinker to accurate history narrator through a liner development but it was treated as apolitical systematic venture by most educationists in the past. Seixas (2000) explained history as the amalgamation of endorsed storylines, fundamental elucidations and memorization of particular facts that helped educationists to differentiate between heritage and myth while giving lectures in classrooms. Many researchers (Wineburg, 2001, Seixas, 2012; Grant, 2014; Peck and Seixas, 2008) claimed that most of the teachers did not guide their alienate students enough to understand the history as heritage or myth which escort various misapprehensions about its nature. History being a domain is fundamentally dead and far from the reality because of its poor fundamentalist epistemologies, historical understanding, history education, conceptualizing history and designing curriculum (Levstik and Barton, 2013). Therefore, this issue raised serious consequences for historians and academicians to develop sound curators, academic background, facts and textbooks while taking historical background into consideration so that students may judge historical arguments as historians. Hewer and Roberts (2012) contended the integration of individual experience, collective memory and academic history as source of knowledge that constructs subjective reality, i.e., formation of notions, values, identity, future, present and past of what is unreal, real, false and true. While taking these concerns into consideration, I highlighted three different pillars (i.e. student experience, collective memory and academic history) of history education with primarily focuses on cultural shifts in collective memory as myth or heritage in nature.

Individual experience in academic history is usually recognized as knowledge source engrossed in social memory dynamics. Experience acquired from different sources, either direct or indirect, that instigates desire, emotions and thoughts as storyline for others in future. Schiff et al. (2001) provided beautiful example of experience as autobiographical memory, that deviously masquerade as individual knowledge, which is consisted collected stories and first-hand experience through communication and social meetings. Portelli (2003) and Gelfand et al., (2000) argued that knowledge behind autobiography epistemology was taken as historical event established through conscious articulation, recollection, and unconscious experience. Memoirs, autobiographies and life histories are always taken as persuasive and popular source of inspiration among students, either as heritage or cultural myth, which designed their educational standpoint in history education (Burnett, 2013). On the other hand side, academic history is another source of knowledge for academic institutions. Archaeology and its closely related paradigm academic history is defined as the excavation progression of learning ancient past (Orton, 2012) and usually termed as scientific process based on rigorous, explorative and systematic analyses to find out objective reality associated with it. Since theories associated with academic history either taught in academic institutions or practicing practically were inferred from fragmented analyses, vicissitudes of time thus required hermeneutic, constructivist and interpretative techniques to understand (Hewer and Roberts, 2012). In spite of above drawbacks, the basic intention of academic history is to give constructive and accurate information to the students with the help of historical ideas within cultural context.

Collective memory, a third pillar of history education referred oppositely to academic history, is subjective and insular rooted in tradition which endorsed unchanging group essence and support single committed perspective (Wertsch and Ethos, 2008). This term coined by French Sociologist and Philosopher named Maurice Halbwach in early 20th century while working in interdisciplinary research that investigate how individuals/groups memorized past events. The seminal work was published in 1920s on collective memory but later it got paramount importance among sociologist and psychologists (few of them were mentioned: Neiger et al., 2011; Erl et al., 2010; Pennebaker et al., 2013; Olick, 2013; Wertsch & Roediger, 2008; Reese & Fivush et al., 2010; Weltzer, 2005, 2009; Hilton et al., 2008) and become a mainstream domain in history education.

The suitable example of collective memory was the study of Schwartz (1996), conducted after the American Civil War, in which he studied the behavior of writers, Sculptors and painters build images of George Washington. He concluded that Washington's image as political and non-democratic military leader who bring democracy in the country between 1965 and 1920. Durkheim's collective representation is another theory which conspicuous similarity with collective memory with all characteristics traditionally and culturally (Erl et al., 2010). Markova (2006) argued that collective memory got multiple dichotomies, after Durkheim tenure, which explained ontological and epistemological differences between European and North American perspectives. At current point of time, there are remarkable distinctions, available in English language, on theoretical and conceptual basis that should take into consideration while giving lessons on narratives to the students about shared nature, cultural as heritage or myth and past.

Lets evaluate an example, we considered about remembering, history and memory differently but memory itself taken as oppositional, counter, unofficial, communicative, public, popular, cultural, social, collective and historic. The description and inferred dichotomies shaped collective memory (e.g., autobiographical, flashbulb, declarative, procedural, semantic, episodic, short and long-term) that help in developing an in-depth understanding of history among students. There is very thin line difference between collective remembering and formal history where history is complex, reflective and critical academic discipline that inclined to give objective standpoint of the historical times (Wertsch and Roediger, 2008).

Anyhow, the amalgamation of experience, memory and history created a unique sense of identity and reality in students which shaped their engagement with history and contemporary studies. The dynamics of lifeblood and heart of social memory, within social milieu, is associated with dynamic and static entities (Hewer and Roberts, 2012). Being a multidimensional identity of collective memory that bestowed with vibrant foundation of information (like broadcasting, multimedia, and internet), foundational and static set of beliefs accountable for diffusing institutional knowledge about political world, military affairs, the judiciary and education. Since every culture has specific facets, that's why commemoration, collective remembering and collective memory is considered as starting point of conversation about unfounded arguments, allegations, gossip, rumor, pseudoscience, science, lies and truth that shaped the history narratives for students (Boyer and Wertsch, 2009).

