

Socialization of Memory and Cognition

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“Sociocultural” Approach

- Focus on sociocultural situatedness of memory and cognition
 - How memory and cognition are shaped by:
 - Cultural context
 - Historical context
 - Institutional context

Distributed Cognition as One Approach

- 2 senses of distribution:
 - Social distribution
 - Instrumental distribution
 - Agent + Cultural Tool
 - 2 forms of distribution typically work together

Social Distribution

- Example: Deanna Barch on memory with schizophrenic patients
 - Performance normally in one individual is distributed, made “intermental”
 - Luria in *Neuropsychology of Memory*
 - Interaction with frontal lobe patients
 - “Can’t remember,” but

Vygotsky's "General Genetic Law of Cultural Development"

- Developmental ("genetic") claim
- Social origins of individual mental functioning: "Intermental" => "Intramental"
- Remembering in adult-child dyad
- Bottom line: The answers are easy; the questions (organized directives) that are the problem.

Studies of Social Distribution and Socialization of Cognition

- Focus on strategic functioning
- Different intermental processes => different intramental processes
- Speech genres as in Beth Marsh's analysis
- Ethnographic studies, controlled interaction studies in developmental and educational psychology

Instrumental Distribution

- Agent + Cultural Tool
- Use of symbol systems: slide rules, calculators, spoken and written language, etc.
- History of “off-loading” parts of cognitive tasks
- Cultural tools do some of our thinking/remembering for us
- Affordances and constraints of tools
- Intelligence = mastery of cultural tools

Instrumental Distribution in Collective Remembering

- One outcome: socialization into the “generalized dialogue” of a society
- Narrative tools provided by others (e.g., state)
 - Referential function of narratives
 - Dialogic function of narratives
- Telling “what really happened” vs. responding to others (“hidden dialogue”)

History Learning and Instruction

- Official, state-sponsored narrative tools involve:
 - Reference and predication about past events, characters, etc.
 - Response to previous or anticipated alternative accounts
- Post-Soviet textbooks on WW II (“GPW”) shaped by need to respond to previous texts

1995 Russian History Textbook

The fact that an enemy reached the Volga (something that had never happened in Russian history) plus the fact that this enemy was stopped only at the price of enormous sacrifice and losses point to the historical weaknesses and unsteadiness of the [Soviet] regime. It was only the colossal moral and intellectual potential of the Russian people, their long-suffering and self-sacrificing nature that made it possible to preserve governability.

1995 Russian History Textbook

- Russian people, with their “long-suffering and self-sacrificing nature” as actors
 - Key to holding state together
 - Key to defeating German invaders
- No mention of Communist Party

1964 Soviet History Textbook

The Communist Party played a leading role in the struggle against Fascism during the war years. Not sparing themselves and their lives Communists everywhere were in the first ranks of the fighters for the freedom and independence of all peoples. . . . The courage and deeply patriotic behavior of Communists during the hard years of the war evoked the admiration of the working classes. These facts provided clear and convincing evidence that only the Communists were capable of leading the people on a path toward freedom and delivering them from infamy. The authority and influence of the Communist Party quickly grew

1964 Soviet History Textbook

- Completely different picture of main actor
- No suggestion of incompetence or responsibility for early disasters in Great Patriotic War
- Two accounts: different specific narratives, but same schematic narrative template
 - Same story, different actors

Post-Soviet 1995 Text

- Strong rebuttal (dialogic response) to Soviet accounts
- Bakhtin's "word with a sideward glance"
 - 1995 text is almost more about Soviet text than extralinguistic reality of GPW
- An ongoing societal dialogue built into text

Post-Soviet 1995 Text

- Hidden dialogicality built into text
- Mastery of text => participation in generalized societal dialogue
 - Automatic affordances and constraints of this cultural tool
 - Socialization as member in a particular cultural, historical, and social setting