The history education and its integration with collective memory in educational institutions have utmost importance (Wang, 2008a, Wang, 2008b) and considered as vital element of establishing country's history (Podeh, 2000). To do this important task, all educational institutes either schools or universities are considered as primary source to teach narratives and previous history. To establish strengthen relationship between homeland and citizen all

nondemocratic or so called western democratic states prefer to teach national history (Wang, 2008a) especially the political transitions prevails in history. Researchers (Podeh, 2000; Wang, 2008b) also emphasized on rewriting school curriculum on nation's political transition history throughout the world. Schools are only factories where teachers should provide notable corpus information about historical narratives either through textbooks, autobiographies or history documentaries so that they have ample ability to response it effectively and emotionally in future.

SHORTCOMING/DEBATE IN PILLARS OF HISTORY EDUCATION

Historians and researchers (Levesque, 2007; Wilson, 2001; Seixas, 2012) claimed that historical narrative stories have significant shortcomings. Since the historical narratives were included or excluded in history curriculum on monopolized decision, most of the narratives especially excluded one were not explained clearly or have some shortfall in their explanations. Due to this reason, the systematic learning of students and critical thinking about historical narratives is reduced. This statement was also backed by empirical research and concluded that students had naïve acquaintances about historical narratives in collective memory history programs. Another empirical research was conducted on the comparison of 500 students each in experimental history programs and collective memory curricula. The purpose of this research was to understand the level of historical knowledge among students in Schools Council History and experimental results concluded that the level of history narratives was very low in: methodology for doing history research, explanations and theory(ies) behind historical narratives and how historical knowledge was constructed (Relch, 2011).

These statistics had significant influence on how history curriculum was monopolized due to which student's ability to understand historical narratives, historical epistemologies and debates in developing basic understanding about history and culture was quite alarming (Levesque, 2008; Seixas, 2012). Only inclusion of historical education courses in schools/universities in curriculum can provide erudite knowledge about historical epistemologies to the students to compete in modern education scenario while taking historical knowledge into consideration (Levesque, 2008). Students' sophistication can only be granted in historical epistemology if history curricula, academic history and historical epistemologies included extensively.

Another critical underestimation of historical and cultural epistemologies in history curricula is due to unique generational gap. While taking psychological and political significance of history curricula into consideration, it facilitates and permits shifts and subtle changes about history and its education across generational gap (Weizer, 2005). There is also a cultural perspective in historical education like Remembrance Sunday in Britain and this idea was taken from World War I and World War II which has basic purpose of remembering lost generation. Despite of acknowledgement in television broadcasting about post military operations in Falklands, Ireland, Malaya, Aden and Korea, but commemorations to these operations were not included explicitly in history education (Wertsch, 2009; Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003, 2005; Misztal, 2003). The commemoration of two world wars were mainly focusing on the military personnel who died in battlefield but there is contentious standpoint contended that the history should also remembered those people who died, served or suffered for their own country like in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and Kashmir.

In my opinion, learning history apart from political basis is communal need for every student to enhance its literary skills if it used appropriately. Accordingly, if history learned negatively or taught incorrectly then likelihood of prejudices, misconceptions and biases increased

drastically. Similarly, we are facing huge difficulties in analyzing our ancient histories in educations, due to personal gain's slants and forged reports available on media networks includes Youtube and Facebook. A professional and practical historian involved in highly erudite practice that ranged from asking questions, analyzing secondary and primary resources, introducing incomplete or disconnected information, providing thoughtful results with concrete evidences while taking availability of historical data, criticism, analyses and interpretation into consideration.

FINAL THOUGHTS

History education imparts critical insight to understand its relationship with society, contemporary education and instills unique attributes of learning and experiencing history. Sexias (2012), the most influential author of History Education from British Columbia University, argued that history education is significantly responsible for new thinking and developing political, cultural, social regimes in societies. While deciding the nature of history curriculum, historians or educationists should think about the historical narratives inclusions and exclusions because every historical narrative has different paradigm with might create disputes in political field for example the hot debates on History Wars were spread from United States of America to Canada and now in Australia (Macintyre & Clark, 2003). These intense debates have two bottom lines: (1) provide basic understanding of teaching history in the context of economic and social scenarios for nation building and (2) imbues patriotism among students.

Many research studies involved in suggesting suitable historical narratives for history education curriculum as ideological content in textbooks and helping materials (Tetreault, 1986; Anyon, 2005). Similarly, historians also provide the importance of ideological content of history in different ways: (1) organization and designing of historical narratives in textbooks (Tetreault, 1986; Clark, 2009), (2) the shift in social representation paradigm in different eras (Clark, 2009), (3) historical narratives representation in social groups and (4) actual standpoint on historical narratives (Zajda, 2009). If educational institutes misrepresent some facts or exclude them from historical narratives then students' thinking and knowledge effected (Seixas, 2012) and this notation also supported by number of research studies which concluded adverse consequences (for example negative attitudes toward social groups, academic achievement, career aspirations and student self image) of doing misrepresentation.

Researchers (Carretero and Kriger, 2011; Carretero, 2011) also indicated the important of teaching actual historical narratives and history in educational institutions. Yilmaz (2008a) argued that historians or professors should have sound knowledge about history, epistemological beliefs that affect the instructional practices, understanding historical events and reading approaches among students. There are greater chance of misinterpretation of historical narratives with teacher did not have conceptual foundation and adequate understanding of subject matter. Yilmaz (2008a) also forced the need of accurate dissemination of history education at teachers' end to avoid any political manipulation, cultural aspects of history and national building process. To understand the role of collective memory in developing historical narratives, history curricula and cultural aspects, Assmann (2008) provided clear distinction in the concept by providing the major elements of history education elements, cultural context and processes, and detailed explication of collective memory components. The basic theme line of Assmann (2008) is to integrate the association of individual experience, resistant to change, traditional perspective, collective memory and academic history based on didactic, revisionist and evidence based perspective (Hewer and Roberts, 2012; Kansteiner, 2010).

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